

Partnership benchmark - success

In July 2021 the Programme of Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025 was approved, which set a target of reaching an increase in exports of goods and services in excess of 50 billion dollars by the end of the five-year period. At the same time, the volume of exports of food products and agricultural raw materials will increase to \$7 billion by the end of 2025. The dynamics of growth in supplies of Belarusian food products and agricultural raw materials to foreign markets in 2021 shows that the task set in the program for the next five-year period can be achieved much earlier. Statistics show that over the first seven months of this year exports of agricultural products from Belarus increased by almost 10%, and exceeded \$3.5 billion. The geography of these supplies is very broad - 97 countries of the world. And practically in all regions of the planet their growth is observed. Particularly dynamic growth has been registered in the European Union and overseas countries, by nearly 45 percent. A broadly similar picture is currently observed with regard to other Belarusian exports. What measures are being taken in Belarus to reach the stated goals? This is what we are talking about in this study.



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Chronicle of multi-vector interaction

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Belarus: the goal is to preserve multi-vector foreign trade

The Programme for Socio-Economic Development of Belarus for 2021-2025 seeks to ensure the qualitative growth of exports and their geographical diversification, which would expand markets and ensure the sustainability of foreign trade. To this end, two tasks need to be solved. "The first one is not to allow the presence on traditional sales markets to decrease. The second one is to maintain multi-vector foreign trade, increasing export volumes to China, the EU, the USA and the far arc countries, mastering new niches of the world market" ¹. The statistics of the export component of the Belarusian economy for the five months of 2021 show how these tasks are being performed today. The volume of exports of goods and services during this period exceeded \$18 billion. At the same time, "the trade surplus in goods and services was \$1.247 million (in January-May 2020, the trade surplus was also \$548.1 million)². An important detail: the export of Belarusian goods during this period grew by almost 40%, exceeding \$14 billion.

The **Belarusian capital** has demonstrated a high growth rate in the export component in 2021. Over five months "exports of goods by organizations of Minsk (with oil) increased by 56.4% and amounted to \$4338.6 million. Trade was conducted with 171 countries, exports - to 130 countries. The main market for Minsk organizations is Russia, as well as Ukraine and the Netherlands (the share of 21.1% and 17.6%, respectively). As for the ³export of services provided by Minsk companies, its volume at the expense of computer, transportation and other business services has increased by 17% in January-May 2021 and amounted to about two and a half billion dollars in 206 countries worldwide. As a result Minsk managed to achieve a foreign trade surplus of over USD 120 million.

1 Main provisions of the draft program of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/osnovnye-polozeniya-proekta-programmy-sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo-razvitiya-respubliki-belarus-na-202.html>

2 Belarus in January-May increased export of goods and services by 32.7%, up to \$18 billion [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-janvare-mae-uvelichila-eksport-tovarov-i-uslug-na-327-do-18-mlrd-449826-2021/>

3 Minsk's export volume quickly recovered to the pre-crisis level - Naumovich [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/objem-eksporta-minska-bystro-vosstanovilsja-dopredkrizisnogo-urovnja-naumovich-452705-2021/>

Enterprises of **Gomel region**, who increased exports of goods and services by 47.2% up to \$2.3 billion in January-May, are doing quite well in terms of foreign shipments in 2021. Diversification of foreign markets has enabled business entities of Gomel region to achieve that "the share of the European Union countries in total exports of goods was 38%, Eurasian Economic Union - 34%, while other countries accounted for 28% of the supplies"⁴ by the results of five months. Great hopes in the Belarusian region connect with the Chinese market, where supplies have already increased by almost a quarter and amounted to \$ 44 million through the Svetlogorsk CCC and dairy processing plants. Accreditation of new products and enterprises of Gomel region is expected to be completed in this country soon, which will give new impulses to export to the Celestial Empire market. This applies, first of all, to whole-milk products made by the Rogachyov INC and meat products made by the Kalinkovich and Zhlobin meat processing plants. If we talk about the Russian market, in the first half of 2021 enterprises and organizations of Gomel region signed foreign trade contracts with partners in this country for almost 270 million dollars. "For example, at the end of June 2021, a contract was signed online between the Gomel Chemical Plant OJSC and VASTEKO Trading House LLC (Nizhny Novgorod) for a total amount of 878.4 million Russian rubles"⁵.

