

# Time for new opportunities

In the first half of 2021, the Republic of Belarus managed to maintain both balance in foreign trade and high growth rates of its presence in foreign sales markets. In January-June, the volume of exports of Belarusian goods and services increased by nearly a third to exceed \$22 billion. At the same time the foreign trade surplus increased by almost one billion dollars. Characteristically, such positive dynamics is observed practically in all foreign economic vectors. In the post-Soviet space, integration ties of Belarus with the Russian Federation within the Union State, with Kazakhstan within the Eurasian Economic Union, and with Uzbekistan within the Commonwealth of Independent States are dynamically developing. In Asia, it concerns, first of all, the People's Republic of China, the relations with which are reaching the level of "iron brotherhood, exemplary all-round strategic cooperation and all-weather partnership". Contacts with other Asian countries - India, Mongolia, Iran, Pakistan, South Korea, and Oman - are being updated. In Belarus itself, the points of growth of the innovation economy are becoming complex "projects of the future". This study is about that.



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Boris Zalesskii



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## **Belarus - Russia:**

### **Orientation towards mutually beneficial cooperation**

The results of the first two months of 2021 show that trade and economic ties between Belarus and Russia continue to develop along a steady growth trajectory. Thus, "the turnover of Belarusian-Russian foreign trade in goods and services in January-February 2021 was \$5.3 billion, having increased by 11.9% against the same period of 2020. Export of goods and services to Russia amounted to \$2.3 billion (a 2% increase)<sup>1</sup>.

Among the Belarusian companies that feel confident in the Russian market is Minsk Motor Works (MMZ), which doubled its export deliveries to Russia in the first quarter of 2021. The main consumers of its products in the neighboring country are enterprises in Kursk, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod and Yaroslavl regions, the Republic of Bashkortostan and the Republic of Mordovia. "During 2021 Minsk Motor Plant will keep on developing the distribution network in Russia in two areas: engines and spare parts, as well as special machinery, in order not to slow down the export growth. The export of the products is planned to increase by 11%<sup>2</sup>. The company also sees one more reserve for increasing its supplies to the Russian market in 2021 in organizing a constant exhibition of a broadened range of engines and special machinery at LLC "Trading House "Minsk Motor Plant" in Noginsk and its partners in every Federal District of Russia. Cooperating today with 59 Russian companies, Minsk motor builders are now working on establishing cooperation relations with ten more partners.

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1 Roman Golovchenko: A package of proposals to deepen the integration of Belarus and Russia is in high gear [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9807>

2 Minsk Motor Plant in Q1 doubled its deliveries to Russia [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-motornyj-zavod-v-i-kvartale-v-dva-raz-uvlechil-postavki-vrossiju-437469-2021/>.

Gomselmash Belarus, which has a distribution network of 60 entities in Russia, including 34 dealerships, two joint ventures and one trading house in Siberia, also announced ambitious plans to increase supplies of its equipment to Russia in 2021. Over the 13 years of its existence, Gomselmash sold more than 3,200 units of self-propelled grain and forage harvesters in the Russian market. In 2020 the sales of Gomselmash equipment in Russia increased by 163 percent. Together with Bryanskseilmash alone, more than one thousand combines were sold to Russian regions. In addition, "in 2020, the company expanded the borders of supply and opened a new dealer center in the Primorsky region - LLC "AgroSupport" <sup>3</sup>. All of these facts give good reason for the Belarusian company to set a truly ambitious task for itself in 2021 - to triple its supplies to Russia.

The Belarusian Steel Works (BSW) is also actively cooperating with Russian companies; its partners in Russia are both suppliers of key raw materials and major consumers of metal products. Suffice it to say that "in January-February 2021, exports by BMZ to Russia exceeded 58 thousand tons, which is 8% more than during the same period in 2020. In monetary terms, exports to the Russian Federation exceeded \$43 million, which is a third higher than over the same period last year<sup>4</sup>. This was due to an increase in sales of rebar, structural rolled steel, steel wire and steel cord.

Another vivid example of such a plan is the Belarusian Automobile Plant (BELAZ). In March 2021 alone, it supplied more than 93% of the total volume of produced machinery and spare parts to foreign markets with an export growth rate of 142%. There is an important detail: "The share of the Russian market, the largest among the traditional markets of

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<sup>3</sup> "Gomselmash plans to triple deliveries of machinery to Russian regions in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-planiruet-utroit-postavki-tehniki-v-rossijskie-regiony-v-2021-godu-436585-2021/>

<sup>4</sup> BMZ increases export deliveries [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uvlechivaet-eksportnye-postavki-433237-2021/>

the company, in the March shipments was 89.1% (growth rate of 308.1%)"<sup>5</sup>. In particular, under the long-term agreement on strategic partnership with the mining company Kuzbassrazrezugol JSC, BELAZ has to supply 29 mine dump trucks by the end of April 2021. Three of them, with a capacity of 220 tons, were shipped to one of Kuzbassrazrezugol's production branch - the Kedrovsky coal mine - at the end of January of this year. It should be noted that the arrival of the other vehicles will substantially enlarge the technological fleet of more than half a thousand vehicles, which is dominated by the Belarusian equipment at the coal mines. "BELAZ machines are also used at the enterprises of Kemerovo Oblast's flagship coal mining company in mining and transportation operations, special machinery of the Belarusian manufacturer is also used (irrigation trucks, tow-tractors, loaders, bulldozers)"<sup>6</sup>. JSC "BELAZ" presence in the Russian market is also secured by the cooperation agreement with the St. Petersburg Mining University signed in April 2021, which implementation is to ensure that "in September [2021] modern and specialised classrooms equipped with exclusive facilities will start functioning in one of the largest Russian institutions of higher education on mining engineering"<sup>7</sup>. In this case, we are talking about opening of the BELAZ Innovation Competence Center, which will be modelled on the best technological solutions in mechanical engineering, digital and information technology in the mining industry. Its main feature will be the use of virtual reality technologies, which will raise not only the training of

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5 BELAZ increased production, sales and export volumes in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-v-i-kvartale-uvlechil-objemy-proizvodstva-realizatsii-eksporta-produktsii-437188-2021/>

6 BELAZ will supply 29 dump trucks for one of the largest coal companies in Russia [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavit-29-karjernih-samosvalov-dlja-odnoj-iz-krupnejshih-ugolnyh-kompanij-rossii-427978-2021/>

7 BELAZ will open a Competence Center at St. Petersburg Mining University [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-otkroet-tsentr-kompetentsij-v-sankt-peterburgskom-gornom-universitete-437447-2021/>

university students, but also improve the skills of specialists and managers of companies that operate machinery of the Belarusian manufacturer.

The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) is also actively building up ties with its partners in Russia. The growth dynamics of Russian business interest in its electronic trading indicate that in 2021 Russia may become a leader on BUCE not only in the number of accredited companies, but also in the volume of exchange commodity turnover. Let us recall that "as of 1 December 2020, 2482 residents of Russia used BUCE services"<sup>8</sup>. And the amount of exchange transactions carried out by them in January and February 2021, "almost three times exceeded the same period in 2020 and amounted to \$ 12 million"<sup>9</sup>. This has put Russia in third place on the list of the largest export markets of the BUTB. Lithuania (\$32 million) and Latvia (\$18 million) retained the first two places. In the first quarter of 2021, the sum of all transactions made by Russian exchange traders was close to \$38 million. Such growth in exports of Belarusian goods to the Russian market resulted from comprehensive measures taken by the Belarusian Exchange to attract business entities from Russia to the exchange trade floor in Belarus. Among the main ones one should mention: 1) simplification of the accreditation procedure at the BUTB; 2) regular webinars and online presentations for representatives of the Russian business community; 3) spot visits to leading industrial, woodworking and agrarian enterprises in various Russian regions. As a result 30 new Russian companies interested in the purchase of Belarusian meat and dairy products, rapeseed oil and building materials, as well as in the implementation of transit transactions on the sales of its own goods in third countries were accredited at the BUTB during the first two months of 2021.

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8 Zalesky, B. With a view to the future. Peculiarities of multi-vector partnership in modern conditions / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. -- C. 97.

9 Russia is one of the three largest export markets of BUTB [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossija-voshla-v-trojku-krupnejshih-eksportnyh-rynkov-butb-432830-2021/>

It should be noted that so far the determining role in the increase in the exchange commodity turnover is played by the close cooperation of the BUTB with the Russian border regions of Smolensk, Bryansk, and Pskov.

In particular, the mention of the Bryansk Region in this list is explained by the fact that Belarus accounts for about half of the foreign trade turnover of this Russian region, which by itself is evidence of a sufficiently high level of trade and economic cooperation. Nevertheless, at the working meeting with the representatives of the Bryansk Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry in March 2021, the parties noted a considerable potential for further expansion of cooperation exactly in the field of exchange trade. In this connection, this year the accent "is to be made on agrarian sector and realization of industrial goods as the most perspective spheres for cooperation development"<sup>10</sup>. For this purpose the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Bryansk Region will use its entire network of business contacts to inform the Bryansk Region business representatives about the advantages of the electronic trading mechanism at the BUTB.

The planned cooperation of the Belarusian Steel Exchange with the Chelyabinsk Region looks very promising. At the webinar on exchange trade with Belarus held in the middle of March 2021 several large producers and sellers from the Russian region announced their plans to increase sales of metal products on the trading floor of the BUCE. "Interest in a more active application of the exchange mechanism, in particular, was expressed by representatives of Chelyabinsk Forge-and-Press Plant, Liteiny Zavod LLC and Trade House MKK LLC. First of all, we are talking about an increase in supplies of ferrous rolled metal products, which are in

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10\_BUTB and CCI of Bryansk region agreed on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tpp-brjanskoj-oblasti-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-431815-2021/>

consistently high demand among Belarusian industrial enterprises.<sup>11</sup>By the way, we should mention that nearly 800 companies trade in ferrous metals and their products on the BUOTB virtually every day, and the number of transactions at a single trading session can reach two million euros. It is clear that the arrival here of the largest Russian metal producers from the Chelyabinsk Region - the undisputed leader in ferrous metallurgy among other Russian regions - will only open up new opportunities and prospects for all participants in these trading sessions.

At the end of March 2021 with the assistance of the Volgograd Region Export Support Center a meeting with business representatives of this Russian region was held at the BUTB. As a result several enterprises of Volgograd region "expressed their interest in selling their products within the industrial and consumer goods section of the BUTB. In particular, there are plans to work out the issue of bidding for products for construction industry, packaging materials and foodstuffs<sup>12</sup>. In early April 2021, the prospects of increasing Belarusian exchange trade were discussed with representatives of **Kursk** Oblast business circles during an online conference. Following the discussion, a number of enterprises of the Russian region expressed their readiness to exhibit their products on the platform of industrial and consumer goods BUTB. For example, "the question of selling equipment for the food industry, high-tech rubber products, packaging materials made of paper and corrugated cardboard is being considered"<sup>13</sup>. BUOTB also expects real results from the agreement, made in March 2021, on the intensification of cooperation with the St.

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11\_The enterprises of the Chelyabinsk Oblast are interested in selling metal products at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-cheljabinskij-oblasti-zainteresovany-v-realizatsii-metalloproduktov-na-butb-433059-2021/>

12\_BUTB plans to establish closer cooperation with Volgograd Oblast [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-naladit-bolee-tesnoe-sotrudnichestvo-s-volgogradskoj-oblastju-434981-2021/>

13\_Kursk Oblast enterprises plan to work in the Belarusian market through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-kurskoj-oblasti-planirujut-rabotat-na-belorusskom-rynke-cherez-butb-435331-2021/>

Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange. The exchange was set up in 2008 and is now the largest commodity exchange in Russia "specializing in trade in oil, oil products, gas, timber and mineral fertilizers"<sup>14</sup>. It should be assumed that the actualization of cooperation with such a serious partner can bring no less serious results.

Apparently, Russia's role for Belarusian exports of construction services in 2021 will also increase noticeably. But first, let us note that the growth of exports of services in general is an important direction to minimize the dependence of the Belarusian economy on the influence of key factors of the foreign economic environment. In 2021, the Republic of Belarus continued its efforts to increase its volumes. Specifically, in the first quarter, "exports of services rose by 3.8% to \$2.287 billion <...>. The balance of the foreign trade in services is positive amounting to \$1.041 billion (in January - March 2020, the surplus was \$1.014 billion)." <sup>15</sup>. At the same time, exports of construction services, which exceeded half a billion dollars in 2020, are not the least of these figures. Today, it is one of the promising directions of development of the Belarusian construction industry, where comprehensive measures are being taken to further increase and expand its geographic coverage, and where the Russian market, which has a significant potential, begins to play an increasingly important role. This is largely due to the fact that "today in Russia there is a labor shortage in the field of construction. The issue of its involvement in the implementation of key construction projects, such as, for example,

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14. BUTB and the St. Petersburg Mercantile Exchange agreed to intensify interaction [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-sankt-peterburgskaja-tovarno-syrjevoj-birzha-dogovorilis-aktivizirovat-vzaimodejstvie-434334-2021/>

15. Belarus increased exports of goods and services by 19.5% to \$10.3 billion in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-i-kvartale-velichila-eksport-tovarov-i-uslug-na-195-do-103-mlrd-441081-2021/>



theatrical and cultural centers in Vladivostok and Kaliningrad, the cosmodrome "Vostochny" is topical"<sup>16</sup>.

Given the observed growth in construction in the neighboring country, the Belarusian side is already taking concrete steps to promote its export interests there. For example, coordination subgroups for cooperation in construction have already been set up in seven Russian regions, and "a portfolio in Russia worth over 3 billion Russian rubles has been formed for the near future. This includes schools in Kaluga, Voronezh and Leningrad regions and St. Petersburg, as well as residential houses in Kaluga, Kursk and Kaliningrad region. <sup>17</sup>All in all, Belarusian builders are planning to build more than ten social facilities in Russia by the end of 2025. In particular, the holding Belstroytsentr "is now simultaneously building about five social infrastructure facilities in the Leningrad and Kaluga regions"<sup>18</sup>.

As for Voronezh Oblast, which is seriously interested in expanding cooperation with Belarusian partners in construction, we are talking, first of all, about the implementation of a joint pilot project in the urban type settlement Strelitsa in Semiluki District to build a school for 520 pupils, participation of Belarusian companies BelinzhiniringstroyInvest LLC and Stroitelny Trest №12 OJSC in construction of pre-school and general educational institutions in Semiluki District, and about using "Belarusian prefabricated houses in implementation of the project. The Theater and Cultural Center in Vladivostok, already mentioned above, is to become one of the largest construction projects in 2021 in cooperation between Belarus

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16 Sivak: Belarus is interested in increasing exports of construction services to Russia [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sivak-belarus-zainteresovana-v-naraschivanii-eksporta-stroitelnyh-uslug-v-rossiju-442169-2021/>.

17\_Parkhamovich, R. The tasks set for the construction industry this year will be fulfilled / R. Parkhamovich // [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/postavlennye-pered-strojtirasljiu-zadachi-v-etom-godu-budut-vypolneny-7784>

18\_By the end of 2025 it is planned to build more than 10 social facilities in Russia [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: [http://mas.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/do-kontsa-2025-goda-planiruetsja-postroit-bolee-10-sotsialnyx-objektov-v-rossii-1313/](http://mas.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/do-kontsa-2025-goda-planiruetsja-postroit-bolee-10-sotsialnyx-objektov-v-rossii-1313/)

and Primorsky Krai. The center will also house the Mariinsky Theatre's maritime stage and the exhibitions of famous Russian museums. And in general, according to the governor of this Russian region O. Kozhemyako, this center "will become a real decoration of the entire Asia-Pacific region and can be compared, for example, to the theater in Sydney, Australia<sup>19</sup>.

Another Russian region, where the possibility of participation of Belarusian builders in the construction of housing and social facilities is being carefully studied today, is the Novgorod Oblast. There are already 15 organizations with the participation of the Belarusian capital registered here, but until recently the interaction with partners from Belarus was mainly in the agro-industrial complex in the form of supplies of agricultural machinery, food products and processing. This contributed to the fact that in 2020 the trade turnover between the parties amounted to \$57.5 million. In this case, the supply of Belarusian goods - dairy products, eggs, plastics, sugar, wood, fertilizers, electrical machinery and equipment - increased by almost 20 percent. By all appearances, the builders are expected to contribute to these figures in the near future. The fact is that "at least two new schools and a few kindergartens are needed in the region. The quality of the work of builders from Belarus is always quite high <...>. We have already had experience in cooperation: Belarus built the so-called medical house for us. We are interested in the construction capacity of our Belarusian colleagues<sup>20</sup>. The sides have also been discussing the idea of building a new runway "near Veliky Novgorod in the place where

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19\_Belarusian specialists will build turnkey theater building in Primorye [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorussskie-stroiteli-budut-stroit-pod-kljuch-zdanie-teatra-v-primorje-434288-2021/>

20 Pivovar, E. Novgorod Oblast is studying the possibility of participation of Belarusian builders in the construction of social objects / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novgorodskaja-oblast-prorabatyvaet-vozmozhnost-uchastija-belorusskih-stroitelej-v-vozvedenii-438576-2021/>

Krechevitsy military airfield used to be"<sup>21</sup>. The Bryansk and Gomel regions also have ample opportunities for cooperation in the construction field. In particular, in April 2021 the parties discussed the prospects of Belarusian companies' participation in the implementation of such projects as "Construction of the highway - protective dike Bryansk 1 - Bryansk 2 (1st stage)", the MPEI "DPS '71" and the Palace of Martial Arts in the Soviet district of Bryansk<sup>22</sup>. As we can see, the Russian vector of Belarusian exports of construction services is already quite broad and diverse. And it continues to expand. Let us hope that this trend will only contribute to the successful implementation of the tasks set for the builders of the allied countries.

Many Russian regions are actively developing ties with their Belarusian partners in 2021. Among them - the Republic of Tatarstan, which is one of them, the trade turnover with which in January-February 2021 increased significantly - more than 80 percent and totaled almost \$ 175 million. At the same time, Belarusian exports soared by nearly a quarter, reaching nearly \$55 million. This happened due to the growth in supplies from Belarus of tractors and tractor units, oil gases, ferrous metal twisted wire without electric insulation, parts and accessories for automobiles and tractors, tires, seamless pipes, tubes and sections of ferrous metals, waste derived from the extraction of soybean oil, fresh or chilled beef, unalloyed steel wire, cheese and curd, tire cords, synthetic polymer-based paints and varnishes in non-aqueous media, furniture and parts thereof. In April 2021 the parties signed a protocol of understanding, which "provides for further mutual interest in developing trade and economic, scientific and technical and humanitarian cooperation between

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21 Pivovarov, E. In Novgorod Oblast they plan to restore air communication with Minsk and Gomel / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-novgorodskoj-oblasti-planirujut-vosstanovit-aviasoobschenie-s-minskom-i-gomelem-438579-2021/>

22 Gomel and Bryansk regions will discuss the development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-i-brjanskaja-oblasti-obsudjat-razvitie-sotrudnichestva-437066-2021/>

Belarus and Tatarstan. <sup>23</sup>In April 2021, the parties signed a protocol of agreements, which "envisages further mutual interest in the development of trade, economic, scientific and technical and humanitarian cooperation between Belarus and Tatarstan.

It should be recalled that the interaction between the parties is developing today within the framework of the intergovernmental agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation of 23 June 2004, which created the preconditions for the formation of a common scientific, technological and innovation space. Last year, the implementation of the Action Plan for 2017-2020 on the implementation of the basic agreement was completed. Due to the fact that today Tatarstan pays special attention to the development of production of high-tech products and establishment of joint ventures, in this Russian region the Belarusian partners are given the opportunity to work at the "investment sites of the Republic. It is important to deepen the cooperation of commodity producers, primarily in the field of mechanical engineering and high technology" <sup>24</sup>.

It should be noted that back in 2017, the two sides set a goal to restore the record level of trade turnover of two billion dollars, which was achieved in 2012. The 7th meeting of the Working Group on cooperation between Belarus and Tatarstan, which took place in October 2019, identified specific areas for joint work in the coming years to achieve the goal, "including supplies of passenger buses, Amkodor machinery, a wide range of agricultural equipment; implementation of joint projects in the gas vehicle sector, in particular - production of passenger vehicles, tractors,

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23 Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Tatarstan actively develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9816>

24 Minnikhanov R. It is important to deepen cooperation of commodity producers, first of all, in the sphere of mechanical engineering and high technologies / R. Minnikhanov // Technologies and innovations in cooperation of the Union State regions as an impulse for development of Eurasian integration: inform.-integration project / coauthors, interviewer: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2017. -- C. 30.

municipal and agricultural equipment, engines; expansion of the volume and range of supplies of autonomous vehicles<sup>25</sup>. At the same time the agreements on cooperation were signed by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, as well as the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and Kazan Federal University.