Brest Oblast enterprises increased the export of their products by almost 23 percent in the first five months of 2021, supplying them to 94 countries and opening three new markets - in South America, North and East Africa. In particular, the first batch of glass putty was shipped to Bolivia, dried milk to Libya, and electrical transformers to Uganda. However, deliveries to the European Union were especially good: "Export to Germany increased by one and a half times. Supplies to France, Spain and Romania more than doubled. Almost by 100% - to Bulgaria and Slovakia.

4 Enterprises of Gomel region increased exports of goods and services by 47.2% [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-uvelichili-eksport-tovarov-i-uslug-na-472-452796-2021/>

5 Gomel enterprises signed contracts with partners from Russia for more than \$269 million [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomelskie-predpriyatija-zakljuchili-kontrakty-s-partnerami-iz-rossii-na-bolee-chem-269-mln-452385-2021/>

More than 40% went to Lithuania and Latvia"⁶. The main export items are coal, furniture, tyres, plastic components and PVC profiles, soybean and rapeseed oil, toys, wood chips and wood pellets, sawn wood and timber. This picture is nicely complemented by the export of services to this region, where "the major share of foreign exchange earnings comes from the 558th Aircraft Repair Plant (\$12.5 million). In addition, the export of transport (up 16.8%), construction (up 17.8%) and computer services (up 24.2%) increased⁷. All these factors allowed the enterprises of Brest Region to achieve a foreign trade surplus of almost half a billion dollars.

The **Mogilev region** also managed to achieve a significant increase in exports - by more than 30 percent - in January-May 2021. It "managed to ensure the highest export volume (\$966 million) and a surplus for the last 5 years"⁸. A typical detail: exports to more than 20 countries of the European Union increased by 1.7 times and amounted to \$221 million. Supplies to China doubled as well. All these facts show that the Belarusian regions have made a good start in the new five-year period to fulfil one of the most important tasks contained in the Programme of Socio-Economic Development of Belarus for 2021-2025. Let's hope that these positive trends will be continued further in line with the innovative development of the Belarusian state.

6_Exporters of Brest region opened three new markets [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksportery-brestskoj-oblasti-otkryli-tri-novyh-rynka-sbyta-453361-2021/>

7_Services exports in Brest region in January-April grew by 25% [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-uslug-v-brestskoj-oblasti-za-janvar-aprel-vyros-na-25-453399-2021/>

8_Despite sanctions, Mogilev Region increased exports to the EU by 1.7 times - Strahar [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/nasmotrja-na-sanktsii-mogilevskaja-oblast-uvelichila-eksport-v-strany-es-v-17-raza-strahar-450601-2021/>

Belarus: food exports grow, supply geography expands

In July 2021, the Program of Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025 was approved, which set a goal to achieve a growth in exports of goods and services in excess of USD 50 billion by the end of the five-year period. At the same time, "the volume of exports of food products and agricultural raw materials will increase to \$7 billion by the end of 2025."⁹ The dynamics of growth in supplies of Belarusian food products and agricultural raw materials to foreign markets in 2021 shows that the objective set in the program for the next five-year period can be achieved much earlier. Statistics shows that over the first seven months of this year exports of agricultural products from Belarus increased by almost ten per cent and exceeded three and a half billion dollars. The geography of those supplies is very broad - 97 countries of the world. And practically in all regions of the planet their growth is observed. Particularly dynamic growth has been registered in the European Union and non-CIS countries, up by nearly 45 percent. If we talk about individual products, "exports of milk and dairy products - increased by 5.6 percent, beef - 12.5 percent, sausages - 30.8 percent, fish and fish products - 19.2 percent, eggs - by 37.5 percent, potatoes - by 15.2 percent, rapeseed oil - in 2 times" ¹⁰.