As a result of the implementation of the provisions of the 4-year plan by February 2020 in Tatarstan already: two assembly factories - Belarusian tractors and Mogilevliftmash; four companies with Belarusian capital - OOO TTK MTZ-Tatarstan, OOO Amkodor-Bel, OOO Molodechnomebel Trading House and a representative office of Pinskdiv Holding - were in operation; dealer network of such Belarusian enterprises as "Gomselmash", Minsk Tractor Works, "Mogilevliftmash", Minsk Automobile Plant, "Amkodor", Borisov Plant of Tractor Electrical Equipment; OOO "TPK MTZ-Tatarstan" became the official distributor of OJSC "MTZ" in Russia, having its own production facilities, transportation and logistics division, engaged in service maintenance. Successful development of cooperation in machine building has led to the fact that "almost 60% of the agricultural machinery fleet of Tatarstan is equipped with MTZ tractors, over 60% of forage harvesters and 40% of grain harvesters - with Gomselmash equipment". More than 50% of Kazan's fleet of passenger vehicles consists of MAZ buses and Belkommunmash trams<sup>26</sup>. And there are good prospects for cooperation in the gas-motor industry, where there are joint projects implemented by RariTEK together with Minsk plants - automobile, tractor and motor works.

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25 The concern held the 7th meeting of the working group on cooperation of the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Tatarstan of the Russian Federation [Electronic resource], - 2019. - URL: <http://www.belneftekhim.by/press/news/eafc42c9330d3164.html>

26 Pivovarov, E. Petrochemistry, industrial cooperation, transport projects - Semashko visited Tatarstan / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/neftehimija-promkooperatsija-transportnye-proekty-semashko-posetil-tatarstan-378550-2020/>

At the 8th meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation, which was held in the format of a videoconference in November 2020, the parties noted the active development of economic ties between enterprises of the machine-building and petrochemical industries, as well as in agriculture, passenger transport, ecology, healthcare science, while emphasizing that "the key area remains cooperation in the petrochemical sector, which accounts for half of Belarus' trade turnover with Tatarstan"<sup>27</sup>. As a result, the Action Plan for 2021-2023 was approved, which provides for many new interesting joint projects. Already in January 2021 in Kichketan rural settlement of Agryz municipal district of Tatarstan Belarusian Unitary Enterprise "Polymerconstruction" "successfully implemented a pilot project in the field of ecology on water treatment" <sup>28</sup>. And now the question of participation of the given UE in implementation of projects on other objects of Tatarstan is solved.

Another Russian region that I would like to mention in this context is the Sakhalin Oblast, which in May 2021 signed an action plan for 2021-2023 to implement the agreement between the governments on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation. This took place during a meeting of the working group on the development of bilateral cooperation, the attention of which was focused on the prospects of "increasing the supply of food products, agricultural, quarry, passenger, road construction equipment, elevator equipment and other products"<sup>29</sup>. It should be reminded that the cooperation agreement between the parties was signed in September 2015 at the venue of the Second Forum of Regions of

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27 Belarus and Tatarstan approve Cooperation Plan for 2021-2023 [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <http://www.embassybel.ru/departments/kazan/news/53efd46968aa.html>

28 The Belarusian company UP "Polimerkonstruktsiya" has successfully implemented a pilot project in the field of ecology in the Republic of Tatarstan [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <http://www.embassybel.ru/departments/kazan/news/29939dd56309.html>

29 Belarus and the Sakhalin Oblast signed an action plan on cooperation for 2021-2023 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-sahalinskaja-oblast-podpisali-plan-meroprijatij-po-sotrudnichestvu-na-2021-2023-gody-441087-2021>

Belarus and Russia. The main objectives it set were to increase mutual trade turnover, intensify business contacts, and cooperation in the social sphere - health care, education, and social protection.

Note that this Russian region is characterized by active foreign economic activity, which it conducts primarily with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region - South Korea, Japan, and China. Overall, "foreign trade turnover of the Sakhalin Region in 2020 was \$12.2 million. USD"<sup>30</sup>. Nevertheless, the Republic of Belarus began to develop its niche in these international partnerships after the signing of the cooperation agreement, as evidenced by concrete facts.

Thus, in 2017, the volume of mutual trade between Belarus and Sakhalin amounted to almost five million dollars. Belarusian meat, sausage, dairy products, textile products and knitwear, footwear and leather haberdashery have sharply increased in the Russian region's consumer market. Suffice it to say that in August 2020, in the administrative center of the Russian region - Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk - the fourteenth (!) store of the retail network Belorusskiy Firmy opened, where products from Belarus are represented by a wide range of sausages and meat delicacies from Brest and Grodno meat processing plants, dairy products from Minsk Dairy Plant, confectionery products from factories Kommunarka, Spartak, Krasny Predfilovik, preserves from ABC Group of Companies. "In addition to the traditional assortment, Belarusian ice cream of 10-12 items appeared in the product line of the store"<sup>31</sup>.

Machinery of various classes from Belarus for agro-industrial, housing and communal services, road construction and timber industries are widely used here. "Due to the large number of Belarusian-made machinery operated in Sakhalin Oblast, the need to establish a unified service center for its

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30 Sakhalin Oblast foreign trade results for 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://sakhalin.gov.ru/index.php?id=152>

31 Another "Belarusian branded" store opened in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.embassybel.ru/departments/khabarovsk/news/fe085b1056fe.html>

maintenance was raised. Thanks to our joint efforts, in April 2017, BelMashService LLC opened a service center for servicing equipment manufactured in the Republic of Belarus in the regional capital<sup>32</sup>.

Over the past five years, the partnership between the republic and the Russian region in the field of agriculture has developed strongly. Already "in 2016, the Belarusian side, after a 30-year break, resumed potato growing on Sakhalin, planting its seeds on the island on the first 40 hectares<sup>33</sup>. Later, a dairy farm for one thousand head of cattle was built at Sovkhoz Korsakovsky JSC using Belarusian technologies. It is interesting that this construction was divided into two stages. At first, eight hay and silage trenches with the capacity of two thousand tons each appeared. On the second stage buildings and constructions of main production, biomass processing, engineering and transport infrastructure were built. Three cowsheds and three calf barns were erected to accommodate animals. "When the enterprise reaches its full capacity, it will give 7 thousand tons of milk and 200 tons of meat annually to the inhabitants of the island region. <...> The agricultural project, which has been implemented in the south of Sakhalin, is included in the government agricultural development programme<sup>34</sup>. An agro-town with 50 one-storey three-room houses of the Belarusian type was also built here. In February 2018, the first nine families of state farm workers received the keys to apartments in the new buildings on Belorusskaya Street. "Now it is the largest facility of modern rural housing construction in Sakhalin Oblast" <sup>35</sup>.

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32 Belik, A. Our plans are to expand the range of cooperation / A. Belik // Priority directions of regional cooperation as a key factor of union construction: inform-integration project / compiled, interviewed by: K. Gusev, B. Zalessky. Gusev, B. Zalesskii. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. -- C. 323–324.

33 Zalessky, B. Formula of multi-vectorism. Possibilities of international cooperation in the context of globalization / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2017. -- C. 60.

34 A 1,000-head dairy farm opened in southern Sakhalin [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: [https://sakhalin.gov.ru/index.php?id=105&no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=12461](https://sakhalin.gov.ru/index.php?id=105&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=12461)

35 Pivovarov, E. An agro-town based on the Belarusian project was erected on Sakhalin [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/agrogorodok-po-belorusskomu-proektu-vozveli-na-sahaline-289289-2018/>



As for other areas of cooperation, back in December 2017, the Belarusian side proposed to improve coal mining and transportation methods in Sakhalin, as these proposals "can significantly improve the infrastructure of the island coal company and give a powerful boost to the development of the coal mining industry in the region as a whole. This is a whole new level of interaction between our parties"<sup>36</sup>. And already in 2020 14 new Belorussian mine dump trucks with carrying capacity of 220 tonnes started working in Solntsevo coal mine on the island<sup>37</sup>. The parties see serious potential for further development of interaction in active cooperation through the chambers of commerce and industry - in organizing online negotiations, holding joint exhibitions, seminars, as well as in establishing direct links between the business community and economic entities of the Republic and the region. They have a result-oriented attitude.

At the April 2021 meeting of the leaders of the governments of Belarus and Russia, it was noted that "the topic of integration in the economic sphere is a priority issue on the bilateral agenda"<sup>38</sup>. The trend towards the restoration of the bilateral Belarusian-Russian trade turnover, which has been taking shape since the beginning of 2021, shows that the sides are successfully developing integration cooperation in many areas, despite the known objective difficulties. This gives new positive impulses to more fully realize the potential of the Union State.

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36. Pivovarov, E. Belarus will help improve methods of coal mining and transportation in Sakhalin / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-usovershenstvovat-metody-dobychi-i-transportirovki-uglja-na-sahaline-277311-2017/>

37. Pivovarov, E. Deliveries of Belarusian heavy trucks and cooperation in the agroindustrial complex - Semashko visited Kuzbass and Sakhalin / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/postavki-belorusskih-bolshegruzov-i-sotrudnichestvo-v-apk-semashko-posetil-kuzbass-i-sahalin-404918-2020/>

38. Roman Golovchenko: A package of proposals to deepen the integration of Belarus and Russia is in high gear [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9807>

## **Belarus - Russia:**

### **Forum of Regions as a generator of new ideas**

The Eighth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, held in late June - early July 2021, focused on the topical issues of the Union State development within the framework of five thematic sections, such as: 1) Russian-Belarusian cooperation in science and education in the era of "big challenges" and digital technologies; 2) the role of digitalization in the formation of a common scientific and technological space of the Union State; 3) interaction between Belarus and Russia on the implementation of Union programs and scientific and technological projects under international treaties; 4) law and digitalization in the Union State: prospects and directions; 5) young people online: the digital environment of the future. The Forum participants' attention to the topic of cooperation between the parties in science, technology and innovation spheres is explained by the fact that large-scale cooperation in these areas is implemented via the Union State programmes, the use of which "allows us to increase the level of integration of our economies, develop cooperation between enterprises, improve competitiveness of jointly manufactured products" <sup>39</sup> and which today should be aimed not only at maintaining individual enterprises and industries, but rather at creating and developing cutting-edge areas. The following projects were mentioned as such at the VIIIth Forum of Belarusian Regions and Russia: 1) intellectual systems of information analysis; 2) supercomputers, neuron networks, artificial intelligence; 3) space instrument engineering and technologies; 4) new laser materials; 5) microelectronics; 6) electric transport; 7) multi-functional unmanned systems; 8) nuclear power; 9) information security.

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<sup>39</sup> Igor Petrishenko: Interaction between Belarus and Russia in science, technology and innovation spheres is aimed at creating a full-fledged common scientific and technological space [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9897>

The formation of the common scientific and technological space of Belarus and Russia, which provides the harmonization of national legislation in science and technology, is necessary to create equal opportunities for Belarusian and Russian scientists to work in the Union State and perform joint research and development in priority areas for both countries, among which were also mentioned at the forum "new materials and chemical procedures, ecology and environmental management, technology living"<sup>40</sup>

Recall that during the existence of the Union State "more than 60 Union programs have already been implemented in the economy, space, security, agriculture, 41 billion Russian rubles have been spent for this purpose"<sup>41</sup>. In particular, the scientific and technical programs relating to the development of remote sensing of the Earth, feed production and genetic research have been implemented. In 2020, such a landmark S&T program of the Union State as "Auto-Electronics" was completed, which provided for "development of a new generation of electronic components for control and safety systems of motor vehicles of special and dual purpose. The results of the program were used to create robotic unmanned mine dump trucks BELAZ, which are already operating in the quarries of the Siberian Coal Energy Company"<sup>42</sup>.

But today the task is to be even more actively involved in the preparation of proposals for new programs not only to the federal and republican executive authorities, but also to the representatives of the

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40 Belarus and Russia have achieved a lot in science and technology - Karasin [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarusi-i-rossii-udalos-mnogogo-dobitsja-v-nauchno-tehnicheskoy-sfere-karasin-448170-2021/>

41 Mezentsev at the Forum of Regions called for more active involvement in the preparation of proposals for union programs [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mezentsev-na-forume-regionov-prizval-aktivnee-vkljuchitsja-v-podgotovku-predlozhenij-dlja-sojuznyh-448530-2021/>.

42 Belarus and Russia plan to create a single registry of technoparks of the Union State [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-rossija-planirujut-sozdat-edinyj-reestr-tehnoparkov-sojuznogo-gosudarstva-448127-2021/>

regions of the two countries. It should be noted that "eight scientific and technical programs are currently being implemented in the Union State, and three more are being prepared"<sup>43</sup>. Another six new drafts of the program concepts are in a high degree of readiness:

- 1) "Overcoming" - development of modern technologies for detecting and overcoming microbial resistance to drugs;
- 2) "Soyuzbiomembranes" - new medical cellular products;
- 3) "Additivity" - creating technologies, materials and equipment for 3D printing;
- 4) "Accelerator-SPR" - development of a complex based on superconducting resonators;
- 5) "Component F" - creation of innovative technologies for the development of the Union State's photonic component base; 6) "Complex-SG" - a new programme in the field of space.

In addition, a project is being prepared to expand the research computer network to connect leading centers and universities not only in Belarus and Russia, but also in the entire Eurasian Economic Union, which will allow scientific and educational organizations of the participating countries to interact effectively, including through remote access to research infrastructure. And the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus, the Association of Clusters and Technoparks of Russia, and the Standing Committee of the Union State are creating an IT platform for a unified registry of technoparks of the two countries with the subsequent development of a data storage, systematization, analysis, and graphical visualization system. The Union State has also recently started preparing a common programme of fundamental research and a road map

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43 Pivovarov, E. In the Union State 8 scientific and technical programs are implemented, three more are being prepared - Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-sojuznom-gosudarstve-realizujutsja-8-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-programm-gotovjatsja-esche-3-vitse-premjer-448523-2021/>

for cooperation that defines objectives and priorities such as "capacity building in space research, expansion of nuclear research, informatics and robotics, development of quantum research, research into advanced nanomaterials"<sup>44</sup>. All this, of course, will still give its result.

The eighth forum also demonstrated very extensive potential for further development of interaction between specific regions of the two countries that are part of the Union State. If we talk about the contracts signed during the forum, "in the real sector of the economy - it is about \$800 million"<sup>45</sup>. Undoubtedly, such high results of the Belarusian-Russian partnership are facilitated by the fact that about 80 regions are involved in this interregional cooperation on the Russian side. "The Republic of Bashkortostan, the Samara Oblast, the Stavropol Krai, the Kursk Oblast, the Komi Republic, the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, the Nenets Autonomous Okrug are actively developing cooperation"<sup>46</sup>. The Moscow Oblast can also be mentioned in the same line, among whose foreign trade partners Belarus ranks second, second only to China. There are already "120 Belarusian companies operating successfully in this Russian region, and representative offices of Belarusian companies supplying food and engineering products have been opened" <sup>47</sup>. While 23 companies from the Moscow Region concluded export contracts with Belarusian partners throughout 2020, 28 companies already did so in the first half of 2021.

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44 Gusakov proposed to accelerate the creation of a unified scientific and technological space of the SG [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/gusakov-predlozhi-uskorit-sozdanie-edinogo-nauchno-tehnologicheskogo-prostranstva-sg-448546-2021/>

45 Kochanova: the Forum of Regions has a solid baggage of signed agreements and contracts [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/kochanova-u-forumov-regionov-solidnyj-bagazh-iz-podpisannyh-soglashenij-i-kontraktov-448569-2021/>

46 About 80 Russian regions participate in interregional cooperation with Belarus - Vorobyov [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/okolo-80-rossijskih-regionov-uchastvujut-v-mezhregionalnom-sotrudnichestve-s-belarusju-vorobjev-448283-2021/>

47 Pivovarov, E. Belarus is second only to China in the volume of trade with the Moscow Region - Governor / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-po-objemu-torgovli-s-podmoskovjem-ustupaet-tolko-kitaju-gubernator-448521-2021/>

The role of Russian partners is high for the Belarusian metropolitan area as well. First, for the five months of 2021 trade turnover with Russia by companies of the Minsk region increased immediately by 30 percent, amounting to more than 2.2 billion dollars. In this case, exports from the Belarusian capital region increased by more than a third, and "the balance of foreign trade turned positive amounting to \$624.3 million"<sup>48</sup>. Secondly, the volume of foreign direct investment from Russia in 2021 has also increased. In the first quarter alone, they amounted to almost \$95 million. And, judging by the available investment cooperation plans, this value is far from being the limit.

Speaking about Brest region in this context, we should note that it "has concluded and is implementing 26 agreements on cooperation with Russian regions, including Penza, Astrakhan, Belgorod, Bryansk, Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Kaluga, Kostroma, Lipetsk, Novosibirsk, Pskov, Saratov, Smolensk, Tyumen Regions, Stavropol Territory, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Buryatia, Udmurtia, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District"<sup>49</sup>. Besides, there are more than 40 agreements on cooperation between Brest region cities and districts and Russian municipal entities. This may be the reason why, in the course of preparations for the VIII Forum of the Regions of Belarus and Russia, the region's enterprises signed commercial contracts worth over \$120 million with their Russian partners. Let us note that the share of the Russian market in the total volume of supplies from the Belarusian region exceeds 60 percent. The main export commodity items include meat and dairy products, cattle meat, ready-made and canned fish, gas stoves, and children's toys. More than 330 enterprises with Russian

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48\_Minsk Region and Russia plan to implement a unique business project in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskaja-oblast-i-rossija-planirujut-realizovat-unikalnyj-biznes-proekt-v-sfere-selskogo-hozjajstva-451727-2021/>  
49\_Brest Region enterprises signed contracts worth \$120 million for the Forum of Regions [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatija-brestskoj-oblasti-podpisali-k-forumu-regionov-kontrakty-na-120-mln-447664-2021/>

capital are registered in Brest region. The most famous of them are JV Brestgazoapparat OJSC, Vastega FLLC, ANREX FLLC, BelINEKO LLC, STiM FLLC, RusBelGaz FLLC, Frost & Co LLC.

The Russian vector of interaction remains a key foreign trade direction for the Grodno Region as well, as it accounts for more than half of foreign supplies from here. Grodno Region works with 74 regions of Russia, and has signed agreements on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation with 27 regions. The Republic of Bashkortostan and Tomsk Oblast added to this list of partners at the VIII Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia. The activation of interregional ties in Russia allows the enterprises of Grodno Oblast to increase the range of goods and expand the geography of supplies, which was greatly promoted by the forum. "The total amount of contracts of the region's producers, primarily in the meat and dairy industries, as well as industrial enterprises, with Russian counterparties is 12 billion Russian rubles"<sup>50</sup>.

Russia's foreign economic relations are successfully developing in the Gomel Oblast as well. The trade turnover between the Oblast and Russia increased by nearly 20 percent over the first five months of 2021 and totaled almost \$2.5 billion. The top five recipients of Gomel Oblast enterprises are Moscow Oblast, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Bryansk and Smolensk Oblasts. The most popular products are rods and wire of iron and non-alloy steel, dairy products, agricultural machinery and spare parts, synthetic fibers, nonwoven materials, metalware. No less important direction of cooperation is investment. "In January-March 2021, foreign investments from the Russian Federation amounted to \$154.3 million"<sup>51</sup>.

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50. Grodno Region Signs Agreements with the Republic of Bashkortostan and Tomsk Region [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-podpisyvaet-soglasheniya-s-respublikoj-bashkortostan-i-tomskoj-oblastju-448192-2021/>.

51. Belarus and Russia need to develop cooperation in IT - Lukyanov [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarusi-i-rossii-neobhodimo-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-it-lukjanov-452331-2021/>

This is largely due to the fact that 361 companies with Russian capital are already operating in Gomel Oblast, 12 of which are residents of the Gomel-Raton free zone. Moreover, the Gomel Oblast Executive Committee signed 22 bilateral agreements on cooperation with Russian regions. Another 78 similar documents were signed at the level of towns and districts of the Gomel region and their partners in the neighboring country.

Among the Russian regions actively developing cooperation with Belarusian partners in 2021 the Vladimir Region should be mentioned. In May this year a meeting of the working group on cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and this Russian region was held, at which the parties considered the whole range of trade and economic cooperation - in industry, agriculture, construction, housing and utilities sector, exhibition and fair activities, as well as at the level of districts and cities. The tone for the discussion was set by the fact that in 2020 the trade turnover between the republic and the region "amounted to \$244 million and fell by 6.7% compared to 2019<sup>52</sup>. In this regard, the working group outlined ways to remedy the situation in mutual trade. To this end, new points of growth in the development of partnerships with this region of Russia were identified. These are cooperation in light industry, mechanical engineering, construction, agro-industrial complex.