The enterprises of the Belgospisheprom Concern, which in the first half of 2021 exported their products to 72 countries, have made a significant contribution to achieving these indicators, having mastered "13 new markets: Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, UAE, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Morocco, Brazil, Libya, Iceland, Oman, Pakistan. All in all, the company sold its products in the amount of \$1.2 million to these markets"¹¹. As a result, in January-July 2021 the Concern achieved a foreign trade surplus in the amount of \$23 million. Belgospisheprom's enterprises

9 Programme of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025. - Minsk, 2021. - -- C. 24.

10 Exports of Belarusian agricultural products in January-July grew by almost 10% [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduktii-v-janvare-ijule-vyros-pochti-na-10-458552-2021/>

11 Enterprises of "Belgospisheprom" mastered 13 new markets in the first half of the year [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatija-belgospisheproma-za-i-polugodie-osvoili-13-novyh-rynkov-sbyta-456841-2021/>

are especially well positioned now on the Chinese market, where deliveries of sugar, confectionery products and strong alcoholic beverages more than tripled in the first half of 2021. The fact that the company is now actively developing formulations for products adapted to the Chinese market also contributes to the continuation of this positive development. In particular, the Lucky Chucky range of chocolates with low sugar content and the sugar-free chocolate range have already been launched here. Specially for the Chinese market, vodka formulas with 69% and 77% alcohol content were developed. Since the beginning of 2021, the range of export goods was expanded, the first shipments of fruit baby food, oat flakes were shipped, the contract on delivery of beer was concluded"¹². In addition, especially for the 4th Chinese international import exhibition, which will be held in Shanghai in the first decade of November 2021, Belgospisheprom prepares new products for the market research - tomato and celery marmalade, ginger-flavored marshmallow, dried lingonberry flavored red pepper. Glubokoe dairy cannery sees great prospects in the market of the People's Republic of China, which also opens new export supplies to this country. For instance, "within 8 months of the last year [2020] we supplied demineralized whey to the Chinese market for \$174 thousand, this year we have supplied \$2 million worth of products. <...> Our company produces whey all year round, on average we get about 800 tonnes per month. And almost all of it goes to the Chinese market"¹³. Glubokoe Whey processing plant also began to develop the Japanese and Vietnamese markets, where in 2021 several batches of whey were shipped. To conclude the topic of Belarus' exports to the Chinese market, we should note that "in the first six months of 2021 China ranked second (after Russia) among the countries importing

12 "Belgospisheprom increased supplies to China 1.6 times in the first half of the year [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospisheprom-v-i-polugodii-uvelichil-postavki-v-kitaj-v-16-raza-455039-2021/>

13 Pushnyakova, A. Glubokoe ICC reoriented whey sales to China / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/glubokskij-mkk-pereorientiroval-sbyt-syvorotki-na-kitaj-457966-2021/>

Belarusian food products".¹⁴ China increased the volume of supplies from Belarus by 1.5 times, to USD 156 million.

Among Belarusian food exporters in terms of opening new markets is also Rogachev Dairy Processing Plant, which supplied its first batch of concentrated milk to Saudi Arabia in July 2021. This happened due to the contract with one of the leaders in this country in distribution, which covers retail chains, stores, restaurants and cafes. The promotion of concentrated milk from Rogachev to the Saudi market was facilitated by the fact that "there are traditions there, which have been preserved for centuries. For example, tea with milk is one of the favorite drinks for the inhabitants of that country, which they consume with pleasure in quite large quantities¹⁵. In this regard, the Belarusian company sees great prospects in the development of the market of this country of the Persian Gulf.