The two countries signed an agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technical, and socio-cultural cooperation in September 2015 as part of the Second Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which was held in Sochi. This document contained agreements "to create the necessary organizational, financial, economic and legal conditions for the operation of joint ventures, development and implementation of joint projects and

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52\_Chervyakov: new points of growth in trade with Vladimir region of Russia are identified [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-opredeleny-novye-tochki-rosta-v-torgovle-s-vladimirskoj-oblastiju-rossii-443237-2021/>.



programs of mutual interest.<sup>53</sup> In December 2017, it was supplemented by an action plan for the implementation of this agreement for 2018-2020, which played a positive role in enhancing interaction between the parties. In particular, it was already noted at that time that "the products of Belarusian companies are of great interest to the Vladimir Region. Among the imported products are binders for the production of foundry molds and cores, fiberglass and products made of it, cheeses and cottage cheese, tableware and kitchenware" <sup>54</sup>. At that time 34 enterprises, in which Belarusian investors fully or partially participated in the founding capital, were already operating on the territory of this Russian region. And the search for new directions of interaction continued permanently.

In May 2018, the Belarusian side offered its partners from the Vladimir Region to implement joint cooperation projects in mechanical engineering, energy, construction of social facilities and apartment buildings. Specifically, they talked about the possible construction of the "Belarusian Quarter" in Vladimir, as well as "the possibility and readiness of Belarusian companies to meet the region's needs for elevator equipment for new buildings and reconstructed housing, increase supplies of construction products, materials, equipment and machinery, and participate in the construction and repair of regional roads, organization of supplies of road construction and utility equipment necessary for this." <sup>55</sup>In June 2019, a Belarusian proposal was made to expand the volume of mutual trade to include industrial cooperation in food production, as well as "to supply the

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53 Zalessky, B. Belarus - Russia: formula of integration. Chronicle of union construction. / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. -- C. 45.

54 Konyshchev, A. Belarusian goods are sold in a significant part of the regional trade facilities / A. Konyshchev // Priority areas of regional cooperation as a key factor of the Union construction: inform.-integration project / co-compiled, interviewed: K. Gusev, B. Zalessky. Gusev, B. Zalesskii. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. -- C. 118.

55 Pivovarov, E. Belarus is interested in joint projects in engineering and construction with the Vladimir region / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-sovmestnyh-s-vladimirskoj-oblastju-proektah-v-mashinostroenii-i-stroitelstve-304088-2018>

region with modern domestic electric transport" <sup>56</sup>. In the construction sector, Belarusian design and manufacturing organizations could participate in housing construction programs implemented in the region, based on the principle of integrated development with the construction of social facilities, construction and repair of public roads, supply of necessary road construction and utility equipment.

The two sides had a detailed conversation on ways to expand cooperation in October 2020, when a representative Belarusian delegation visited Vladimir. A number of joint projects in terms of cooperation between industrial enterprises of the republic and the region were outlined then. "These are Kovrov Electromechanical Plant and Minsk Motor Plant regarding the production of loaders using the internal combustion engine that will be manufactured in Belarus. At the moment the samples are being tested" <sup>57</sup>. In addition, other business entities from both sides suggested interesting projects. Among them are the Betal company from Vladimir, which manufactures water tanks, as well as Minsk Tractor Works, Mogilevliftmash, and Novy Resource from Kovrov.

In December 2020, at the Vladimirskiy Investment Congress, a new action plan was approved to implement the cooperation agreement for 2021-2023 "to expand direct ties between business entities of both sides,"<sup>58</sup> aiming to increase commodity turnover between Belarus and Vladimir region. It is believed that the agreement will reflect the theme of further development and expansion of the movement of twinning between the cities and regions of the parties, which has already had its considerable

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56 Valagin, A. Belarus proposed to build up the Vladimir region / A. Valagin // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://rg.ru/2019/06/06/reg-cfo/belarus-predlozhila-zastroit-vladimirskuiu-oblast.html>

57 Vladimir Oblast / Belarus - expanding cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://export33.ru/news/vladimirskaya-oblast-belarus-rasshiraem-sotrudnichestvo/>

58 Belarus and the Vladimir Region approved the action plan to implement the cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vladimirskaja-oblast-utverdili-plan-meroprijatij-po-realizatsii-soglashenija-o-420545-2020>

history. The town twinning agreement between Vladimir and Bobruisk was signed back in 1998. For the passed time "they have developed mutually beneficial partnership relations in economy and business, science, culture, education, sports ..<sup>59</sup>". Since 2006 Kovrov and Brest have been twinned. And in 2016 an agreement on cooperation in trade and economic, scientific and technical, humanitarian and cultural spheres was signed between the Vladimir Region Administration and the Gomel Regional Executive Committee. All these facts show that the parties have a good foundation for further movement forward in terms of implementation of the set objectives to increase mutual trade turnover.

Another Russian region to focus on in this context is the Novosibirsk Region. In June 2021, the fifth meeting of the Business Cooperation Council of the Republic of Belarus and the Novosibirsk Region was held, at which the results of the implementation of the Program of measures to develop cooperation between the parties for 2019-2021 were reviewed. It should be recalled that the Agreement on trade and economic, scientific and technical and cultural cooperation was signed by the government of the republic and the administration of the region back in 1998. In 2020, the trade turnover between the parties exceeded 150 million dollars. This allowed the Novosibirsk region to become the third in terms of bilateral trade with Belarus among the subjects of the Siberian Federal District after the Krasnoyarsk and Altai territories. The wide range of trade and economic interaction between the sides is evidenced by the Belarusian supplies to this Russian region, the main part of which are tractors and truck tractors, trucks, spare parts for cars and tractors, trailers and semi-trailers, ferrous metal structures, aluminum bars and profiles, furniture, TV sets, monitors and projectors, meat, cheese and cottage cheese, sugar, fresh

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59 Vladimir region takes part in the forum of Russian and Belarusian regions [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.zsvo.ru/press/view/3058/>

and canned fruits and vegetables, hosiery, footwear. It is also important that today there are more than 40 companies registered in Novosibirsk Oblast with participation of Belarusian legal entities and individuals. In general, the region cooperates with the Belarusian side not only under the aforementioned agreement of 1998, but also within a number of other agreements - with Mogilev, Grodno and Brest regions, which gives a concrete impact in industry, agriculture and transport. In particular, cooperation of the sides in the transport sector has been recently intensified. For instance, in 2020 Novosibirsk purchased from its Belarusian partners "15 gas-engine buses of large class; this year [2021] plans to purchase 50 more city buses, 20 trolleybuses with large autonomous running, and 10 low-floor trams. A fundamental decision has also been made to purchase a large batch of 150 buses under leasing programs<sup>60</sup>.

But, perhaps, even more promising looks the intention of the parties to develop cooperation in science, technology, innovation, and education. It is an interesting fact: during more than 20 years of the cooperation agreement between Belarusian and Novosibirsk universities there have been signed 28 direct agreements on the development of partnerships, within which scientific projects are implemented, experience is exchanged and joint activities are carried out. Another 11 contracts and agreements were signed during the fifth session of the Business Cooperation Council. Thus, "the development of a joint program between the Department of Digital Economy of the Belarusian State Economic University and the Faculty of Information Technology of Novosibirsk State University seems promising. The Science and Technology Park BNTU "Polytechnik" is ready for further cooperation with the Novosibirsk colleagues in the

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60 The Novosibirsk Region and the Republic of Belarus are increasing the pace and scope of cooperation [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.nso.ru/news/47415>

implementation of the Belarusian-Russian project for the production of medical products for cardiac surgery<sup>61</sup>. The Belarusian party suggested continuing the practice of exchanging undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students and inviting leading scholars within the framework of the Visiting Professor program. A number of Belarusian universities are included in the implementation of the project "University 3.0" - the trinity of science, education and technological innovations, the platform for the implementation of which are technoparks, interbranch laboratories, technology transfer centers.

The Novosibirsk State Technical University (NSTU) should be mentioned among the active participants of the Belarusian-Russian cooperation in education, which develops partnerships with Belarusian universities based on the Agreement on cooperation in science, technology, culture, sports, student and academic mobility NSTU for 2016-2021, which was signed with the Belarusian State University, for 2017-2022 - with the Belarusian-Russian University, agreements on cooperation for 2018-2023 - with the Brest State University and the Belarusian-Russian University. Another promising project in this regard is the International Russian-Belarusian Center for Interregional Cooperation in Education, Science, and Culture, founded by Novosibirsk State Technical University, the Belarusian-Russian University, the Novosibirsk Center of Belarusian Culture, and the social and cultural public association "Heritage". "Among the main objectives of the center are the establishment and development of effective partnerships between scientific, educational, social, cultural, youth and sports organizations of the Mogilev and Novosibirsk regions; organization of participation in international scientific, educational, sports,

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61 Belarus and Russia are interested in strengthening direct contacts between educational institutions - Karpenko [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-rossija-zainteresovany-ukrepljat-prjamye-kontakty-mezhdu-uchrezhdenijami-obrazovanija-446424-2021/>

cultural events held at the founders of the center, the familiarization of Belarusian and Russian citizens with the history, culture, traditions, achievements in economy, science, culture and sports<sup>62</sup>. In 2020 with its help an interethnic cultural online dialogue "Russia and Belarus - 2020" was organized, which became an important educational and cultural platform, aimed at supporting and strengthening the Union State. The Business Cooperation Council set the task to intensify the work of the center to promote the ideas of the Union State, patriotic education, and involvement of young people in the development of civic initiatives aimed at supporting and strengthening the statehood.

All these facts show that the reserves of interaction between the two countries' regions are truly enormous. And there are good reasons to believe that they will definitely be used in the very near future.

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<sup>62</sup> Belarus and the Novosibirsk Region are interested in developing cooperation in education [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-novosibirskaja-oblast-zainteresovany-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-obrazovanija-446260-2021/>

## **Belarus-Hungary: trade turnover demonstrates sustainability, and the business community is interested in partnership**

In April 2021, at the initiative of the Hungarian business community, a Hungarian-Belarusian business forum was held online, which was attended by more than 80 companies from both countries. This happened in the context of maintaining very active trade relations between Budapest and Minsk. Suffice it to say that "the trade turnover between Belarus and Hungary during the pandemic has generally demonstrated resistance to external shocks. In 2020, it reached the mark of \$245.5 million, with Belarusian exports amounting to \$121.8 million"<sup>63</sup>. Railroad cars, potash and mineral fertilizers, plywood, parts and accessories for cars and tractors, and furniture made up the bulk of supplies from Belarus to the Hungarian market. Furthermore, 412 Belarusian tractors worth over seven million dollars were exported to Hungary via Poland in 2020. All of these facts show that there is serious potential both to further increase the volume and expand the range of mutual trade, and to attract mutual investments.

Proceeding from the understanding of the existing prospects in the bilateral trade and economic cooperation, the participants of the business forum came to a conclusion about the need to establish a joint Belarusian-Hungarian business council on the basis of the chambers of commerce of the two countries. It has been decided to formalize its structure at the next session of the intergovernmental trade and economic commission scheduled for the second half of 2021. The sides connect not only hopes for

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<sup>63</sup> Belarus and Hungary will establish a joint business council [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vengrija-sozhdadut-sovmestnyj-delovoj-sovet-439230-2021/>

new business contacts, revival of the export-import and investment component of the bilateral cooperation with the appearance of such a council. "This platform could become a discussion platform where problematic issues are discussed, new ideas and recommendations for the governments of the two countries on the development of bilateral trade are elaborated<sup>64</sup>.

It should be noted that trade and economic engagement is traditionally one of the main priorities for the development of partnership between Belarus and Hungary. For example, at the 10th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Hungarian Commission for Economic Cooperation, which was held in May 2020, the two countries discussed, above all, pressing issues of trade cooperation, as well as the status of partnership relations in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, energy, transport, science, education, and tourism. A month later, in June 2020, economic engagement was the focus of the visit of Hungarian Prime Minister V. Orban to Belarus. Orban's goal for the next two to three years was to increase trade between the two countries to EUR 500 million. This can happen at the expense of implementation of various projects "that include both attraction and use of Belarusian technologies in Hungary in such spheres as mechanical engineering, construction and also Hungarian technologies in Belarus - in agriculture and pharmaceutics"<sup>65</sup>. In this regard, cooperation in the field of electric transport can be particularly effective, because "taking into account Hungary's plans to switch to green

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64 Ponomarev, A. Viktor Orban's visit - a new stage of Belarusian-Hungarian cooperation / A. Ponomarev // [Electronic resource]. - -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/vizit-viktora-orbana-novyj-etap-belorussko-vengerskogo-sotrudnichestva-7346/>

65 Roman Golovchenko: Belarus is ready to share experience with Hungary in developing electric transport [Electronic resource]. - -- 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9444>



technologies, cooperation in the production of buses and electric buses is especially promising.<sup>66</sup>."

Another promising area of economic partnership between the two countries, which can focus the attention of the business council to be formed, is the electricity sector. It is worth reminding that in June 2020, the Ministry of Energy of Belarus and the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office signed a memorandum on cooperation, which secured the mutual interest of the parties in cooperation in the nuclear power sector in order to develop contacts between business entities whose activities are related to the construction of nuclear power facilities and infrastructure. "Besides, exchange of experience in operating nuclear power plants, storage and disposal of radioactive waste is planned. The memorandum provides for different forms of cooperation, including the establishment of joint ventures for participation in investment projects in the field of electric power"<sup>67</sup>. This interest in cooperation is explained by the fact that Hungary, like Belarus, "has decided to cooperate with Russia on the development of nuclear energy, a model identical to the Belarusian power units to be used for the expansion of the Paks NPP. This opens up additional opportunities for finding common ground<sup>68</sup>.

It should also be recalled that back in January 2019, Belarus and Hungary signed a number of important documents outlining promising areas for the development of bilateral relations. Two of them are the intergovernmental Belarusian-Hungarian agreement on the promotion and

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66\_Negotiations with Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://president.gov.by/ru/media/details/peregovory-s-premer-ministrom-vengrii-viktorom-orbanom-1591375023>

67\_Belarus and Hungary signed a memorandum on cooperation in the electricity sector [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vengrija-podpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-v-oblasti-elektroenergetiki-393689-2020/>

68 Hajnowski, A. Belarusian-Hungarian cooperation is pragmatic and effective / A. Hajnowski // [Electronic resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/interview/view/belorusko-vengerskoe-sotrudnichestvo-javljaetsja-pragmaticnym-i-effektivnym-6383/>

mutual protection of investments, as well as the memorandum of the foreign ministries of the two countries on the promotion of interregional cooperation. Minsk and Budapest see special importance in the agreement on mutual protection of investments, because "it is of paramount importance for investors of any country. <...> it is an excellent impetus for the implementation of investment projects"<sup>69</sup>. The document, which has been in the making for almost a decade, sends an important signal to the business communities in the two countries to step up cooperation. Especially since "Hungary and Belarus are already developing cooperation in many areas, there are joint projects in mechanical engineering, pharmaceuticals, construction, and the financial sector"<sup>70</sup>. In particular, in 2017, a joint venture with Belarusian partners appeared in Hungary in the construction sector. The company, established with the participation of Belstroycenter, participates in construction projects here, as well as supplies Belarusian construction materials here. And a pharmaceutical company "Gedeon Richter" has been operating in Belarus for many years. All in all, "eight companies with Hungarian capital operate here"<sup>71</sup>.

Nevertheless, according to the parties, "joint new investment projects and deep industrial cooperation with the prospect of access not only to the national markets, but also to the large markets of the European Union for Belarus and the Eurasian Economic Union for Hungary are necessary"<sup>72</sup>.

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69 The agreement on mutual protection of investments between Belarus and Hungary gives impetus to the implementation of projects - Sijjarto [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/soglashenie-o-vzaimnoj-zaschite-investitsij-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-vengriju-daet-impuls-dlja-realizatsii-333401-2019/>

70 Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary Péter Szijjártó [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/vstrecha-s-ministrom-inostrannyx-del-i-vneshnej-torgovli-vengrii-peterom-sijjarto-20273/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-ministrom-inostrannyx-del-i-vneshnej-torgovli-vengrii-peterom-sijjarto-20273/)

71 Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary Péter Szijjártó [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8529>

72 Transcript of the approach to the press by Belarusian Foreign Minister V. Makiej following his talks with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary (14 January 2019) [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: [http://mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/c74a125b79ae2a47.html](http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c74a125b79ae2a47.html)

And such plans should get their real outlines in the foreseeable future. In particular, it was expected that as early as 2019, "the first Belarusian-Hungarian agricultural enterprise, where Hungarian corn processing technologies will be used, will be established in the Mogilev region" <sup>73</sup>. And in the same year, the two countries planned to open a joint line for the production of double-deck cars for railway trains. "A total of 19 double-decker trains are to be manufactured. This will be the first time in the history of Hungarian railways. They will be used on the most popular routes" <sup>74</sup>.

It should be assumed that the future business council will not ignore the issues of intensifying interregional cooperation, the potential of which the parties have yet to really master. Thus, the free economic zone (FEZ) Grodnoinvest, the administration of which was among the participants of the April Hungarian-Belarusian business forum, is ready to become one of the active participants in this partnership. The interest of Grodno residents is based on the existing foundation of cooperation with partners from this European country. In particular, "the trade turnover of the residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest with Hungary in 2020 amounted to USD 2.1 million, including USD 575 million of exports. The trade turnover of the residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" amounted to USD 2.1 mln, including USD 575 thousand of exports. EXPORTS AMOUNTED TO USD 575,000. The basis of exports is woodchip boards, furniture and plastic products" <sup>75</sup>.

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73 Grishkevich, A. The first Belarusian-Hungarian agricultural enterprise will be created in Mogilev region / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervoe-belorussko-vengerskoe-selhozpredpriyatie-sozhdut-v-mogilevskoj-oblasti-332570-2019/>

74 Belarus and Hungary will produce double-deck cars for trains [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vengrija-budut-proizvodit-dvuhetazhnye-vagony-dlja-poezdov-332532-2019/>

75 Administration of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" took part in the Hungarian-Belarusian Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/administraciya-sez-grodnoinvest-prinyala-uchastie-v-rabote-vengersko-belorusskogo-biznes-foruma/>

The memorandum on the promotion of interregional cooperation should also play an important role in this context, which gives the parties an opportunity to expand cooperation between regions not only between the two capitals - Minsk and Budapest, but also on the scale of their countries. It should be recalled that the cooperation agreement between the Minsk City Executive Committee and Budapest Municipality was signed in 2016. The Belarusian capital was then seriously interested in the experience of Hungarian partners in the use of large sports facilities, public transport management, waste recycling, water purification. In April 2018, Budapest hosted Days of Minsk, which once again showed what serious partnership potential the two sides can still use in practice. Suffice it to say that Minsk enterprises in 2017 sold "over \$26 million worth of goods on the Hungarian market, increasing exports by 37.2% compared to 2016" <sup>76</sup>. At the same time, in April 2018, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Partizan district of Minsk and the district of Csepel Budapest, which opened up new opportunities, primarily for economic interaction. After all, both districts are industrial, so businesses located in their territory will be able to cooperate mutually beneficially. And they are already doing it. For example, "The Kozlov plant is working with Siemens. <...> The search for points of contact continues"<sup>77</sup>. In June 2020, representatives of the Gomel Region and one of the leading Hungarian regions in terms of economic indicators, Győr-Ménfőcsanak-Sopron, also discussed opportunities for establishing interregional partnerships. Above all, they talked about the implementation of the "memorandum of understanding on cooperation in

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76 Parukova, E. Days of Minsk in Budapest: what connects the two capitals and how their cooperation will develop / E. Parukova // [Electronic resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <https://minsknews.by/dni-minska-v-budapeshte-cto-svyazyivaet-dve-stolitsyi-i-kak-budet-razvivatsya-ih-sotrudnichestvo/>

77 Leaders of Partyzanski District of Minsk and Csepel District of Budapest signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <http://part.gov.by/3744-rukovoditeli-partyzanskogo-rajona-minska-i-rajona-chepelel-budapeshta-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve>

the field of poultry breeding" signed in 2020. <sup>78</sup>The discussion was primarily about the implementation of the "Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of poultry breeding" signed in 2020.

In May 2020, as noted above, the 10th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Hungarian Commission for Economic Cooperation - the leading bilateral platform where positions converge and solutions are developed on a wide range of topical issues on the economic and humanitarian agenda - took place. For the first time in the practice of the bilateral relations, this event was held in the format of a videoconference for obvious reasons; however, it did not lose its relevance in terms of the prospects of Belarusian-Hungarian cooperation, which development can be divided into several main trends.