Among other foreign markets, where Belarusian food supplies increased sharply in 2021, we should also mention Turkey. "In the first half of the year, food exports to Turkey grew 4.8 times year-on-year to \$2.9 million¹⁶. At the first meeting of the Belarusian-Turkish working group for agriculture held in August 2021, Belarus said it was ready to further increase supplies of high-quality food products to its partners, including butter, cheese, skimmed and whole milk powder, and, in the future, meat products - beef and poultry - produced in compliance with Halal requirements.

14. Belarusian agricultural exports to China increased 1.5 times in the first half of the year [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduksii-v-kitaj-v-i-polugodii-vyros-v-15-raza-458304-2021/>

15. Rogachev ICC shipped the first batch of concentrated milk to Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rogachevskij-mkk-otgruzil-pervuju-partiju-kontsentrirannogo-moloka-v-saudovskuju-araviju-457094-2021/>

16. Belarus increased food exports to Turkey almost fivefold in the first half of the year [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-pervom-polugodii-velichila-eksport-prodovolstvija-v-turtsiju-pochti-v-5-raz-457327-2021/>

Belarus-Russia: Focus on Science, Technology, Innovation

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 single 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 integration level of our economies, develop cooperation between enterprises, increase the competitiveness of jointly manufactured products" ¹⁷ 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 intellect; 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.

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

17 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>

priority areas for both countries, among which were also mentioned at the forum "new materials and chemical procedures, ecology and environmental management, technology living"¹⁸

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"¹⁹. 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"²⁰.

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 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"²¹. Six more new projects of the programs concepts are in a high degree of readiness: 1) "Overcoming" - development of modern technologies of detection and overcoming of resistance of microorganisms to medicines; 2) "Souzbiomembranes" - new medical cellular

18 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/>

19 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/>.

20 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/>

21 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/>

products; 3) "Additivity" - creation of technologies, materials and equipment for 3D-printing; 4) "Accelerator-SPR" - development of complex on the basis of superconductive resonators; 5) "Component F" - creation of innovative technologies of development of photonic component base of the Union State

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 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"²². All this, of course, will still give its result.

²² 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-predlozhit-uskorit-sozdanie-edinogo-nauchno-tehnologicheskogo-prostranstva-sg-448546-2021/>

Belarus-Russia: from Forum of Regions to Enhanced Cooperation

The VIII Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which took place in the summer of 2021, demonstrated quite extensive potential for further development of cooperation between the two countries, which are members of the Union State. If we talk about the contracts signed during this forum, "in the real sector of the economy - it is about \$800 million²³. Certainly, 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 cooperation²⁴. 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"²⁵. 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.

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

23. 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/>

24. 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-belarusiju-vorobjev-448283-2021>

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

\$624.3 million²⁶. 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"²⁷. 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 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

26_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/>

27_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/>

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" ²⁸.

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"²⁹. 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 Oblast and their partners in the neighboring country. Thus, the reserves for cooperation between the regions of the two countries are enormous, as evidenced by the results of the Eighth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia.

28. 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-soglashenija-s-respublikoj-bashkortostan-i-tomskoj-oblastju-448192-2021/>.

29. 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/>

Belarus - Novosibirsk Region: Cooperation with a Focus on Innovation

In June 2021, the fifth meeting of the Business Cooperation Council of the Republic of Belarus and the Novosibirsk Region was held, where the results of the implementation of the Programme for the development of interaction 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, steel structures made of ferrous metals, aluminum bars and profiles, furniture, TV sets, monitors and projectors, meat, cheese and cottage cheese, sugar, fresh and canned fruit 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 programs³⁰.

30 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>

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 implementation of the Belarusian-Russian project for the production of medical products for cardiac surgery³¹. The Belarusian party suggested that the practice of exchanging undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates should be continued and inviting leading scholars within the framework of the Visiting Professor program should be stepped up. 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

31_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/>

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, the organization of participation in international scientific, educational, sports, 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 sports³². 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.