One of the growth drivers back in 2020 was agriculture, as evidenced by the following facts. According to the results of 2019, the turnover of agricultural products and food products between Belarus and Hungary increased by almost 15 percent and exceeded 17 million dollars. An important detail: "The export of Belarusian agricultural products during this period increased by more than three times. Among the main export items are seeds and fruits of various oil-bearing crops, and shellfish" <sup>79</sup>. In the first quarter of 2020, a similar picture was observed: the turnover of agricultural products and foodstuffs increased by almost ten percent and Belarusian export by twenty percent. At the same time, the two countries continued to actively step up efforts to implement new joint projects in this area. In March 2020, during the visit of Hungarian Minister of Foreign

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78\_Grishkevich, A. Gomel region establishes relations with the Hungarian region / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-nalazhivaet-svjazi-s-vengerskim-regionom-396832-2020/>

79 Markovich, E. Belarus in 2019 increased the export of agricultural products to Hungary by more than three times / E. Markovich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-2019-godu-uvelichila-eksport-produktsii-apk-v-vengriju-bolse-chem-v-tri-raza-393476-2020/>

Affairs and Foreign Economic Relations P. Szijjártó to Belarus, the parties "identified the main areas for further cooperation in food supplies, investments, and poultry"<sup>80</sup>.

In June 2020, the 1st Minsk poultry farm and the Hungarian company Babolna Tetra signed a framework cooperation agreement worth about three and a half million euros. The three-year document envisages breeding of poultry and production of pedigree young laying hens. Due to this project, the Belarusian side "will be practically exempt from importing laying hens' breeding flocks from 2020, and from 2023 will be able to fully provide the domestic market with its own egg breed"<sup>81</sup>.

Belarus is also interested in commodity supplies from Hungary in those areas of the agricultural sector, which are very well developed in this country - corn, cattle and poultry. Specifically, the talk is about a joint project with Hungarian partners to breed geese in Gomel region "to help restore regions affected by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster"<sup>82</sup>. At least during the talks that took place on this subject in June 2020, the issues of financing this project, as well as where this production will be organized and who from the Belarusian side will take part in it, have already been discussed. In addition, in June 2020, Belarus and Hungary "agreed to develop an agreement on cooperation in the training of personnel for the agricultural sector, to establish cooperation between

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80\_Belarus and Hungary plan to expand cooperation in the agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vengrija-planirujut-rasshirjat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-apk-381906-2020/>

81 Markovich, E. Belarus and Hungary will cooperate in poultry farming / E. Markovich // [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vengrija-budut-sotrudnichat-v-sfere-ptitsevodstva-393454-2020/>

82\_Markovich, E. Belarus is interested in implementing a joint project with Hungary on goose breeding / E. Markovich // [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-realizatsii-sovmestnogo-s-vengrijej-proekta-po-vyraschivaniju-gusej-393464-2020/>

agricultural universities, and to establish a working group for cooperation in agriculture<sup>83</sup>.

Other promising areas of cooperation include medicine. Thus, back in July 2020, the Belarusian JLLC Nativita and the Hungarian company Pharma Gap Kft signed in Budapest an agreement of intent to cooperate in order to accelerate the registration and distribution "in the territory of Hungary and other countries of vital medicines produced in Belarus. The list of the medicines includes the medicines for the treatment of oncological diseases as well as cytokine storm in COVID-19 infections"<sup>84</sup>. And in December 2020, the parties discussed cooperation in the pharmaceutical field and topical approaches for medication treatment of complications caused by coronavirus infection, cancer and other serious diseases, and reached an agreement on "terms and conditions for access of Belarusian medicines to the Hungarian market"<sup>85</sup>. The agreements reached between the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade of Belarus and the Hungarian Competition Authority in 2020 should also play a positive role in the development of trade and economic relations between the two countries. Specifically, the parties agreed on "the final version of the memorandum on cooperation in the field of competition policy"<sup>86</sup>.

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83 Belarus and Hungary will develop an agreement on cooperation in training personnel for the agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vengrija-razrabotajut-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-podgotovke-kadrov-dlja-apk-398804-2020/>.

84 Grishkevich, A. Belarusian drugs go to the pharmaceutical market of Hungary / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-lekarstva-vyhodjat-na-farmatsevticheskij-rynok-vengrii-399319-2020/>

85 Belarus and Hungary discussed cooperation in the pharmaceutical industry [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-vengrija-obsudili-sotrudnichestvo-v-farmatsevticheskoi-otrasli-420817-2020/>

86 MART and the Hungarian Competition Authority plan to sign a memorandum of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mart-i-vengerskoe-konkurentnoe-vedomstvo-planirujut-podpisat-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-400521-2020/>

It only remains to add to the above mentioned that the contractual and legal framework of Belarusian-Hungarian bilateral cooperation today "includes about 20 international agreements, the subjects of regulation of which are the issues of trade, economic, scientific and cultural cooperation; cooperation on legal and tax issues, in the sphere of agriculture, sports, tourism, education, defense, motor traffic"<sup>87</sup>. This creates a solid foundation for the successful operation of the emerging joint business council, the appearance of which, as noted above, is planned for the second half of 2021.

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<sup>87</sup> Bilateral relations [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: [https://hungary.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/HUN/pol/](https://hungary.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/HUN/pol/)



## **Belarus-Kazakhstan: plans for the future - in the road map**

In May 2021, the 16th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Kazakhstani Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation was held, at which the parties adopted a road map or a program of measures for 2021-2022. A kind of tuning fork of the meeting were the results of the interaction between the two countries in the first quarter of 2021. "The trade turnover amounted to \$215 million and increased by 12% compared to the corresponding period in 2020"<sup>88</sup>. At the same time, the surplus for the Belarusian side amounted to \$133.5 million. Among the main activities of the adopted roadmap is the development of Belarusian-Kazakh cooperation in industrial cooperation and supplies of machinery, agriculture and construction, as well as in the interaction between the regions of the two countries.

Another important event in Belarus-Kazakhstan engagement took place in late June 2021, when a government delegation of Belarus led by Prime Minister R. Golovchenko visited Kazakhstan, during which the two sides made serious progress in the development of bilateral **trade and economic relations**. The visit took place against the backdrop of very positive dynamics in the mutual trade between the two countries. Suffice it to say that "in 2020 the trade turnover between Belarus and Kazakhstan amounted to \$847.9 million. The main Belarusian export items were tractors, combines, beef, milk, cream, sugar, cheese, cottage cheese,

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<sup>88</sup> Industrial Cooperation and Days of Culture - Belarus and Kazakhstan held a meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkooperatsija-i-dni-kultury-belarus-i-kazahstan-proveli-zasedanie-mezhpravkomissii-443204-2021/>

furniture and medicines<sup>89</sup>. These figures are also an evidence of many things. Today 54 companies with Kazakhstani capital, including 13 joint ventures and 36 foreign ones, are operating on the Belarusian soil. And 366 companies with Belarusian capital operate in Kazakhstan. In addition, there are enterprises with Belarusian technologies operating in different areas of the country. And now the parties are focused on increasing the localization of machinery produced there - the same tractors and cars, so that in 2021 "to reach new figures in mutual trade - for goods and services totaling more than \$1 billion a year<sup>90</sup>.

The contracts signed between the economic entities of the two countries at the end of June 2021 should facilitate the achievement of this goal. In particular, Minsk Tractor Plant will supply 590 units of machinery worth ten million dollars to Kazakhstan. "Another contract was signed between MAZ and Hyundai Trans Auto LLP for the supply of MAZ trailers for \$1.3 million. Also BELAZ and ASTANABELAZSERVICE LLP signed a contract for the supply of BELAZ machinery for \$1.2 million<sup>91</sup>. Bobruiskagromash is also on the list of Belarusian exporters. For the last five years it has been working closely in Kazakhstan's market, where it assembles trailers, balers and mowers. In 2020, it has increased its export of agricultural machinery to that country by one and a half times. In 2021, the results promise to be no worse. At least that is what the signed contract for the supply of one million dollars worth of products with the entities of Bobruiskagromash's distribution network in Kazakhstan promises. Gomselmash OJSC and AgromashHolding KZ JSC - the only

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89\_Ruslan Golovchenko visited major enterprises of Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/roman-golovchenko-posetil-krupnye-predpriyatija-kazahstana-447818-2021/>

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

91\_Belarus is increasing deliveries of equipment to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-naraschivaet-postavki-tehniki-v-kazahstan-447970-2021/>

industrial enterprise in this country that produces grain harvesters, tractors and additional products in a wide range and is the exclusive distributor of Gomel's products in Kazakhstan - also signed an agreement to develop cooperation in 2021-2022.

But perhaps more than others in terms of the development of **industrial cooperation** with Kazakhstani partners is the Minsk tractor plant, which already has three assembly plants here, has its own trading house and plans to develop in this Central Asian country one more assembly plant - with investments of 50 million dollars - based on the enterprise "Composite Group Kazakhstan" in Kostanai. Now the assembly line here is calculated on release of 1200 tractors "Belarus". But plans on development of a platform, creation of new workplaces, increase in quantity of the carried out technological operations directed on growth of localization of manufacture are already generated. In particular, "in the first stage, a shop for production of cabins will be constructed together with our Kazakh partners. The next stage is the construction of another 25 thousand square meter building for the assembly of engines and radiators of all types. It is also planned to produce a new product - diesel pumps"<sup>92</sup>. It is quite possible that the enterprise will become an important element of the Belarusian industrial center being created in the industrial area of Kostanay. "It will be a multidisciplinary structure that will combine not only production capacity, but also scientific and technical activities and training of specialists"<sup>93</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that such a center could become the core of innovative development.

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

93\_Golovchenko: the foundation of Belarus-Kazakhstan cooperation is trade and economic relations [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-fundament-belorussko-kazahstanskogo-sotrudnichestva-torgovo-ekonomicheskie-otnoshenija-447956-2021/>

Among other areas of Belarus-Kazakhstan cooperation that should receive accelerated development in the near future is **agriculture**. For Belarusian agrarians, the market of this Central Asian country is important because it ranks second after Russia in terms of food supplies from Belarus. By the end of 2021, the Belarusian side plans to "reach 120% of our exports to Kazakhstan as compared to the previous year: in 2020 it was over \$300 million<sup>94</sup>.

In this regard, it is important to recall the results of 2020, which showed that even in the face of restrictions related to the spread of coronavirus infection, the agro-industrial complex of both countries continued to show growth trends in 2020. In particular, data from the Eurasian Economic Commission show that "agricultural production in the territory of member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2020 grew by 2.3% and amounted to 114.3 billion US dollars. The highest production growth among the EAEU countries was recorded in Kazakhstan (by 5.6%) and Belarus (by 4.9%)."<sup>95</sup>

Positive trends in the growth of interaction between the two countries in the agro-industrial complex were also recorded at the second meeting of the joint Belarusian-Kazakh working group on the development of promising areas for bilateral cooperation in agriculture, which was held in February 2021 in Minsk. The meeting focused on the issues of trade in foodstuffs, crop and livestock production, veterinary medicine, breeding and selection, given the fact that "in 2020, trade turnover of agricultural products and food between Belarus and Kazakhstan increased by 1.2 times against 2019 and reached \$ 307.2 million. Export was amounted to \$ 289.9

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

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

million (more than 20% growth)<sup>96</sup>. In this regard, the parties noted the serious potential for further stable growth of trade turnover and consolidation of positive trends in mutual trade.

On the Belarusian side, these prospects are seen in the supply of equipment for the construction of dairy farms, introduction of new technologies, expansion of procurement of agricultural equipment, retraining of personnel for the agro-industrial complex. The Kazakh side is particularly interested in the Belarusian experience in developing the dairy and sugar industries, as well as other areas of agricultural production. The nature of this interest lies in the fact that "the coronavirus has shown how much demand there is for all agricultural products now. New niches are opening up" <sup>97</sup>.

In particular, the parties are pinning great hopes in 2021 on the continuation of cooperation between Belarus's Gomselmash and Kazakhstan's largest manufacturer of agricultural machinery, AgromashHolding KZ, which increased its output by 1.7 times in 2020. The joint assembly of grain harvesters by these enterprises on Kazakh soil began back in 2007. "In 2019, the organization produced 429 harvesters and tractors, and in 2020 - 730 units of equipment".<sup>98</sup> This includes the first ESSIL KZS-790 combine harvester, which has already been tested in the Karaganda region and has shown good results. The new machine has increased engine power and cleaning area, and the threshing is combined:

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

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

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

drum and rotor. In 2021 it is scheduled to start serial production of this model. In addition, the production of self-propelled mowers will also increase, which is explained by the growing demand for them among farmers of Kazakhstan. Let us also recall that back in the summer of 2020 more than 70 machine sets of the model KZS-10 MAX were sent from Gomel to Kazakhstan. "The innovations introduced on this model of combine harvester, relating mainly to more comfortable work of machine operators, were liked by the agrarians of Kazakhstan. This prompted them to order another 30 such harvesters" <sup>99</sup>. And in the second half of December 2020, this additional batch of 30 sets of machines was shipped to our Kazakhstani partners.

Among the events that should positively affect the development of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan in agriculture in 2021, let us mention a few more. First, an interesting result can be achieved with the idea discussed at the meeting of the Belarus-Kazakhstan Business Council in November 2020, which was attended by representatives of over 160 enterprises of the two countries. Given the fact that one of the most important issues in the development of relations between the two former Soviet republics is exhibitions, "Belarus and Kazakhstan are considering the possibility of holding an agricultural exhibition Belagro in Kazakhstan" <sup>100</sup>. This could be another concrete step towards enhancing bilateral cooperation and increasing mutual trade turnover. Second, back in November 2020, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) offered Kazakhstani companies to buy Belarusian meat and dairy products and sugar on the exchange trades. At the same time, BUTB could provide

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

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

assistance to Kazakh companies in selling their products on the Belarusian market. Following up on this proposal, in January 2021, the FTUB agreed to intensify cooperation in electronic trade with the Astana Universal Commodity Exchange, which "will make it possible to create a unified database with commercial offers of Belarusian and Kazakh companies and will facilitate the growth of mutual trade"<sup>101</sup>.

Another important area of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan, which should receive intensive development in the very near future, is **the construction sector**, as the parties are seriously interested in this interaction. This is explained by the fact that "today Belarus and Kazakhstan have multifunctional construction complexes, which continuously carry out their activities, increasing the pace every year"<sup>102</sup>. Among the priorities of cooperation in this area the parties see such areas of cooperation as construction of industrial enterprises, construction of housing and dairy complexes, production and supply of building materials, as well as establishment of a trading house of Belarusian building materials in Kazakhstan and expansion of supplies of sanitary faience, thermal insulation and roofing materials, floor coverings to this Central Asian country.

If we are talking about industrial construction, then already at the 16th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission it was noted that "an important step in cooperation will be the construction of the JSC "MTW" in Kazakhstan to produce cabins for tractors and front axles"<sup>103</sup>. Let's add that

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101 BUTB and Kazakhstan's Astana Exchange intend to develop cooperation in the field of electronic commerce [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kazahstanskaja-birzha-astana-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-elektronnoj-torgovli-425206-2021>

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

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

the work on the specified production facilities in the Kazakh city of Kostanai has already begun. "About 7 million dollars of investments will be directed on realization of the project. And in total it is planned to invest about 50 million dollars in development of productions"<sup>104</sup>.

In addition, today the parties are working on an issue of creation and construction of a joint venture for production of ceramic tiles in Kazakhstan. This project will be realized in reality, if there will be enough raw materials for production of this production in the bowels of this country. That's why "now the geological, environmental services of Kazakhstan are studying the amount of available resources"<sup>105</sup>.

Another interesting construction project that is being elaborated by the parties concerns the construction of the "Belarusian quarter" in Nur-Sultan. On its example the Belarusian side could demonstrate its ability to design and build residential complexes. The peculiarity of this project lies in the fact that it does not exclude "the possibility of completing the constructed housing with Belarusian furniture and household appliances, as some construction companies in Kazakhstan have such a practice of selling completely finished housing"<sup>106</sup>.

In this regard, the next project discussed by the parties looks logical to open a trading house in Kazakhstan, which will include such Belarusian enterprises of the construction industry as Keramin, Berezastroyaterialy, and Belarusian Glass Company. The Belarusian Ministry of Architecture and Construction may be joined later by Bellesbumprom Concern. The fact is that during the first four months of 2021 alone its enterprises increased

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

105 Joint factory of ceramic tiles and "Belorusskiy Kvartal" can appear in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sovместnyj-zavod-keramicheskoy-plitki-i-belorusskiy-kvartal-mogut-pojavitsja-v-kazahstane-452553-2021/>

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



exports of their products to the Kazakh market by almost 30 percent - up to more than seven million dollars. "First of all, it is furniture: it is delivered for more than \$2 million. Belarusian upholstered furniture and cabinet furniture made of solid wood are especially popular in Kazakhstan. This country also exports chipboard, plywood, wooden windows and doors, wallpaper, paper, cardboard and sawn wood.<sup>107</sup>..". There are good reasons to believe that sales of Belarus woodworking products will keep growing on Kazakhstan's market. Using the potential of the specialized trading house can only open new additional sales opportunities in this regard.

Finally, with regard to the construction of agricultural facilities, the Kazakh side is particularly interested in this issue. At the end of June 2021 it was even agreed to meet with partners from Kazakhstan in Belarus, where "we will show them our capabilities to build fairly large farms for 2,400 heads"<sup>108</sup>. If this Belarusian experience finds a positive response from the Kazakh side, then in the future we can talk about the implementation of a similar turnkey project of the Belarusian farm in Kazakhstan with its further expansion throughout the country. The term "turnkey" in this case includes design, construction by Belarusian companies, supply of equipment and pedigree livestock.

An important place in the development of Belarus-Kazakhstan partnership links is also occupied by **interregional cooperation**. Suffice it to say that there are about 30 cooperation agreements between the regions of Belarus and Kazakhstan. In particular, the Executive Committees of Minsk, Brest, Gomel, Vitebsk and Mogilev Regions and the Akimat of Karaganda Region have signed the relevant documents. Gomel and Vitebsk

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

108 Belarus plans to double exports of construction materials to Kazakhstan - Parkhamovich [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-udvoit-eksport-strojmateriakov-v-kazahstan-parhamovich-447920-2021/>

Regions have an agreement on cooperation with North Kazakhstan Region, Brest Region - with East Kazakhstan Region. Grodno region interacts with Aktobe, Kostanay and Mangistau regions, Gomel region - with Almaty and Atyrau regions. These partnerships between the two countries' regions are complemented by documents on cooperation between such cities as Minsk and Nur-Sultan, Brest and Semey, Bobruisk and Ust-Kamenogorsk, Mogilev and Shymkent. But due to the fact that "in 2020 the development of regional cooperation was to some extent hampered by quarantine restrictions related to the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus infection". In <sup>109</sup>2021, the objective is not only to intensify the existing partnerships, but also to work on the establishment of new ones.

In particular, Gomel Region demonstrates serious intentions in this regard, offering its Kazakhstani partners to expand cooperation, including through joint ventures, small businesses, transport infrastructure and tourism. In 2020, the region's foreign trade with Kazakhstan exceeded \$115 million. "The growth rate of trade turnover in January - April [2021] reached 161% compared to last year's four months." <sup>110</sup>The main suppliers are Gomselmash and the meat and dairy company. The same Gomselmash in June 2021 signed an agreement on cooperation development for 2021-2022 with Kazakhstan's Agromashholding JSC. The crux of the matter is that "the Kazakh side has requested 570 units [harvesters] for this year - \$60 million. Over the next three years we have set a goal to produce up to 1000 units of combines annually<sup>111</sup>. The parties are also discussing other areas of cooperation. In particular, there are prospects for mutually

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109 On Interregional Cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the Republic of Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: [https://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/trade\\_economic/region/](https://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/region/)

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

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

beneficial partnerships in the chemical and glass industries. Also noteworthy is a proposal by the head of Kazakhstan's diplomatic mission to Belarus, A. Beisenbayev, who spoke in Gomel, about the need to hold a forum of the regions of the two countries.

Brest Region, which exceeds \$130 million in foreign trade turnover with Kazakhstan in 2020, intends to actively develop cooperation with the Kazakhstani side. Now there are nine enterprises with Kazakhstan's capital registered in the Brest region. But there is certainly room and potential for further cooperation. Today we are talking about "supplies of products with added value, primarily in such sectors as woodworking and food industry"<sup>112</sup>.