32_Belarus and the Novosibirsk Region are interested in developing cooperation in education [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-novosibirskaia-oblast-zainteresovany-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-obrazovanija-446260-2021/>

Belarus - Voronezh region: to increase the volume of trade turnover

One of the important trade and economic partners of the Republic of Belarus in the Central Federal District of the Russian Federation is the Voronezh Region. The parties signed an agreement on trade and economic, scientific and technical, humanitarian and cultural cooperation within the framework of the V Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, held in October 2018. The trade turnover between them in the first half of 2021 increased by almost 15 percent and amounted to nearly 160 million dollars with the share of supplies from Belarus amounting to almost 102 million dollars. "The basis of Belarusian exports consisted of ferrous metal structures and other metal products; parts and accessories for cars and tractors; cheese and cottage cheese; frozen beef; soybean oil products; butter."³³

In addition, in addition to trade in goods, other areas of cooperation are actively developing here, in particular, construction services. The fact is that the Voronezh region, along with the Kaluga, Pskov and Leningrad regions, is among those Russian regions where "the scheme for the construction of social facilities, which is acceptable to both Belarusian builders and customers, has been worked out"³⁴. In February 2021 a delegation of Belarusian Ministry of architecture and construction has visited our region and discussed with Voronezh partners opportunities of "implementation of joint pilot project in urban village Strelitsa of Semiluki district for construction of school for 520 pupils, participation of Belarusian companies Belenginiringstroyinvest LLC and Building trust №12 OJSC in construction of pre-school and educational institutions in Semiluki district, as well as the prospects for the use of Belarusian prefabricated construction sets in the

33 Pivovar, E. Belarusian delegation headed by Semashko will visit Voronezh / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusskaja-delegatsija-vo-glave-s-semashko-posetit-voronezh-457530-2021/>

34_Exports of construction goods and services of Belarus in January-June amounted to \$637 million [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-stroitelnyh-tovarov-i-uslug-belarusi-v-janvare-ijune-sostavil-637-mln-452543-2021/>

implementation of construction projects³⁵". On the eve of the new school year - at the end of August 2021 - an opening ceremony of a secondary school was held in Strelitsa. It has become a pilot project of cooperation development in the construction sphere between Belarus and Voronezh region on the investment and construction basis - with the involvement of export credit of the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus and such Belarusian manufacturers of construction materials and equipment as "Mogilevliftmash", "Gomelstroyaterialy", "Keramin". The general contractor for construction of the school in quite a short time, less than a year, was Stroitel trust #12 of Mogilev, which has already gained a good image outside Belarus. In the Voronezh region "even at the stage of construction the customers are more than satisfied with the quality and progress of work and are inviting Mogilev residents to participate in the tender for the construction of several more facilities³⁶".

The experience gained in Strelitsa using the investment-construction principle showed that it was beneficial for all project participants. The Russian side has received stable financing and a two-year deferral of payments, as well as high quality of work at an acceptable cost. The Belarusian side sees the benefit in the fact that the loan is subject to a number of conditions - from the obligatory participation of Belarusian companies in the construction, which receive their profits, to the deliveries of construction materials and equipment from Belarus. An important detail: a similar scheme will now be applied to the construction of other social facilities with Belarusian participation in Voronezh Region.

One of such new facilities will be a 2,560-seat megashool in Voronezh. In August 2021 OOO SroyEngineering established with the participation of the Belarusian side received the right to build it. This facility - a building with a variable number of floors of two to four, the construction of which is estimated at three and a half billion Russian rubles - will be one of the largest educational institutions in

35 Zalessky, B.L. Russian vector of export of construction services / B.L. Zalessky // Materialy XVII Miedzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Aktualne problemy nowoczesnych nauk - 2021", Volume 3. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. -- C. 7.