A real breakthrough in the development of cooperation between the regions of the two countries could be the appearance of the Belarusian Industrial Center in the Kostanai Region, which was agreed by the parties in June 2021. "It will be a multidisciplinary structure that will combine not only production facilities, but also scientific and technical activities and training of specialists"<sup>113</sup>. This center will be located in the industrial zone "Kostanai", which was opened in 2017 and is an industrial area of 400 hectares, provided with communications, where enterprises of mechanical engineering, food and light industry, production of construction materials and structures, agricultural equipment are already located. It is interesting that the first "swallow" of this zone was a "factory for the production of tractors of "Belarus" brand of the company-holding "Composite Group Kazakhstan". It was opened in 2018, and now it is successfully

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

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

developing"<sup>114</sup>. So the foundation for the appearance of the Belarusian industrial center is already here.

As we can see, Belarus and Kazakhstan have great prospects for cooperation in various areas, and a good groundwork has already been laid for long-term cooperation between industrial, agro-industrial and construction complexes, as well as at the level of regions of the two countries. Let us hope that all of these plans discussed above will be successfully implemented.

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

## **Belarus - Uzbekistan:**

### **Commission outlines priorities for cooperation**

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

It is recalled that diplomatic relations between the two former Soviet republics were established in January 1993. In 2020, the Belarus-Uzbekistan trade turnover grew by another 17 percent and exceeded 280 million dollars with the share of supplies from Belarus - more than 237 million dollars. "The main items of Belarusian exports last [2020] were trucks, tractors and truck tractors, meat and meat products, sugar and dairy products, medicines, vaccines and blood serums"<sup>115</sup>. Noting these positive trends, the parties at the meeting of the intergovernmental commission nevertheless focused their attention on those issues, the solution of which would help bring bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level. One of the urgent priorities is to expand the legal framework of Belarusian-Uzbek interaction that totaled more than 70 agreements by March 2021. The eighth meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission contributed to its further expansion.

In particular, the agreement on cooperation, which defines the main areas of cooperation for the next five years, was signed in Tashkent by the National Metrology Institutes of Belarus and Uzbekistan. The document deals with the close partnership of the parties in the development and

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<sup>115</sup> Belarus aims to further develop bilateral relations with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9736>

implementation of programs to create national and working standards. "Another direction is participation in the development of interstate documents on the uniformity of measurements to solve the problems of harmonization of national legislation and work out unified principles in this area"<sup>116</sup>. In addition, the State Committee for Standardization of Belarus and the Agency Uzstandart have adopted a program of cooperation for 2021-2023 that envisages comparisons of state standards, calibration of measurement standards and working instruments, as well as participation of laboratories in proficiency testing programs. All this, together with the planned establishment of a permanent group, should help to resolve issues related to technical barriers to trade between the two countries. Another important prospective aspect of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in this area is that the Eurasian Economic Union currently has a draft agreement on the procedure and conditions for removing technical barriers in mutual trade with third countries in a high degree of readiness. In this regard, the Belarusian Gosstandart "is working on the possibility and makes a proactive proposal that the first pilot project on this agreement after its entry into force will be implemented with Uzbekistan"<sup>117</sup>.

Ten more documents on cooperation were signed in early March 2021 by higher education institutions of the two countries. They added to the already very extensive legal base of interaction between educational institutions and scientific organizations, which already had about two hundred direct agreements. Thanks to them, joint departments and educational programs, including dual degrees, are successfully operating today. A joint Belarus-Uzbekistan interindustry institute of applied

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<sup>116</sup> Institutes of Metrology of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/instituty-metrologii-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-431178-2021/>

<sup>117</sup> Gosstandart of Belarus and Uzstandart Agency signed a cooperation program for 2021-2023 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gosstandart-belarusi-i-agentstvo-uzstandart-podpisali-programmu-sotrudnichestva-na-2021-2023-gody-431298-2021/>

technical qualifications was opened in Tashkent. The establishment of an Uzbek-Belarusian university of materials science is under elaboration. The following figures are quite eloquent: "In the academic year 2020-2021, educational institutions of Belarus will admit about 2,000 Uzbek students. The export of educational services to Uzbekistan last year [2020] amounted to \$1.7 million, up almost 14% compared to the previous year<sup>118</sup>. We have to assume that the emergence of another ten documents on cooperation between the universities of the two countries will only contribute to further expansion of the Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the educational sphere.

It should be noted that a number of national universities show considerable interest in the development of cooperation with Uzbek partners. These include the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, the Belarusian National Technical University, the Belarusian State Technological University, the P.M. Masharov State University of Vitebsk, the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, and the Francysk Skaryna State University of Gomel. The Belarusian State University (BSU) is also engaged in the implementation of major plans to expand its presence in the Uzbek education market and plans to seriously expand the range of joint educational programs here.

In particular, the agreement signed in April 2021 on cultural and scientific cooperation between BSU and the Mirzo Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan, the first and leading institution of higher education in Central Asia, offers great opportunities in this regard. Established in 1918, it currently comprises 12 faculties: Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Social Sciences, History, Geology and Geoinformation Systems, Geography and Natural Resources, Foreign Philology, Journalism and Taekwondo. Until recently, the

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<sup>118</sup> Universities of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed 10 documents on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/vuzy-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-10-dokumentov-o-sotrudnichestve-431140-2021>

cooperation between the two universities has consisted in joint training of Uzbek students in biomedicine and medical ecology at the Sakharov International State Ecological Institute of BSU. The document signed in April covers not only cooperation in student and teacher exchange, preparation of theses, dissertations and publications, joint scientific research and events, exchange of literature, periodicals, but also expands the subject area of inter-university relations in new directions, including "the parties have identified an increase of joint educational programs in humanitarian and natural sciences, organization of joint summer schools, interaction between<sup>119</sup> universities of the two countries". In addition, the Uzbek side was interested in the BSU experience in organizing a system of continuous legal education, which is implemented through the law college and faculty, as well as the Institute for retraining and advanced training of judges, prosecutors, judges and institutions of justice. It is also quite possible that Belarusian scientists with relevant experience will participate in the development of a satellite for the Uzbek university.

The topic of expanding the range of educational programs is also relevant in the interaction of BSU with the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, the joint training of Uzbek students with which the specialty "Oriental (Chinese) Philology" is conducted since 2019. New areas under discussion include the use of BSU's experience in training specialists for the IT-industry, as well as the development of interdisciplinary specialties. In particular, in April 2021, "an initiative to jointly train students in computational linguistics" was supported <sup>120</sup>and the implementation of youth start-up projects.

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119\_BSU and the National University of Uzbekistan reach a new level of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-natsionalnyj-universitet-uzbekistana-vyhodjat-na-novyj-uroven-sotrudnichestva-436206-2021/>.

120\_BSU plans to expand joint educational programs with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-planiruet-rasshirit-s-uzbekistanom-sovmestnye-obrazovatelnye-programmy-435893-2021/>



The road map signed in April 2021 between the Belarusian State University and the Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature named after Alisher Navoi will result in opening an Uzbek language and literature classroom in Minsk in December 2021 that will be aimed at "strengthening educational and cultural relations between the two countries, creating conditions for the study of language, history and ethnic peculiarities of Uzbekistan"<sup>121</sup>.

An agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian State University and the Tashkent State Law University has been in place since 2020. This year this interaction will be expanded through the joint training of Uzbek students at the College of Law of the Belarusian university with the prospect of subsequent enrollment at the Faculty of Law of BSU, as well as the opening of joint programs with the Faculty of International Relations of BSU. Here it should be noted that the Uzbek partners are very "interested in the BSU experience of participation in international rankings, according to which the Belarusian university is close to the top 1% of universities in the world"<sup>122</sup>. In April 2021 the parties agreed to create a working group to efficiently elaborate documents on the implementation of the proposed initiatives, as well as to organize in September a joint educational programme for the training of legal personnel. Finally, in cooperation with the University of Journalism and Mass Communications of Uzbekistan, the sides are now discussing the possibility for Uzbek teachers to take internships at the BSU, to study there under advanced training programs and to invite employees of the Belarusian university to deliver lectures in Tashkent.

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121. The Cabinet of Uzbek Language and Culture will open at BSU [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/kabinet-uzbekskogo-jazyka-i-kultury-otkrojut-v-bgu-435914-2021/>

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

Another important result of the work of the intergovernmental commission was the first meeting of the Belarusian-Uzbek Business Council, which brought together over 170 representatives of business circles of the two countries, who were able to discuss "specific cooperation projects in agriculture, mechanical engineering, logistics, food industry, chemical and pharmaceutical production, science and education and information technologies"<sup>123</sup>. The implementation potential of these projects is quite eloquently demonstrated by the example of Minsk Motor Plant, whose representatives brought over four million dollars worth of contracts to the Uzbek capital. This is largely due to the fact that "MMZ's commodity distribution network in Tashkent is represented by BURAN-SAVDO, SIGMA, INDUSTRIAL MARKETING, FUTURE GENERATION MARKETING. In 2019-2020 MMZ sold more than 1 thousand engines to the primary and secondary markets of Uzbekistan"<sup>124</sup>.

A logical continuation of the first meeting of the business council was the participation of 23 Belarusian enterprises in the international exhibition INNOPROM in April 2021. Great Industrial Week in Uzbekistan, where exporters from Belarus presented products of mechanical engineering, metallurgy, chemical industry, pharmaceutical industry, medical equipment, as well as scientific developments and consumer goods. One of the concrete results of the participation of Belarusian manufacturers in the exhibition event was the signature of an agreement of intent by the subsidiary of the Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan - MAZ-Tashkent LLC "to supply chassis and mechanical components for assembling

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123. More than 170 representatives of businesses from Belarus and Uzbekistan took part in a business council meeting [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bole-170-predstavitelej-biznesa-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-prinjali-uchastie-v-zasedanii-delovogo-soveta-431374-2021>

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

machines in the Uzbek market for \$10 million. The company also concluded an agreement with a private Uzbek company to supply 50 MAZ machines for a total of \$3 million<sup>125</sup>. So, there are good prospects for the development of economic relations between the two countries.

It should be recalled that the roadmap for cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan, adopted in November 2018, is the basic document for trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, which contains 158 measures. Already by May 2020, more than a third of them turned out to have been completed. This had an immediate impact on the state of Belarusian-Uzbek partnership ties: "According to the results of 2019, the volume of trade turnover between the countries reached \$239 million and increased 1.5 times by 2018" <sup>126</sup>. This means that the parties intend to achieve the goal, which the heads of the two states outlined in the same 2018 - to increase the volume of bilateral trade turnover to one billion dollars as quickly as possible. "The goal is expected to be achieved in three to four years, actualizing all possible areas of interaction," <sup>127</sup>One of the most promising areas is agriculture.

The fact is that the main trend in the development of the agro-industrial complex of Uzbekistan today is the formation of a cluster production system. In other words, clusters should unite producers of agricultural raw materials and its processors into industrial enterprises. The Belarusian experience in this regard is viewed by Uzbek partners as very positive, so they demonstrate their high interest in establishing direct

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

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

127 Zaleskii, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. A view from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - - C. 223.

business contacts and partnerships with Belarusian producers and processors, the effectiveness of which is evidenced by the figures.

In 2019, agricultural products and foodstuffs worth 35 million dollars were supplied to the Uzbek market from Belarus, which more than doubled the level of 2018. The positive dynamics of mutual trade in this area continued next year, despite restrictions caused by the spread of the coronavirus. "Belarusian food exports more than doubled in 2020 and reached \$73 million. Supplies of Belarusian beef to Uzbekistan more than doubled, sugar - 3.5 times, milk powder - twice, fish and fish products - 1.5 times" <sup>128</sup>.

At the same time, cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan is certainly not limited to the mutual supply of food products, but also includes a wide range of interaction, including in the development of joint scientific approaches and modern technologies. In particular, "promising areas of cooperation in the agricultural sector include participation of the Belarusian side in the construction of dairy complexes, organization of milk processing, establishment of joint ventures to produce veterinary drugs, cooperation in breeding, organization of training and retraining of Uzbek specialists on the basis of Belarusian agricultural educational institutions" <sup>129</sup>.

The first Belarus-Uzbekistan Agrarian Forum held in 2020, which was attended by more than 700 people, demonstrated this diversity of effective partnerships. The business part of Belarusian delegation alone included about 150 representatives of exporters of agricultural and food products, scientific and educational institutions of Uzbekistan. In particular, an active participant of the forum was Gomselmash OJSC, which signed an agreement with the Tashkent plant of agricultural machinery in autumn

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

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

2019. "The document provides for the creation of assembly production of combines in the capital of Uzbekistan" <sup>130</sup>. The Uzbek side was represented by delegations from all regions of the country, as well as from the relevant ministries and organizations of the agro-industrial complex. As a result, "Belarusian exporters have signed over 30 agreements and contracts with their Uzbek partners"<sup>131</sup>. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan adopted the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation.

Simultaneously with the agrarian forum, an exhibition was organized in Tashkent, where only the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus presented more than 60 innovative developments and technologies for agriculture in Uzbekistan. Among the novelties of the Belarusian scientists from the Scientific and Practical Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on food, vegetable marmalade aroused great interest. "The line included marmalade of sweet corn, red carrot, ripe pumpkin, juicy tomato and spicy celery. The marmalade contains prebiotics and no artificial colors" <sup>132</sup>. The Institute of Soil Science and Agrochemistry demonstrated a range of complex mineral fertilizers with a balanced ratio of nutrition elements for cultivated crops. The S.N.Vyshelessky Institute of Experimental Veterinary Medicine demonstrated vaccines for prophylaxis and treatment of viral and bacterial diseases of farm animals. Scientists from the Centre of Identification Systems and Electronic Business

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

131. More than 30 agreements and contracts were signed based on the results of the Belarusian-Uzbek agrarian forum [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bole-30-soglashenij-i-kontraktov-podpisano-po-itogam-belorusko-uzbekskogo-agrarnogo-foruma-381350-2020/>

132 The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus presented more than 60 innovative developments for agriculture in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nan-belarusi-predstavila-v-uzbekistane-bole-60-innovatsionnyh-razrabotok-dlja-selskogo-hozjajstva-381057-2020/>

Operations have proposed technologies for digital identification and traceability of animals and animal products. Scientific and Practical Centre for Potato Growing interested the exhibition visitors in new potato varieties - Manifest, Uladar, Palac - resistant to a range of diseases. As we can see, even this brief list of novelties presented in Tashkent clearly shows what tempting prospects are opening up in the development of Belarusian-Uzbek agricultural partnerships in the near future.

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## **Belarus - Asia:**

### **prospects for effective cooperation**

In June 2021, a Belarusian-Asian forum was held, which was attended by representatives of embassies of those Asian states in Russia and Belarus that do not have their diplomatic missions in Minsk and where there are no Belarusian foreign missions. Specifically, the participants included heads of diplomatic missions and other diplomats from Indonesia, Yemen, Cambodia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand, Afghanistan, Laos, and the Philippines. The attention of the Belarusian side to the Asian region is quite understandable. After all, "there are no political problems on the bilateral agenda here and the approaches to major international issues are quite similar. This creates a good basis for the development of trade and economic cooperation as the main area for bilateral engagement."<sup>133</sup>

Suffice it to say that in 2020, the volume of Belarusian exports to the countries of this continent was about two billion dollars. And this, of course, is not the limit. "It is obvious that the Asian market still remains underdeveloped by Belarusian exporters in terms of the promotion there of many types of their products, including those manufactured by mechanical engineering, electronic and petrochemical industries."<sup>134</sup> The experience of this engagement in recent years shows that there are still many opportunities to promote Belarusian trade and economic interests in the Asian direction. In order to use them successfully, it is necessary to continue systematic and consistent work, developing mutual interest and

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133 Cooperation with the countries of the Asian region has been and remains one of the priorities of Belarus's foreign policy - Barysieich [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/sotrudnichestvo-so-stranami-aziatskogo-regiona-bylo-i-ostaetsja-odnim-iz-prioritetov-vneshnej-politiki-445159-2021/>

134 Zalesky, B. Belarus - Asia: partnership vector. Chronicle of mutually beneficial cooperation / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. - - C. 5.

initiating new forms of contacts, as it is actually happening in the development of partnership ties with a number of Asian countries.

In particular, the Republic of Belarus has already reached a strategic partnership with the **People's Republic of China**. In the language of figures, it looks as follows. In 2020, the volume of Belarusian-Chinese trade will show a significant increase of more than 10 percent. Even higher dynamics of development of this partnership is characteristic for 2021. "From January to April this year, the total volume of imports and exports of goods between the countries amounted to \$1.25 billion, an increase of 58 percent compared to the same period last year. China became the second largest trade partner of Belarus" <sup>135</sup>.

A number of projects that have already been successfully implemented and are still being implemented by the Belarusian side can be seen in some other Asian countries. For example, in early June 2021, Minsk Tractor Works and the Indian company Erisha Agritech Private Limited signed a cooperation agreement, which determined that "the Indian partner will purchase at least 200 BELARUS tractors by the end of 2021. Moreover, the parties intend to organize the localization and assembly of tractors under the joint brand DARSH BELARUS in **India**". <sup>136</sup>to supply them to other countries of the continent - Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Another interesting Asian country in this context is **Mongolia**. In June 2021, it became known that the Belarusian Development Bank will finance export deliveries of Belarus tractors and agricultural machinery produced at Minsk Tractor Works OJSC for four and a half million euros - to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia. And

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135\_Political interaction between Belarus and China is continuously strengthening - Xie Xiaoyun [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/politicheskoe-vzaimodoverie-belarusi-i-kitaja-nepreryvno-ukrepljaetsja-se-sjaojun-446045-2021/>

136\_MTZ signed an agreement on the supply and assembly of tractors in India [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-podpisal-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-s-indijskoj-kompaniej-444577-2021/>



this will be the third individual credit line under the general Belarusian-Mongolian intergovernmental export credit agreement concluded in April 2019, aimed at expanding the geography of Belarusian export supplies and strengthening foreign economic and trade relations between specific enterprises. It should be reminded that under this agreement, the Development Bank has already "financed the supplies of fire-fighting vehicles manufactured by Pozhsnab to the National Emergency Management Agency of Mongolia, as well as machinery manufactured by MAZ, the managing company of Belavtomaz Holding, to the Road and Transportation Development Center at the Ministry of Roads and Transportation Development of Mongolia<sup>137</sup>. These facts testify to the fact that Belarusian industrial enterprises today consider the Asian region as one of the key ones for increasing their export supplies. And they see great potential there, "because its member countries are showing very good economic growth. <sup>138</sup>which makes Belarusian products in demand at that market. And such exporters as BelAZ, BMZ, MAZ, MTZ, Amkodor and Integral have good opportunities for expanding supplies here.

Today, the Asian region looks even more promising for Belarusian food export, which has grown 13(!) times over the last five years. In 2020, it amounted to USD 356 million. During the four months of 2021 Belarus exported USD 167 million worth of foodstuffs to 37 Asian countries, "which is 60% more than last year. A wide range of dairy and meat products, sugar, flax fiber, rapeseed oil..."<sup>139</sup>. It is obvious that both the

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137. The Development Bank will provide an export loan to supply Belarusian agricultural machinery to Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bank-razvitija-predostavit-eksportnyj-kredit-na-postavku-belorusskoj-selhoztehniki-v-mongoliju-445880-2021/>.

138 Pivovarov, E. The Ministry of Industry of Belarus considers the Asian region as one of the key ones for product deliveries / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-belarusi-rassmatrivaet-aziatskij-region-kak-odin-iz-kljuchevyh-dlja-postavok-produktsii-445212-2021/>

139 Pivovarov, E. Supplies of Belarusian food products to the Asian countries for 5 years have grown 13 times / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL:

geography and the range of these supplies will only expand, as evidenced by the interest of the participants of the Belarusian-Asian Forum in the proposals of Belarusian manufacturers voiced in their presentations at the event. In addition, the engagement of the Belarusian side with a number of other Asian countries - Iran, Pakistan, South Korea, and Oman - became much more active in 2021.

As for **Iran**, in April 2021, it became known that the Belarusian Homiel Region intended to resume and develop cooperation with the Iranian province of Mazandaran, the document on trade, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation with which was signed back in 2009, but the plans therein were never implemented. Back then, when signing the memorandum on cooperation, the parties noted good prospects in organizing exports of agricultural products, metal and agricultural machinery from the Belarusian region. And Iranian exporters planned to establish permanent supplies of citrus and other southern fruits to the Homiel market. "In addition, there are large deposits of solid fuels in Mazandaran province, which could be exploited by economic entities of the Gomel region."<sup>140</sup>

Among the projects that the Belarusian region and the Iranian province intend to return to now are "production of copper rod in Rechitsa district, development of the chalk deposit in Vetka district, and mining of rocks in Lelchitsa district"<sup>141</sup>. Besides, the Belarusian side made proposals to supply machine tools, timber, cardboard, cellulose, confectionary

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<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/postavki-belorusskogo-prodovolstvija-v-strany-azii-za-5-let-vyrosli-v-13-raz-445207-2021/>

140. Sidorchik, V. Gomel region and the Iranian Mazandaran province will sign a memorandum on cooperation / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - - 2009. - URL: <http://cenadm.gov.by/ru/region/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-iranskaja-provintsija-mazandaran-podpishut-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-1957/>

141. Gomel Region and Iranian Mazandaran Province to resume trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-iranskaja-provintsija-mazandaran-vozobnovjat-torgovo-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-439208-2021/>

products, as well as gas-powered combine harvesters to the Iranian market. Noting the great potential in the interaction between the two regions, the Iranian side suggested such areas of partnership as oil extraction, chemical industry and manufacturing. Concrete steps to implement all these proposals will be discussed at a webinar to be held in the near future.

The mere fact that the partnership ties between the Gomel region and Mazandaran province have become more active shows that Belarus and Iran, having survived the period of the coronavirus pandemic, are starting to bring bilateral mutually beneficial cooperation back to the growth trajectory. As a reminder, the 14th meeting of the Joint Belarusian-Iranian Commission on Economic Cooperation was held in January 2018, which resulted in the signing of the Roadmap for the Development of Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Iran for 2018-2020. It talked about the development of bilateral cooperation "in various fields of politics, investment, trade, industry, transport, agriculture, healthcare, education, science, technology and energy" <sup>142</sup>It also contained the intention to increase the trade turnover between Belarus and Iran to \$500 million. However, U.S. sanctions, which blocked bilateral engagement between Minsk and Tehran in a number of important areas, became a serious obstacle to the development of economic cooperation between Belarus and Iran. However, "despite the restrictions, the trade turnover between Belarus and Iran amounted to \$24.7 million in 2020<sup>143</sup>. Tires, wood products, newsprint, and bearings made up the bulk of Belarusian export to the Iranian market.

Currently, the two sides are preparing for the 15th meeting of the joint commission, where they intend to develop a roadmap for trade and

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142\_Belarus and Iran have developed a cooperation roadmap for 2018-2020 [Electronic resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-iran-razrabotali-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-na-2018-2020-gody-285761-2018/>

143 Trade and economic relations [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: [https://iran.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/economic/](https://iran.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/economic/)

economic cooperation in order to give an additional impetus to the relationship. The high interest of the parties in such partnership development can be judged by the composition of the participants in the Belarusian-Iranian business forum, which was held in Minsk in July 2019 under the auspices of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture. At that time, Iranian companies interested to cooperate "in the areas of banking, medical and pharmaceutical products, gas equipment, parts and equipment for refrigerators, agricultural machinery, construction materials and construction equipment, petrochemical and oil refining industry, production and supply of food and spices, textile industry (supply of Persian carpets)" took part <sup>144</sup>in negotiations with the Belarusian business circles .

Cooperation between the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) and the Iranian Commodity Exchange (ITB) may also become one of the promising areas for economic cooperation between the two countries. The two sides agreed to actualize their partnership back in October 2019, because "the use of the exchange mechanism will reduce commercial risks and simplify the search for business partners for Belarusian and Iranian business entities"<sup>145</sup>. Moreover, Iranian businessmen are interested in using the BUTB platform to promote products of ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, textiles, nuts and dried fruits to Belarus. Belarusian companies are interested in the exchange platform for the export of lumber, wood slabs, and petrochemical products to Iran.

Another promising resource for the expansion of Belarusian-Iranian trade and economic cooperation is the Interim Agreement leading to the

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144 Belarusian-Iranian business forum to be held on July 24 in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusko-iranskij-biznes-forum-projdet-24-ijulja-v-minske-355013-2019/>

145 BUTB and Iran Commodity Exchange intend to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-iranskaja-tovarnaja-birzha-namereny-aktivizirovat-sotrudnichestvo-364553-2019/>

establishment of a free trade zone between the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and Iran, which entered into force in October 2019. This document established a list of goods for which exporters of EAEU countries, including Belarus, received preferences in the Iranian market. It "includes meat and fat-and-oil products, certain types of confectionery and chocolate, electronic and mechanical equipment, as well as metals and cosmetics"<sup>146</sup>. So, the parties have great opportunities to solve the tasks set for invigorating trade and economic relations. It is necessary to use them.

**The Islamic Republic of Pakistan** is one of the states in South Asia, in relations with which the Republic of Belarus has created the necessary legal and infrastructure framework over the past five years in order to strengthen and develop bilateral engagement aimed at the full-scale implementation of the existing potential of partnership relations. It should be recalled that in 2015, the Islamabad Declaration of Belarus-Pakistan Cooperation was adopted at the highest level, "in which the parties consolidated the basic principles of the political dialogue"<sup>147</sup>. The Roadmap of Bilateral Cooperation for 2015-2020 was signed at the same time to make a gradual transition from simple trade to more advanced forms of cooperative interaction. Joint efforts to create a contractual and legal framework for Belarusian-Pakistani cooperation resulted in the fact that by early 2021, "the parties had signed 77 memorandums of understanding and agreements. At the moment, many agreements are under development"<sup>148</sup>. For example, an amended intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the field of industrial, scientific and technical cooperation.

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146 Zalesky, B. Potential of multi-vectorism. Chronicle of international cooperation / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2020. - - C. 7.

147 Zalesky, B. Belarus - Asia: partnership vector. Chronicle of mutually beneficial cooperation / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. - - C. 86.

148 Sajjad, H.H. How the pandemic affected the relations of Belarus and Pakistan / H.H. Sajjad // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/kak-pandemija-povlijala-na-otnoshenija-belarusi-i-pakistana-7589/>

In 2015, Minsk and Islamabad established the basic institutional mechanism for bilateral trade and economic relations - the joint Belarus-Pakistan commission for trade and economic cooperation, having organized five meetings to date. Within the framework of the Joint Commission, working groups in various fields, such as industry and agriculture, focus their attention on specific issues of bilateral cooperation. And in December 2020, the first meeting of the Belarusian-Pakistani working group for cooperation in healthcare and pharmaceuticals "identified possible areas for mutual cooperation in the export of medical and educational services"<sup>149</sup> and outlined the prospects of further cooperation.

As for partnerships between the business communities of the two countries, they are structured within the framework of the activities of the Joint Belarusian-Pakistani Business Council, the first three meetings of which were held in August 2015, in March 2016 and 2017. In April 2021, the parties held the fourth meeting of this council, which was attended by representatives of more than a hundred Belarusian and Pakistani companies. They discussed not only the development of bilateral trade, but also opportunities to step up investment cooperation, industrial cooperation, and establishment of joint companies and productions, noting industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, as well as education, information technology, and logistics among the priority areas for cooperation. In addition, the sides considered "the possibility of doing business by Pakistani enterprises in the framework of the Industrial Park "Great Stone", the main directions of the new policy of automotive development in Pakistan and the existing in connection with it the preferences for foreign companies, the prospects for urban electric transport in Pakistan, as well as

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149\_International cooperation. Meeting of the Joint Belarus-Pakistan Working Group on Cooperation in Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://belmapo.by/mezhdunarodnaya-sotrudnichestvo.-zasedanie-sovmestnoj-belorussko-pakistanskoj-rabochej-gruppyi-po-sotrudnichestvu-v-sfere-zdravooxraneniya-i-farmacevtiki.html>

the main directions of Chambers of Commerce and Industry to promote business contacts"<sup>150</sup>.

The potential for the expansion of Belarusian-Pakistani relations is evidenced by the figures. "In 2020, the trade turnover between the countries amounted to \$52.2 million, which is 4% more than in 2019 <sup>151</sup>. At the same time, the surplus for the Belarusian side exceeded \$20 million. This was facilitated by supplies from Belarus to Pakistan of such export items as "tractors and spare parts, trucks, potash fertilizers, synthetic thread harnesses and synthetic fibers, tires, machine tools, polycarboxylic acids (phthalic anhydride), newsprint, baby food (dry blends)" <sup>152</sup>.

In 2021, the Belarusian side plans to only increase its export to the Pakistani market, using a variety of tools to promote products from Belarus to Pakistan. One of them is participation in international exhibitions organized in that South Asian country. Specifically, "in October [2021], Belarusian companies are planning to take part in the industrial exhibition in Karachi. <sup>153</sup>It should be noted that a year and a half ago, in September 2019, the national exposition of Belarus was organized at the largest exhibition event of the South Asian region - the International Engineering & Machinery Asia Exhibition (IEMA) in Lahore, Pakistan, where "such leading Belarusian companies as BelAZ, MAZ, MTZ, Mogilev Metallurgical Plant, and organizations of the Belneftekhim concern

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150 Online Meeting of the Belarus-Pakistan Business Council [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <http://grotpp.by/onlayn-zasedanie-belorussko-pakista-2/>.

151\_Belarus is interested in developing mutually beneficial cooperation with Pakistan - Karankevich [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-razvitii-vzaimovygodnogo-sotrudnichestva-s-pakistanom-karankevich-436781-2021/>

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

153\_Ulakhovich: there are many opportunities to strengthen cooperation between Belarus and Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ulakhovich-dlja-ukreplenija-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-pakistanom-est-mnogo-vozmozhnostej-429292-2021/>

(Belshina, Naftan, Polatsk-Steklovolokno) presented their products<sup>154</sup>. The numerous visitors of this business forum were also able to get acquainted with the best Belarusian higher educational institutions and advanced scientific developments of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. The Belarusian State University alone demonstrated in Lahore "over 20 scientific and technological developments in the field of instrumentation, new materials, metal optics, and tribophatics," and signed a protocol on cooperation in this field. The Belarusian State University alone demonstrated in Lahore "20 scientific and technical developments in the field of instrument engineering, new materials, metal optics and tribophatics, and <sup>155</sup>signed a protocol on intentions to develop academic, scientific and technological cooperation with the Ali Power company from Islamabad. It was not a bad experience of participation.

Speaking about the development of cooperation with **South Korea**, it should be recalled that in July 2021, the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Korea International Trade Association established a business cooperation council, putting into practice the agreements reached in December 2020, when the parties signed a cooperation agreement. Participants of this new platform for discussing business issues and strengthening economic, investment and scientific and technical cooperation are expected to include Belarusian and Korean companies that have successful cooperation experience and "contribute to the expansion of bilateral business and economic relations, as well as enterprises interested in implementing joint projects in the most promising

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154\_National exposition of Belarus opened at the IEMA exhibition in Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-otkrylas-na-vystavke-iema-v-pakistane-363543-2019/>

155 Results of BSU participation in the International Engineering & Machinery Asia Exhibition (IEMA) (Lahore, Islamic Republic of Pakistan) [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://research.bsu.by/2019/10/08/bsu-results-in-the-international-exhibition-international-engineering-machinery-asia-exhibition-iema/>



areas<sup>156</sup>. Judging by the composition of the inaugural session of the Belarus-Korea Business Cooperation Council, these include the Belarusian High Tech Park, the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone, and over twenty more leading companies in electronics, machine tools, automotive industry, pharmaceuticals, and information technologies.

As a reminder, the year 2022 will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Today, Minsk and Seoul seek to take concrete steps to step up bilateral cooperation, as well as to "fill up cooperation within the framework of the 'New Northern Policy,'" which is understood as a set of measures to intensify economic cooperation between the Republic of Korea and Eurasian integration associations.<sup>157</sup> This policy is understood as a set of measures to step up economic cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the states and integration associations of the Eurasian region, including the Eurasian Economic Union. According to this policy, Korea divides the North into three major regions: east - Siberia and the Far East, Mongolia, three northeastern provinces of China; central - five Central Asian countries; west - western part of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. It is the western region that Seoul considers to be the most industrially developed and receptive to innovation. For this reason, they consider it "a kind of center of innovative industry in the northern direction of economic cooperation, including the creation of new composite materials and development of information technology"<sup>158</sup>.

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156\_Belarus and the Republic of Korea set up a business cooperation council [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-respublika-koreja-sozdali-sovet-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-449731-2021/>

157\_Belarus and the Republic of Korea discuss practical steps to enhance cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-respublika-koreja-obsudili-prakticheskie-shagi-po-aktivizatsii-sotrudnichestva-436200-2021/>

158 Pak, C.H. Programmatic approach / C.H. Pak // [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: [https://export.by/programme\\_approach](https://export.by/programme_approach)

The Belarusian side is also generally interested in relations with its Korean partners, primarily in the expansion of industrial cooperation and establishment of joint production facilities in a variety of areas. Not only in the machine tool industry, automotive industry, production of automotive components, electronics, and household appliances, but also in the production of tires, medical equipment, and agricultural machinery, as well as "in the financing and implementation of infrastructure projects in innovation, information and communication technologies, industry, and science and technology"<sup>159</sup>. In this regard, one of the topical areas of interaction with Korean partners is as follows.

Since 2019, the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus has been implementing a series of international cooperation projects regarding the creation of infrastructure for support and development of smart industry in our country. First, a set of works was carried out to assess the readiness of the digital transformation of the national economy, including its real sector. The project resulted in recommendations, which provide for the development of a strategy aimed at cooperation of large manufacturing companies with small and medium-sized enterprises. New tools of state support for digital transformation of organizations of the real sector of the economy were also introduced. So, this work was carried out with the support of the knowledge exchange programme with the Republic of Korea. More specifically, "from 2020, this programme will provide advisory support for the implementation of a pilot project for the digital transformation of a machine-building enterprise. It is planned that the obtained results and recommendations will be used to organize digital

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159\_Belarus is interested in expanding investment cooperation with the Republic of Korea [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-investitsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-s-respublikoj-koreja-436524-2021/>

transformation of machine building enterprises throughout our country"<sup>160</sup> . The seriousness of this interaction with the Korean partners is also proved by the fact that in March 2021, Minsk hosted the national seminar-meeting "Studying the Experience of the Republic of Korea in Digital Transformation of the Industrial Sector of Economy (Mechanical Engineering)," which was attended by over 160 representatives of state bodies and organizations, the business community of Belarus, free economic zones, science and technology parks, scientific and educational sphere. Importantly, with the assistance of experts from the Republic of Korea, they considered the specific experience of the backbone Korean manufacturing companies - LG and Hyundai - in deploying the process of digital transformation in the mechanical engineering sector of industry. After that, the Belarusian Ministry of Economy expressed confidence that "the results of the discussion of the Korean experience will become a solid basis for the deployment of projects in the field of digital development of organizations of the country's industrial complex and involvement of the SME sector engaged in the manufacturing sector in this process"<sup>161</sup> . It should be assumed that the Belarusian-Korean Business Cooperation Council will now make its contribution to solving all these issues. After all, it has a very broad field of activity.

**Oman** is another Asian state with which the engagement intensified in 2021. In August 2021, the Belarus-Oman Business Forum was held online. The attention of the Belarusian side to the intensification of business engagement with this Middle Eastern country can be explained by

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160. The experimental and demonstration center in Brest Technopark is planned to be put into operation in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/opytno-demonstratsionnyj-tsentr-v-brestskom-tehnoparke-planiruetsja-vvesti-v-ekspluatatsiju-v-2022-godu-448204-2021/>

161. The Republic of Korea presented its experience in digital transformation of machine building in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/respublika-koreja-predstavila-v-minske-svoj-opyt-tsifrovoj-transformatsii-mashinostroenija-432451-2021/>

several reasons. First, it exports oil, oil products, and gas. And it always considers buying food and engineering products from its foreign partners. Second, Oman is interesting to Belarus because of its geographic location. Its port infrastructure allows Belarus to seriously consider exports to the entire Arabian Peninsula region. All of this makes Oman one of Belarus's promising trade, economic and investment partners in the Middle East.

However, in 2020 the trade turnover between the countries amounted to only USD 1.15 million with the share of the Belarusian export amounting to USD 850 thousand, the basis of which was "potash fertilizers and foodstuffs"<sup>162</sup>. It is considerably inferior to the indices, which were observed in the Belarusian-Omani trade almost ten years ago. As a reminder, "the highest level of the trade turnover between Belarus and Oman was recorded in 2012 - \$12 million"<sup>163</sup>. That is why the task of returning the volumes of trade and economic cooperation to the growth trajectory was one of the main ones for the participants of the business seminar, during which they discussed both the current state and prospects of developing bilateral partnerships in the areas of industrial production, agriculture and food, the potential for investment cooperation and implementation of joint projects in the two countries, "as well as possibilities for holding a meeting of the Belarus-Oman Business Council"<sup>164</sup>.

The parties' attention to the business council's activities can be explained by the fact that it is one of the most actively used instruments to develop trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

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162 Cooperation in trade and economic sphere [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: [https://egypt.mfa.gov.by/ru/blr\\_oman/economical/](https://egypt.mfa.gov.by/ru/blr_oman/economical/)

163 Ogneva, Y. Koltovich: the visit of the business delegation from Oman will contribute to an increase in trade turnover / Y. Ogneva // [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/koltovich-vizit-biznes-delegatsii-iz-omana-posposobstvuet-uvelicheniju-tovarooborota-211012-2016/>

164 Belarus and Oman have significant potential for cooperation in various areas - Ulahovich [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/mezhdu-belarusju-i-omanom-est-znachitelnyj-potentsial-sotrudnichestva-v-razlichnyh-oblastjakh-ulahovich-455263-2021/>

Belarus and Oman signed the agreement on its establishment back in 2010; however, the first meeting of the Business Council was held only in August 2015 in Minsk. The Omani side saw its task in coming to the Belarusian capital at that time as determining the most promising areas for expanding trade and economic cooperation here. "If we talk about the investment of Oman in Belarus, the prospects are seen primarily in such areas as the heavy industry and the petrochemical complex<sup>165</sup>. A few months later, the Omani partners were interested in investing in the development of Belarusian agriculture, real estate and eco-tourism, and agreed with the Belarusian side to "jointly develop scientific and innovative projects, work out proposals and establish Belarusian assembly facilities in Oman<sup>166</sup>.

In September 2016, for the first time, a representative delegation of more than 40 major businessmen from Oman came to Minsk from Oman to participate in the second meeting of the Belarusian-Omani Business Council, whose scope of activities and interests included "investment, banking, construction, food and agriculture, industrial production, mining, insurance, financial consulting, transportation services, retail trade, hotel business and tourism<sup>167</sup>. One of the main topics of this forum was "investment in the production of agricultural products in Belarus in order to increase production volumes here and supply both to the markets of the Persian Gulf and the Eurasian Economic Union<sup>168</sup>. There was also talk

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165 Ogneva, Y. Oman will study the possibility of participation in the China-Belarus Industrial Park / Y. Ogneva // [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/oman-izuchit-vozmozhnosti-uchastija-v-kitajsko-belorusskom-industrialnom-parke-160157-2015/>

166 Omani business shows interest in investing in the agro-industrial complex of Belarus, real estate sector, ecological tourism [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/biznes-omana-projavljaet-interes-k-investirovaniju-v-apk-belarusi-sektor-nedvizhimosti-ekologicheskogo-166686-2015/>

167 More than 40 major businessmen from Oman will visit Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-40-krupnyh-biznesmenov-omana-posetjat-belarus-210359-2016/>

168 Omani businessmen plan to invest in the production of agricultural products in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/omanskije-biznesmeny-planirujut-investirovat-v-proizvodstvo-selhozproduktov-v-belarusi-210859-2016/>

about the possibility to establish a joint venture in Oman for sales, assembly production and after-sales service of Amkodor machinery.

In October 2017, Belarus for the first time took part in Oman's largest food and hospitality industry exhibition Food and Hospitality. The interest in it was fueled by the fact that food production remains a problem in that country, as in the entire Middle East. Up to half of Oman's imports come from consumer goods and food products. "Currently, Oman is particularly interested in supplying poultry, chicken eggs and dairy products: skimmed and whole milk powder, animal oil, milk whey powder and cheese"<sup>169</sup>. Finally, the third meeting of the Belarus-Oman Business Council was held in Minsk in April 2019. At it, the participants considered opportunities for bilateral business interaction and prospects of implementing investment projects "in the areas of logistics, oil and gas industry, development of security and safety systems, tourism, organization of exhibitions and fairs, business events."<sup>170</sup>..". In addition, the Omani delegation included "a company that is interested in the development of innovative technologies and the IT-sphere"<sup>171</sup>.

All this shows that the parties have considerable potential for the development of business cooperation, which today should be capitalized in specific projects. This will be discussed at the fourth meeting of the Business Council, which the parties plan to hold in 2021.