36 Rusyi: sustainable work of labor collectives in the basis of economic well-being of the country [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rusyj-ustojchivaja-rabota-trudovyh-kollektivov-v-osnove-ekonomicheskogo-blagopoluchija-strany-450830-2021/>

Russia. "The megashop will have 110 classes taught in one shift with 220 teachers. <...> The project envisages segregated learning units, the creation of a barrier-free environment, conditions for the development of children's creative potential and sports activities³⁷. Besides, the Belarusian specialists are supposed to reconstruct the region's main sports ground. In this case, "the reconstruction of the football stadium "Fakel" is estimated at 812 million Russian rubles. ³⁸Another school and a kindergarten are planned to be built with the Belarusian participation in the village of Semiluki.

It should be noted that Belarus and Voronezh Region have a number of other areas for cooperation: supplies of machinery, food, waste recycling, and industrial cooperation. In particular, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange "plans to provide a single sales and procurement channel for agricultural producers because it is the products of the agro-industrial complex that have all chances to become the driver of exchange trade with this Russian region" ³⁹. This can be explained by the fact that oilseed meal, fodder supplements, cereals and grains are traditionally in demand in the Belarusian market, and Voronezh Region is known to be one of the leaders in this segment.

In 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the Voronezh Region "plan to increase the volume of trade turnover by 7-9% to the level of 2021 on the basis of bilateral projects"⁴⁰. The outlined specific plans show that the parties have everything they need to solve this task.

37 Pivovar, E. Belarusian specialists will build one of the largest schools in Russia / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-spetsialisty-postrojat-odnu-iz-krupnejshih-shkol-v-rossii-456043-2021/>

38 Pivovar, E. Belarus reconstructs stadium in the Voronezh Oblast and builds educational institutions / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-rekonstruiuet-v-voronezhskoj-oblasti-stadion-i-postroit-obrazovatelnye-uchrezhdenija-457654-2021/>

39 Zalessky, B. L. Orientation on regions as a condition for successful partnership / B. L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVII International scientific and practical conference "Prospects of world science - 2021", July 30 - August 7, 2021: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - – C. 3.

40 Belarus and Voronezh region signed an agreement to increase trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/12260267>

Belarus-Kazakhstan: both industrial cooperation and regional cooperation

In May 2021, the 16th session of the Belarus-Kazakhstan intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation was held, at the end of which the parties adopted a road map or a program of government-to-government activities for 2021-2022. A kind of tuning fork for this meeting were the results of cooperation 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"⁴¹. At the same time, the surplus for the Belarusian side amounted to \$133.5 million.

Among the main activities of the adopted roadmap should be the development of Belarus-Kazakhstan cooperation in industrial cooperation and supply of machinery, where the most important priority should be the establishment of the Minsk tractor plant in Kazakhstan to produce cabins for tractors and front axles, as well as expansion of the jointly produced range of tractors, combines, other agricultural and automotive equipment and units. In addition, the intergovernmental commission supported the proposal to hold joint Belarusian-Kazakh joint scientific and technical projects contests in both countries in 2021 and the following years.

An important place in the development of Belarus-Kazakhstan partnership links is occupied by interregional cooperation. Suffice it to say that about 30 cooperation agreements are in effect 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 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

41 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/promkoopertsija-i-dni-kultury-belarus-i-kazahstan-proveli-zasedanie-mezhpravkomissii-443204-2021/>

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 ⁴²2021, 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." ⁴³The 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 annually⁴⁴. The parties are also discussing other areas of cooperation. In particular, there are prospects for mutually 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

42 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/

43 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/>

44 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>

are talking about "supplies of products with added value, primarily in such sectors as woodworking and food industry"⁴⁵.

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"⁴⁶. 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 developing"⁴⁷. So the foundation for the appearance of the Belarusian industrial center is already here.