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169\_Belarusian products will be presented at the international exhibition in Oman [Electronic resource]. - – 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-produkty-budut-predstavleny-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-v-omane-266188-2017/>

170\_A meeting of the Belarus-Oman Business Cooperation Council will be held in Minsk on April 10 [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zasedanie-belorusko-omanskogo-soveta-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-projdet-v-minske-10-aprelja-342835-2019/>

171\_Lisatovich, T. Belarus is interested in the arrival of Omani business - Koltovich / T. Lisatovich // [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-prihode-v-stranu-biznesa-omana-koltovich-343395-2019/>

## **Belarus - China:**

### **To develop the existing cooperation 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 Joint Construction Project"<sup>172</sup> Meanwhile, the 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"<sup>173</sup>. 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"<sup>174</sup>.

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

173 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-razvitija-7479/>

174 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<sup>175</sup>.

The flagship project in this context is undoubtedly the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", which in its incomplete six years of existence has already invested 650 million dollars, where 68 residents from 14 countries have already registered with a declared investment of 1.2 billion dollars, of which about half have started 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<sup>176</sup>. 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 considering the possibility of opening a "pharmaceutical plant to produce a wide range of

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175. 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-otnoshenija-s-kitaem-428410-2021>

176 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/>



drugs, including to combat COVID-19" <sup>177</sup>in 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" <sup>178</sup>.

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"<sup>179</sup>.

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

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177\_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-farnzavoda-426540-2021/>

178\_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/>

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

government, and 110 tons from twin regions and partner companies" <sup>180</sup>. 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"<sup>181</sup>. 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 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"<sup>182</sup>.

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180 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-kr-okazalas-stressoustojchivoj-7641/>

181 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-predsedatelem-kitayskoy-narodnoy-respubliki-si-czinpinom>

182 Zalessky, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / B. Zaleskii. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - - C. 105.

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" <sup>183</sup>. 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" <sup>184</sup>.

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 culture"<sup>185</sup>. In addition, the fact that the Chinese province has a well developed industrial sector - electronics, mechanical engineering, and the Belarusian region - agriculture - contributed to the rapprochement of the regions. And this is "just one of the areas of mutually complementary cooperation that can be established in

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183 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/>

184 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/>

185 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](http://shanghai.mfa.gov.by/ru/o_generalnom_consulstv/news/b1e61ad9861a3f9c.html)

the trade and economic area<sup>186</sup>. 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, as well as implementation of more global and ambitious projects. These include "construction of a 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 goods<sup>187</sup>. 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.

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186\_ 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/>

187\_ 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/>

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 agreed to establish direct cooperation between the two countries.<sup>188</sup> They also agreed to establish direct contacts and twinning arrangements between the cities of the region and the province. And already three years later - 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<sup>189</sup>.

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

189\_ 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-uvelichili-eksport-tovarov-v-kitaj-pochti-v-35-raza-338253-2019/>

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<sup>190</sup>. 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, alcoholic beverages, carbon fibers, nonwoven carbon fiber, lumber and furniture" <sup>191</sup>. 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 pavilion<sup>192</sup>. Let us

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190 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-uvelichili-eksport-produktsii-v-kr-434841-2021/>

191 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-soglasenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-436511-2021/>

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

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 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"<sup>193</sup> 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.<sup>194</sup> 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 is evidenced by the fact of 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

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193\_\_Signed agreement of intent [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: [http://gomel.gov.by/ru/news/podpisano-soglasenie-o-namereniyakh/?NEWS\\_FILTER\\_TYPE=sotrudnichestvo](http://gomel.gov.by/ru/news/podpisano-soglasenie-o-namereniyakh/?NEWS_FILTER_TYPE=sotrudnichestvo)

194 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/>

Spartak were presented with separate presentations" <sup>195</sup>. 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.

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, and the experience of their implementation 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, with <sup>196</sup>consistent and steady development of which the partners move to the promotion of mutual investment, expansion of industrial cooperation in creating high-performance industries.

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195\_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>

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



## **Belarus - China: regions as a factor of comprehensive strategic partnership**

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 Belarusian exports increased by almost 10 percent. In this regard, "agriculture and wood processing products became the driver of Belarusian export to China, with deliveries doubling.<sup>197</sup> 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, quarantine supervision and logistics chains, in the form

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<sup>197</sup> On the results of bilateral trade with China in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c603710a55ba783e.html>

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%" <sup>198</sup>. 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.

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

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198 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-knr-sozdali-ploschadku-dlja-otrabotki-voprosov-dostupa-na-kitajskij-rynok-420487-2020/>.

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".<sup>199</sup> 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 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,

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<sup>199</sup> 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>

"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" <sup>200</sup>.

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"<sup>201</sup>. 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 interaction. As a result, "the parties agreed to agree on a roadmap for the development of cooperation in the near future" <sup>202</sup>.

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"<sup>203</sup>. 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

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

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

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

203 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-razvitiiju-sotrudnichestva-podpisali-mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-444325-2021/>

of this province, became Mogilev's twin<sup>204</sup>. 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 - 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"<sup>205</sup>. 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"<sup>206</sup>.

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

205 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/za-poslednij-god-mogilevskaja-oblast-v-9-raz-velichila-eksport-govjadiny-v-kr-360961-2019/>

206 Kuliagin, S. Mogilev region and the Chinese province Henan intend to more actively develop investment cooperation / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2017 - URL:

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"<sup>207</sup>. And in December 2020, the Mogilev Regional Development Agency hosted an online meeting of over 30 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"<sup>208</sup>.

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

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<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-henan-namereny-aktivnee-razvivat-investsotrudnichestvo-257928-2017/>

207\_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/>

208 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>

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" <sup>209</sup>. 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.

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. <sup>210</sup> 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

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209 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-tehpomoschjju-kitaja-sotsialnyj-dom-sdali-v-ekspluatatsiju-v-mogileve-254650-2017/>

210 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>

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 processing problems"<sup>211</sup>. Recall that in our country, SAMSE - a subsidiary of China National Machinery Corporation Sinomach from Beijing - owns shares of NWAO 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"<sup>212</sup>. 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

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211 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/>

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



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 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 several "product supply agreements between business

representatives totaling USD 24 million" <sup>213</sup>. 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" <sup>214</sup>. 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 be prototypes of the development, respectively <sup>215</sup>. 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.

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

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213. 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/>

214 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>

215 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/>

of supplies of Belarusian agricultural products to China and establishment of a joint dairy processing enterprise<sup>216</sup>. 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)"<sup>217</sup>. 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"<sup>218</sup>. Minsk is 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 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

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216 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>

217 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-projdu-7-9-nojabrja-368252-2019/>

218 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/>

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"<sup>219</sup>. 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"<sup>220</sup>. 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 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"<sup>221</sup>.

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

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

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

221 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/>

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 Allynnav 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 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, Krinitza OJSC, Slodych OJSC, Kristall OJSC, Minsk Bakery Products Plant OJSC, MinskKhlebprom KUP and Minsk Refrigeration Plant No.2 TUPUP.

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" <sup>222</sup>. One of the concrete results of this visit was an invitation from the Chinese side to the students of the

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<sup>222</sup> 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\\_consultsv/news/b8beff0b9304c615.html](http://shanghai.mfa.gov.by/ru/o_generalnom_consultsv/news/b8beff0b9304c615.html)

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"<sup>223</sup>. 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.

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223 Zalesskii, B.L. Information sovereignty and international journalism / B.L. Zalesskii // Rehiyanalnyi Mass Media of the Republic of Belarus in the personal era: from lokalnaya problematyki to informatsiyny 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.

## **Belarus: paving the way to the future comprehensive programme**

Belarus has prepared a draft State Programme of Innovative Development for 2021-2025, which envisages the implementation of some 80 innovation projects to create high-tech industries. Among the priorities should be the development of six "projects of the future", which are focused on new production, technology and products that are in line with global trends and take into account the development of markets. One of the most prominent among them is national electric transport. The implementation of the prepared comprehensive program for the development of this industry in 2021-2025 will not only create a new machine-building sector in Belarus - electric vehicles, but will also have a large-scale multiplier effect on the innovative development of other sectors, such as metallurgy, electrical engineering, robotics and information technology. In addition, "it is envisaged to develop samples of new machinery, create 14 production facilities for cargo, passenger and special electric vehicles, including the assembly facility for electric cars at BELJI CJSC, as well as basic components for it" <sup>224</sup>.

It should be reminded that back in March 2020, the Republic of Belarus adopted a decree "On Stimulation of Electric Vehicles Use," which envisaged measures designed to stimulate demand for this environmentally friendly vehicle in the country, as well as creation of the relevant charging and service infrastructure in the regions. The emergence of this document was prompted by a number of circumstances. First, let us recall that "at the 24th United Nations World Conference on Climate Change, held in December 2018 in the Polish city of Katowice, the Belarusian side stated

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224. Shumilin, A. How Belarus plans to develop the high-tech sector / A. Shumilin // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/kak-belarus-planiruet-razvivat-vysokotehnologichnyj-sektor-7711/>

that it considers the green economy and low-carbon sustainable development as a strategic vector"<sup>225</sup>.

Secondly, existing expert forecasts show that "by 2030, one in five cars in the world will be electric. This process is spurred on by government policies in a number of countries, where they are going to impose restrictions on cars with internal combustion engines"<sup>226</sup>. Thirdly, the growing number of electric cars will help to reduce air pollution in Belarus. Fourthly, "the use of electric vehicles is one of the ways to competently increase electricity consumption".<sup>227</sup>, which becomes especially relevant in connection with the commissioning of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. Fifthly, the transition to electric cars is a turn to new technologies corresponding to the best world practices, so that already by 2025 about 40 percent of cars with internal combustion engine in Belarus could be replaced by electric transport.

Turning to the decree, we should note some of the measures it contained. For example, this document exempted owners of electric cars from paying a fee for a permit to participate in road traffic. Individuals will not have to pay value added tax when importing electric cars into our country for personal use. In addition, "owners of electric vehicles shall be exempt from paying for parking in specially equipped spaces in communal car parks until April 1, 2026"<sup>228</sup>.

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225 Zalesky, B. Growth points. Features of sustainable development in the context of global challenges / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. - – C. 57.

226 The measures taken will contribute to the creation of production of electric cars in Belarus - Ministry of Economy [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prinimaemye-mery-budut-sposobstvovat-sozdaniyu-v-belarusi-proizvodstva-elektromobilej-minekonomiki-383056-2020/>

227 Ecology and smart power consumption - what benefits the growth of electric cars in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekologija-i-gramotnoe-potreblenie-elektroenergii-chem-vygoden-rost-chisla-elektromobilej-v-belarusi-383046-2020>

228 Lukashenka signed a decree to stimulate the purchase of electric cars [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-podpisal-ukaz-o-stimulirovanii-zakupok-elektromobilej-383041-2020>



The decree also contained measures for producers of electric cars and electric charging stations, as well as for organizations operating them. In particular, the charging stations were exempted from the value added tax when used in Belarus. And land plots for construction and maintenance of electric charging complexes were leased to Production Association Belorusneft without auctions. This may be the reason why PA Belorusneft was planning to open 180 fast-charging stations at once in 2020.

At that time, the situation with electric charging stations (EPS) in Belarus was as follows. Since the beginning of 2020, "the EPS network has expanded to 251 such stations (plus 13 facilities)"<sup>229</sup>. And it could already serve up to nine thousand electric cars. The EFS network in the Belarusian territory includes two types of stations: firstly, Mode 3, where an electric vehicle needs six to eight hours to charge; secondly, Mode 4, where the battery can be charged in less than an hour. An important detail: at the beginning of 2020, Belorusneft's filling station network got a new brand, Malanka, which will have 639 charging stations by 2022. And by 2030, there should be so many of them to service up to 300,000 electric vehicles.

Speaking about the production of our country's own electric vehicles, it should be recalled that the first Belarusian sample of such vehicles based on Geely was presented back in August 2017. At that time, it was said that "after testing the first electric vehicle, scientists will start developing an improved prototype. It could be ready as early as next [2018] year"<sup>230</sup>. Nevertheless, as it was already noted at the March 2020 meeting of the President of Belarus with the leadership of the Council of Ministers, so far the topic of producing its own electric car has not received the proper

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229. "Belorusneft" plans to open 180 electric charging stations this year [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusneft-planiruet-otkryt-180-elektrozarjadnyh-stantsij-v-etom-godu-383042-2020>

230 Gavrilova, V. Ecological, modern and maneuverable: scientists presented the first Belarusian electric car / V. Gavrilova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/reportazh-ekologichnyj-sovremennyy-i-manevrennyj-uchenye-prezentovali-pervyj-belorusskij-elektromobil-262688-2017>

impetus, although electric transport has enormous potential. "It is an urgent need today. <...> Many states are already developing this promising direction. Countries like us, which are export-oriented and do not have huge reserves underground, have long focused on electric transport"<sup>231</sup>.

With the appearance of the decree "On promotion of electric cars" it became clear that this business would be taken up by BELJI CJSC, which "is ready to consider production of electric cars in Belarus on condition of sales of 5-10 thousand cars per year"<sup>232</sup>. At the same time the company received four Chinese electric Geely Geometry A models, which were to be tested: one - at the plant and three - at dealerships. This version of the electric car attracted by the fact that it has a cruising range of 500 kilometers, adaptive cruise control and pedestrian and cyclist response systems, as well as an intelligent automatic parking system. At that time, there were hopes that with the adoption of the presidential decree, production of the Geely Geometry A will go much faster at BELJI CJSC.

In January 2021, the draft of the Complex Programme of electric transport development for 2021-2025 elaborated by the National Academy of Sciences together with other interested parties and providing for increasing the share of public electric transport in Belarus up to 30 per cent by 2025, was considered at the meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, where the main government requirements for the document content were announced: "The programme should be really complex - from scientific research and development to stimulating In other words, it should be "end-to-end" and touch upon all the spheres connected with electric transport one way or another"<sup>233</sup>. Probably, this is the reason why other

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231 Meeting with the leadership of the Council of Ministers [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/soveschanie-s-rukovodstvom-soveta-ministrov-23197/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/soveschanie-s-rukovodstvom-soveta-ministrov-23197/)

232 "BELJI is ready to consider the release of electric cars at the sale of 5-10 thousand cars per year [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beldzhi-gotov-rassmatrivat-vypusk-elektromobilej-pri-prodazhe-5-10-tys-avto-v-god-382660-2020/>

233 The share of public electric transport in Belarus wants to increase to 30% by 2025 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9713>

topical high-level documents also talk about the development of electric transport in Belarus. In particular, the State Program "Energy Saving" for 2021-2025 envisages the development of production of electric transport, components and charging infrastructure for it in the industrial sector, while in the transport sector it envisages "development of electric cars, hybrid cars and charging network, electrification of urban passenger transport to substitute the use of hydrocarbon fuel" to <sup>234</sup>achieve the set goals.

As far as the research and development component of this topic is concerned, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus outlined its plans to create an experimental production of Belarusian electric cars as early as January 2021. The fact is that domestic scientists are working on middle class models designed for a wide range of consumers. We are talking about production of several models at once: cargo, passenger car, minivan, even a sports car. Characteristically, "it is not Geely, it is a fundamentally different electric car with all-Belarusian stuffing. <...> Several battery models - lithium-ion, graphene and graphene-lead - are being developed for the Belarusian electric car," <sup>235</sup>so that its range will be 500 kilometers.

In this regard, it should be noted that at the exhibition of achievements and the most significant results of scientific, technical and innovation activities "Days of Belarusian Science - 2021" held in Minsk in January 2021, it was already possible to see a mock sample of the electric car Academic Electro of the United Institute of Machine Building, designed for transportation in closed areas, that is, without going to public roads, and designed for two passengers on the open area. "The maximum speed of the electric car is 50 km/h. The frame-panel type of the body allows production

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234 State Program "Energo-Saving" for 2021-2025. - Minsk, 2021. - – C. 15.

235 The National Academy of Sciences expects to create an experimental production of Belarusian electric cars [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/nan-rasschityvaet-sozdat-eksperimentalnoe-proizvodstvo-belorusskih-elektromobilej-425463-2021/>

in small batches according to the customer's requirements"<sup>236</sup> . Another peculiarity of this novelty is that the power part of its cabin does not contain metal elements: it is made of fiberglass plastic. In addition, the United Institute of Mechanical Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences is already implementing a number of joint projects with several Belarusian enterprises. Thus, "an electric truck, which will be equipped with an electric power unit developed at the institute, is being developed together with MAZ"<sup>237</sup> . And the result of the work with Minsk Tractor Plant will be an electric ice-pouring machine for ice rinks, the first production run of which is scheduled for 2021. As for the production of electric cars on the basis of BELJI, in 2021 five hundred to one thousand electric cars are planned to be delivered to Belarus, "so that we can study the demand, understand the possibilities, and then do all the necessary work to prepare the production. We should expect the electric cars closer to the second half of the year"<sup>238</sup> . In short, the measures taken in Belarus to create its own electric cars promised to yield results as soon as possible.

Finally, in April 2021, the Republic of Belarus has already finally approved a Comprehensive Program for the development of electric transport for 2021-2025, which aims to achieve such major goals as:

- 1) creation of a new machine-building industry - production of electric transport;
- 2) Ensuring conditions for increasing the number of electric traction vehicles in use;

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236 New drone and electric car - the National Academy of Sciences will present about 200 developments at the exhibition for the Science Day [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/novyj-bespilotnik-i-elektromobil-nan-predstavit-okolo-200-razrabotok-na-vystavke-ko-dnju-nauki-425608-2021/>

237\_Electric trucks, electric combines and electric cars - what Belarusian scientists are working on [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/elektrogruzoviki-elektrokombajny-i-legkovye-elektromobili-nad-chem-rabotajut-belorusskie-uchenye-426333-2021/>

238\_"BELJI will study demand for electric cars and prepare for production - Parkhomchik [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beldzhi-izuchit-spros-na-elektromobili-i-budet-gotovitsja-k-proizvodstvu-parhomchik-423890-2021/>

3) expansion of electric transport infrastructure; 4) minimization of negative impacts on the environment.

To this end, the integrated programme has seven objectives:

1) creation of a system of scientific support, including ensuring scientific and technological security of the country in the field of mechanical engineering;

2) organization of production of electric transport, its basic components and infrastructure elements and their maximum localization;

3) formation of a set of institutional conditions for the development of electric transport on the basis of systematic provision of its standardization, conformity assessment and regulatory legal support;

4) creation of electric transport infrastructure, including EHS, with its optimal spatial location and taking into account the specifics of consumers (public passenger and freight, personal electric transport);

5) coordination of state bodies' actions for the development of electric transport and its infrastructure on a national and regional scale; optimization of investments in the creation of production and acquisition of electric transport;

6) formation and implementation of measures to stimulate the development of electric transport from scientific support, purchase and operation to recycling and reuse, including to attract investment for the accelerated development of electric transport;

7) minimization of economic, environmental, social and other risks.

Two subprograms - "Production and technological base of electric transport" and "Creation of charging infrastructure for electric transport" - provide for the creation of scientific groundwork and production base to increase the number of electric-powered vehicles in use, as well as a developed network of EPS that will ensure the smooth movement of electric vehicles throughout Belarus. And among the activities planned by

the comprehensive program, we shall mention the establishment of experimental production of electric vehicles, as well as "exemption of road users of electric cars from the fee for the use of publicly owned parking lots"<sup>239</sup>. In addition, this type of transport is exempt from transport tax in the Republic of Belarus. More precisely, "owners of vehicles of category M1, M1G (electric cars and SUVs) driven solely by electric motor will not pay transport tax. This benefit is granted until 31 December 2025"<sup>240</sup>.

Of course, all these measures create good conditions for the growth in the number of electric cars, which by mid-March 2021 already numbered more than two and a half thousand in our country. At the same time, "the volume of electricity consumption by charging stations for electric vehicles in Belarus almost doubled in 2020 compared to 2019 - up to 7.7 million kWh"<sup>241</sup>. Up to two hundred new users are now registered on the EHS network every month. And "there are an average of 250 charging sessions every day at the stations, and in the last two months [January and February] their total number exceeded 15,000"<sup>242</sup>. The comprehensive programme contains serious measures for the development of the EPS network. If now the network consists of 288 FFSs, by the end of 2021 there are to be already 471 of them. At the second stage (2022-2025), 466 will be added, and at the third stage (2026-2030) another 407.

Another important issue of this topic is that budget Chinese electric cars continue to be especially popular among Belarusian consumers today due to

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239 On the Comprehensive Program of electric transport development until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <http://government.by/ru/content/9804>

240 Ministry of Taxes and Levies: electric cars are exempt from transport tax until the end of 2025 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mns-elektromobili-osvobozhdeny-ot-transportnogo-naloga-do-kontsa-2025-goda-434965-2021/>

241 Electricity consumption by electric vehicle charging stations in Belarus almost doubled in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: [https://atom.belta.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/elektropotreblenie-zarjadnymi-stantsijami-dlja-elektrotransporta-v-belarusi-v-2020-godu-vyroslo-pochti-vdvoe-11190/](https://atom.belta.by/ru/news_ru/view/elektropotreblenie-zarjadnymi-stantsijami-dlja-elektrotransporta-v-belarusi-v-2020-godu-vyroslo-pochti-vdvoe-11190/)

242 The number of electric cars in Belarus exceeded 2.5 thousand [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chislo-elektromobilej-v-belarusi-prevysilo-25-tys-431822-2021/>.

the fact that domestic models simply do not exist yet. The comprehensive program in this regard states that "we plan to master mass production of electric cars at BELJI CJSC and produce 1,000 electric cars based on "Geometry C" model in 2021".<sup>243</sup> It is also planned to set up experimental assembly production of single models and small batches of electric cars of various modifications at the "United Institute of Mechanical Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus" on the basis of the maximum use of components and assemblies of Belarusian production.

As for other types of electric-powered transport vehicles, a very extensive development program has been outlined. In particular, production of electric buses for passenger transportation at airports with Belarusian-made power plant components is to be mastered by the end of 2023. The United Institute of Mechanical Engineering together with the Minsk Automobile Plant will create a sample electric truck with a payload capacity of about four and a half tons, and with Belkommunmash - up to ten tons. The fleet of the Belarusian electric transport is also expected to include a domestic electric garbage truck. Finally, the Belarusian Automobile Plant "intends to create a sample of battery-operated dump truck within the program. GVW of such a vehicle will be 176 tons and payload - 90 tons"<sup>244</sup>.

As we can see, expanding the use of electric vehicles in Belarus in the coming years should become one of the most promising areas of development, which will not only reduce the use of imported energy carriers, but will also improve the environmental situation and ensure the use of the capacity of the Belarusian energy system.

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243 Comprehensive programme of electric transport development for 2021-2025. - Minsk, 2021. -- C. 20.

244 Electric dump truck, electric garbage truck and electric vehicle of Belarusian production are planned to be created by 2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://doingbusiness.by/elektrosamosval-elektromusorovoz-i-elektromobil-belorusskogo-proizvodstva-planiruetsya-sozdat-do-2025-goda>

## **Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: Multi-vector approach is a top priority**

The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) demonstrates high growth rates of export transactions in 2021, where their volume increased by 80 percent to \$369 million in the first half of the year. At the same time, "Belarusian goods were bought through the BUCE by companies from 29 countries. The top five largest markets are Lithuania, Germany, Latvia, Estonia and Russia<sup>245</sup>. The main export items for Lithuania were sawn wood, wood chips and oilseeds processing products. The export value was equal to \$101 million. German companies have bought sawn timber worth 64 million dollars and household stakes, milk powder and technical casein worth one million dollars. Latvia was characterized by the purchase of Belarusian lumber, wooden poles and stakes, rapeseed oil and ferrous and nonferrous metal scrap for 57 million dollars. As for Russia, there has been a significant increase in exports of such commodity items as: cement - 6 times - up to \$10.7 million, butter - 61(!) times - up to \$10 million, milk powder - 7 times - up to \$6.6 million. In total, as of July 1, 2021, 300 new foreign companies were accredited to the BUTB in the first half of the year, and their total number was 5,218.

A number of other countries, among which Ukraine should be mentioned, were also involved in transactions through the Belarusian exchange platform. The number of its representatives on the BUTB increased to 326 in the first half of 2021. "Exchange commodity turnover with Ukraine has also grown considerably: following the results of six months it reached \$24.6 million, which is 58% more than for the same

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<sup>245</sup> Export of goods through BUTB in the first half of the year increased by 80% [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-tovarov-cherez-butb-v-i-polugodii-vyros-na-80-451881-2021/>



period of 2020"<sup>246</sup> . And in August 2021, the first deal was made on the export of milk powder to the Ukrainian market - a trial batch of 40 tons for \$108 thousand. Previously, bidders from this country were more interested in scrap metals, construction materials, flour and plant seeds.

Another country that should be mentioned in this context is Poland, to whose market in the first half of 2021 rebar produced at BMZ - the management company of BMK Holding JSC - was shipped almost four times more than in six months of 2020 - by almost four and a half million dollars. This result is the result of very diligent work with this market. Not every Polish company was prepared to work on conditions of full advance payment and deferred delivery. However, now not only two or three Polish importers take part in each trading session on BTUB, as it was at the beginning, but at least ten of them. Thus, firstly, a high level of competition during bidding is ensured, and secondly, the volume of sales of Belarusian valves to Poland is steadily growing<sup>247</sup>.

Vigorous steps are being taken at the BUTB to increase sales of Belarusian goods to China. Currently 48 Chinese small and medium-sized enterprises have been accredited on this exchange platform. In July 2021 the Belarus Interbank Currency Exchange agreed on the development of cooperation with the "BR-Consult" UE, a subsidiary of the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus, which specializes in the implementation of export-oriented investment projects. The essence of the reached agreements is the attraction of one of the largest shareholders of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" to the exchange trade - the Chinese corporation China Merchants Group. Its entrance to the BUTB

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246 BUTB conducted the first transaction on export of milk powder to Ukraine [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-provela-pervuju-sdelku-po-eksportu-suhogo-moloka-v-ukrainu-453373-2021/>

247 BUTB almost quadrupled exports of BMZ products to Poland [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-pochti-v-4-raza-narastila-eksport-produktsii-bmz-v-polshu-449067-2021/>

would significantly increase the "possibilities to supply Belarusian products to China. This applies not only to lumber, but virtually the entire export range, including rapeseed oil, dairy products, meat, and tanning semi-finished products"<sup>248</sup>.

Another interesting trend related to Chinese companies accredited on the BUTB emerged in July 2021. Kangkai Zhiguan (Heze) Industrial Development, a major importer of lumber from China, which has been operating on the Belarusian exchange platform since May 2020 and received the status of a non-resident stockbroker in April 2021, declared its intention to invest in the Belarusian timber processing industry and develop its business in our country in order "not only to increase the volume of purchases of lumber products, but also to establish its own production in Belarus"<sup>249</sup>. At the same time, the company intends to buy raw materials and sell the finished product exclusively through the BUTB.

As for the Chinese vector, it should be noted that this country's market is considered one of the most promising at BUOTB. As it was noted above, almost 50 Chinese companies have already been accredited at the exchange, more than half of which regularly participate in the trades. "In addition, special trading sessions are held every two weeks to sell lumber in the PRC"<sup>250</sup>. All of this combined contributes to the fact that in the first half of 2021, BUTB's trade turnover with Chinese partners exceeded \$25 million, almost double that of the entire year 2020. To further increase the attractiveness of the exchange platform for customers from China, the BUTB decided to provide them with the opportunity to make all necessary

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248. BUTB and the Development Bank intend to develop cooperation in exports and investments [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-bank-razvitiya-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-eksporta-i-investitsij-452308-2021/>

249. A major Chinese importer of lumber plans to invest in Belarusian woodworking [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnyj-kitajskij-importer-pilomaterialov-planiruet-investirovat-v-belorusskiju-derevoobrabotku-451402-2021/>

250. The possibility of making settlements in Chinese yuan will appear on the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vozmozhnost-proizvodit-raschety-v-kitajskih-juanjah-pojavitsja-na-butb-449604-2021/>

settlements in yuan. This will affect the settlement of exchange contracts, payment of the exchange fee and transfer of the deposit. And in general it will simplify the financial side of exchange activities for Chinese participants.

Speaking about Asian vector of BUTB activity, let us remind such a fact: in June 2021 the first company from the Republic of Korea - Nam Chang Co. Ltd., which is a large supplier of timber products on Korean market, has its own production facilities and a branched warehousing network. The company is going to buy sawn wood and fuel pellets, which are produced in Belarus, at Belarus' FSRB. "We plan to deliver the goods to the port of Pusan using railroad and sea transport." <sup>251</sup>. It is interesting that with the appearance of this Korean participant, the geography of exchange trade on the BUTB started covering 65 countries.

In March 2021, a large furniture and decoration materials distributor Global Edge Sourcing Ltd. became the first BUTB broker in Israel. Its plans include "organizing direct supplies of Belarusian lumber to the Israeli market, where there is a high demand for these products today"<sup>252</sup>. In the future the range of goods bought via BUTB will be increased. In particular, it can be achieved due to the rolled metal products made by Belarusian Steel Works. It should be noted that as of the end of March 2021 more than 50 brokerage companies, including those from Germany, China, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Russia, and Estonia, had already been accredited to the BUBS.

Along with China, such European country as Great Britain is becoming one of the fastest-growing export destinations of the BUTB in

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251\_BUTB organizes supplies of Belarusian products to the Republic of Korea [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-organizuet-postavki-belorusskoj-lesoproduksii-v-respubliku-koreja-444466-2021/>

252\_BUTB accredited the first broker in Israel [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-akkreditovala-pervogo-brokera-v-izraile-433901-2021/>

2021. According to the results of the first half of the year the deliveries of Belarusian lumber to the British market through the exchange platform increased by 11(!) times, exceeding USD 12 million, and the deliveries of wooden stakes - by 16(!) times - up to USD 3,7 million. April 2021 saw the start of regular sales of tanned semi-finished vet-blue wood produced by Belarusian tanneries to this European country. And in just a couple of months, the amount of transactions for this commodity item exceeded \$740 thousand. To all appearances, this is only the beginning of a very dynamic and promising growth. And at the end of June 2021, a special trading session was organized at BUTB, which became "the first experience of timber products sales to the British market in the form of complex multi-base lots" <sup>253</sup>. As a result of these trades, almost five thousand cubic meters of lumber worth two and a half million dollars were sold to the UK.

Also in June 2021, the first deal on the sale of Belarusian leather products to Italy was registered at the BUTB. The Italian company bought a trial batch of tanned semi-finished leather goods "vet-blue" worth \$35,000" <sup>254</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that this pilot deal will become a starting point for long-term cooperation.

In 2021, BUTB specialists also engaged in serious work on the African vector of activity. In particular, the Egyptian direction. In March, "the first deal on the export of Belarusian goods to this North African country was made by the Egyptian company Sama Al-Jazeera for Import and Export, which purchased a trial batch of Belarusian lumber" <sup>255</sup>. And the goods were safely delivered to the end user. In June 2021 the delegation of

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253\_Belarusian lumber worth \$2.5 million sold to the UK in exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-pilomaterialy-na-25-mln-prodali-v-velikobritaniju-na-birzhevyh-torgah-448128-2021/>

254\_Italy starts buying Belarusian leather products at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/italija-nachala-pokupat-beloruskiju-kozhevennuju-produktsiju-na-butb-444946-2021/>

255\_Zalessky, B. To move forward. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - - C. 266.

the Egyptian business circles visited BUTB to study the Belarusian exchange experience and introduce it as a basis for creation of the first Egyptian exchange. The business partners from this North African country were especially attentive to the peculiarities of the exchange trade in agricultural products, "as the pilot trading at the first commodity exchange in Egypt will be conducted exactly for this commodity group"<sup>256</sup>. In the future, the parties plan to cooperate in other areas, including supplies of Belarusian lumber, construction materials and industrial goods to the north of the African continent. In the meantime, information about the possibilities of the Belarusian exchange platform has already been included in the materials of the events held by the Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce.

Another trend that eloquently demonstrates that the Belarusian stock exchange is gradually gaining popularity among representatives of foreign business, for whom minimization of risks is of paramount importance, is the rapid growth - three and a half times in the first half of 2021 - in the number of transit transactions made by foreign companies. The peculiarity of these transactions is that their participants are non-residents of Belarus - companies from Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, and Estonia. An important detail: if in 2020 these transactions concerned only industrial and consumer goods, now they are registered practically in all the areas available at the BUTB. In particular, "Russian companies actively supplied softwood lumber to the Baltic states and Poland. As a result during the first half of the year there were 77 transit transactions registered to the sum of \$968 thousand"<sup>257</sup>. As for the industrial and consumer goods, the subject of

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256 Egyptian business sees significant potential in the development of exchange trade with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/egipetskij-biznes-vidit-znachitelnyj-potentsial-v-razviti-birzhevoj-torgovli-s-belarusju-444144-2021/>.

257 The amount of transit transactions on the BUTB has increased 3.5 times since the beginning of the year [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL:

76 transactions was textile, lighting equipment, furniture, and motor oil, worth a total of \$2.3 million. And there is every reason to believe that these indicators will only increase in the future.

Speaking about the Russian vector, and as of June 1, 2021 2589 economic entities from Russia were accredited on the BUTB, it should be emphasized that intensified work with companies from regions became one of the main trends in the interaction of the BUTB with the Russian Federation in the first half of 2021. The total amount of exchange transactions between Russian and Belarusian business entities during this period rose 1.8 times to \$63 million. This is largely due to the fact that 126 new participants from Russia still came to the BUOT in 2021. And representatives of Leningrad, Moscow and Smolensk regions accounted for the largest volume of transactions. "The leadership of the Leningrad region is due, on the one hand, to the significant volume of purchases of Belarusian cement and dairy products, and, on the other hand, coal supplies for the needs of Belarusian enterprises." <sup>258</sup>. The Novosibirsk Region, which is the largest buyer of Belarusian dried milk, and the Ivanovo Region, which is the leader in exchange purchases of butter in Belarus, joined the leaders.

It is quite possible that this list will include other regions of Russia in 2021. In particular, the BUTB plans to provide a single sales and procurement channel for agricultural producers for the Voronezh region, since it is the products of the agro-industrial complex that have all chances to become the driver of exchange trade with this Russian region. The fact is that "oilseed meal, fodder supplements, cereals and grains are always in demand in the Belarusian market, and Voronezh region is one of the

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<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/summa-tranzitnyh-sdelok-na-butb-s-nachala-goda-vyrosla-v-35-raza-452802-2021/>

258 Exchange trade turnover between Belarus and Russia doubled in the first half of the year [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/birzhevoj-tovarooborot-belarusi-i-rossii-za-i-polugodie-vyros-v-2-raza-450765-2021/>

leaders in this segment"<sup>259</sup>. On the other hand, according to the results of the first half of 2021, the turnover of agricultural products at the BUTB has already grown by 70 percent, and Belarusian export has increased almost fourfold, exceeding 60 million dollars.

As for Yaroslavl Region, it is planned to organize the export of Belarusian butter and powdered milk there through the BUTB site. This became known in July 2021, when "the management of one of the leading producers of dairy products and ice cream in the Yaroslavl region expressed an interest in buying large amounts of butter and skimmed milk powder on the exchange auctions to meet the needs of the enterprise in high-quality raw materials"<sup>260</sup>. At the same time, it is also about using the BUTB platform to sell Yaroslavl products to China using the mechanism of transit transactions.

The fact that the use of the exchange mechanism can give a powerful impetus to the development of trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and the Pskov Oblast, the volume of which decreased noticeably in 2020, was discussed at the business forum at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of this Russian region in June 2021. The attention of its participants was focused not only on the supplies of the Pskov enterprises to the Belarusian market, but also to third countries through transit transactions. After all, it is now one of the most in-demand tools for Russian exchange trading participants. And arrangements have already been made to sell "a wide range of lumber, oilseeds and processed

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259\_BUTB will provide a single sales and procurement channel for agricultural producers of Belarus and Voronezh Oblast [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-obespechit-edinyj-kanal-sbyta-i-zakupok-dlja-selhozproizvoditelej-belarusi-i-voronezhskoj-oblasti-450418-2021/>

260 BUTB plans to develop exchange trade in dairy products with Yaroslavl Oblast [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-razvivat-birzhevuyu-torgovlju-molochnoj-produktsiej-s-jaroslavskoj-oblastju-450278-2021/>

products, fodder additives, electrical equipment, BOPET films and polyester produced by Pskov companies" <sup>261</sup>through the BUTB.

In June 2021, the BUTB and the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry agreed to unite their efforts to develop Belarusian-Russian trade. Let us remind, that in 2020 the commodity turnover of Belarus with St.-Petersburg and Leningrad region "has closely approached to \$2 billion, and it is despite of negative consequences of pandemic"<sup>262</sup>. The fact that the interest in business cooperation between the parties continues to grow is evidenced by the BUTB seminar for St. Petersburg business community held in June 2021, which was attended by executives of 30 companies, representing various sectors of the economy, including production of rolled metal and electrical products, machinery construction, wholesale trade in agricultural products, supply of equipment for the railway and the agro-industrial complex.

The Oryol Region also sees great potential for cooperation with BTUB in 2021. This is evidenced by the agreements reached in June 2021 and associated with the organization of "deliveries of cable and wire products, load-lifting equipment, and solid-state relays"<sup>263</sup> to Belarus. It should be noted that for this Russian region, Belarusian business entities, along with Latvian and Kazakh ones, are among the top three major trade and economic partners. In 2020 Oryol enterprises supplied nearly \$41 million worth of products to the Belarusian market. The BUTB will

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261 BUTB will expand cooperation with the Pskov Oblast [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirjaet-sotrudnichestvo-s-pskovskoj-oblastiju-445547-2021/>.

262 BUTB and St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry agreed on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-sankt-peterburgskaja-torgovo-promyshlennaja-palata-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-445340-2021/>

263 Enterprises of the Oryol region of Russia plan to sell metal products and equipment through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatija-orlovskoj-oblasti-rossii-planirujut-prodavat-metalloproduksiju-i-oborudovanie-cherez-445119-2021/>



provide them with an additional sales channel and an opportunity for direct access to the largest Belarusian consumers.

The activation of exchange trade with the Kaliningrad region was discussed at the seminar held at the end of June 2021, which was attended by representatives of small and medium businesses of this Russian region, interested in expanding the sales of their products. As a result the participants of the business meeting agreed that the most promising direction of exchange trade is the products of agro-industrial complex. In particular, commodities of oil and fats group which traditionally occupy a significant share in export of Kaliningrad region, and "the largest processor of oil seeds in the region regularly tops the rating of sellers of oil meal at exchange trading. Moreover, the exchange platform can serve not only as an entry point to the Belarusian market, but also simplify the access of Kaliningrad companies to the markets of third countries"<sup>264</sup>.

Exchange trade could become an important element of trade and economic cooperation with other Russian regions as well. In particular, this was discussed at the same June 2021 meeting of the working group on cooperation between Belarus and Kalmykia, where the BUTS demonstrated its willingness to provide Kalmyk exporters with direct access to more than 21 thousand Belarusian companies and also become an electronic window to markets of other countries, revealing the experience of transit deals "to sell Russian rapeseed oil to China, and lumber to the Baltic states"<sup>265</sup>.

The business community of the Orenburg region intends to cooperate with the BUTB in several areas at once, which was discussed during the webinar of the parties held in early July 2021. Firstly, it is a question of

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264. BUTB and the Kaliningrad Chamber of Commerce and Industry agreed on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kaliningradskaja-torgovo-promyshlennaja-palata-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-448294-2021/>  
265. BUTB plans to develop exchange trade with Kalmykia [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-razvivat-birzheviju-torgovlju-s-kalmykiej-446923-2021/>

organizing the export of Orenburg pig iron and flat products to the Belorussian market. Secondly, entrepreneurs in this Russian region are interested in supplies of oilseeds to third countries' markets through the mechanism of transit deals. The fact is that non-energy non-resource goods prevail in the structure of Orenburg region's exports. And the Belarusian side is particularly interested in metal products - pig iron and rolled sheets. As for transit deals, the BUTB "is ready to help oilseeds processors from the Orenburg region to enter the markets of China, Switzerland and the Baltic states"<sup>266</sup>.

The Republic of Bashkortostan considers exchange trade as an efficient tool for enhancing trade and economic cooperation with Belarus. At the meeting of business circles of this Russian region in July 2021 with the representatives of BUTB, 12 Bashkir companies involved in the production and sale of compressor equipment, air purification systems, food products, bio-fertilizers, reagents for the oil industry and water recycling systems showed interest in participation in electronic trading on the Belarusian exchange platform at once<sup>267</sup>.

All of these facts convincingly show that today the Belarusian BUOTB is taking active measures to actualize cooperation with Russian regions, as "deepening of integration with the Russian Federation in the next five years will remain the most important task of the Belarusian government in terms of development of foreign economic activity and international cooperation".<sup>268</sup>, and plans for joint activities are envisaged for both sectors of the economy and the Russian regions.

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266 The Orenburg Oblast is interested in the development of exchange trade with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/orenburgskaja-oblast-zainteresovana-v-razvitii-birzhevoj-torgovli-s-belarusju-448484-2021/>.

267 The BUTB is ready to help restore the volume of mutual trade between Belarus and Bashkortostan [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-gotova-sodejstvovat-vosstanovleniju-objegov-vzaimnoj-torgovli-belarusi-i-bashkortostana-452420-2021/>

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