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

46 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>

47 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-Kazakhstan: Aiming at Trade and Production Cooperation

In late June 2021, a Belarusian government delegation led by Prime Minister R. Golovchenko visited Kazakhstan, where the two sides made serious progress in the development of bilateral trade and economic relations, which are the foundation for Belarusian-Kazakhstani engagement. The visit took place against the backdrop of quite 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, furniture and medicines⁴⁸. 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 year⁴⁹.

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 million⁵⁰. Bobruiskagromash is also on the list of Belarusian exporters. For the last five years it has been working closely in Kazakhstan's market,

48_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/>

49_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/>

50_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/>

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 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 for 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"⁵¹. 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

51. 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/>

specialists⁵². And there is every reason to believe that such a center could become the core of innovative development.

Among other areas of Belarus-Kazakhstan cooperation that should receive accelerated development in the near future are agriculture and construction. For Belarusian agrarians, the market of that 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 exports of our products in Kazakhstan compared to the previous year: in 2020 it was over \$300 million⁵³. In addition, the parties plan to implement a major joint agricultural project related to milk production. To do this, the Kazakh partners were given a project of a Belarusian farm so that they could then expand this area throughout the country. As for the construction industry, the Belarusian side plans to double its exports. This applies to the supply of construction materials, as well as possible joint investment projects. In particular, we are talking about the construction of cattle farms for 2,400 heads, the expansion of export of sheet glass and ceramic tiles. "In order to systematize the supplies, we are now working to open a trading house that will include Keramin OJSC, Berezastroymaterialy OJSC, Belarusian Glass Company⁵⁴. All these facts testify to the fact that the trade and economic relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan, even under the current difficult conditions, are capable of making a serious addition to the spheres of mutual interest.

52_Golovchenko: the foundation of Belarus-Kazakhstan cooperation is trade and economic relations [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-fundament-belorusko-kazhstanskogo-sotrudnichestva-torgovo-ekonomicheskie-otnoshenija-447956-2021/>

53_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-kazhdjy-god-uvelichivaetsja-447921-2021/>

54_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-strojmaterialov-v-kazahstan-parhamovich-447920-2021/>

Belarus-Kazakhstan: the construction sector as a priority for mutually beneficial cooperation

The construction sector is one of the most important areas of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan, which should receive intensive development in the very near future, as the parties are seriously interested in this interaction. It is explained by the fact that "today in Belarus and Kazakhstan there are multifunctional construction complexes, which continuously carry out their activities, increasing the pace every year⁵⁵. We should note that this line of partnership bilateral relations were discussed in 2021 at the 16th session of the Belarus-Kazakhstan intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation in May, during the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to Kazakhstan at the end of June, and as part of a number of agreements reached between the relevant agencies - the Belarusian Ministry of Architecture and Construction and the Kazakh Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development. Among the priorities for cooperation in this area, the parties see such areas of cooperation as construction of industrial enterprises, 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 in supplies of sanitary faience, heat insulation and roofing materials and 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 axles⁵⁶. Let's add that the work on the specified production facilities in the Kazakh city of Kostanai has already begun. "About 7

55_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/>

56 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>

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"⁵⁷.

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"⁵⁸.

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"⁵⁹.

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 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

57. 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>

58. 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-belorusskij-kvartal-mogut-pojavitsja-v-kazahstane-452553-2021/>

59. 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-utyupin-451644-2021/>

exports chipboard, plywood, wooden windows and doors, wallpaper, paper, cardboard and sawn wood.⁶⁰..". 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"⁶¹. 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.

As we can see, Belarus and Kazakhstan have great prospects for cooperation in the field of construction, and a good foundation has already been laid for long-term cooperation between the construction complexes of the two countries. Let us hope that all these plans mentioned above will be successfully implemented.

60_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/>

61 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-strojmaterialov-v-kazahstan-parhamovich-447920-2021/>

Minsk Region: Chinese Vector of Foreign Economic Relations

In July 2021, the Minsk Regional Executive Committee and China SAMSE Engineering Corporation JSC signed a memorandum under which major healthcare facilities will be built in the Belarusian capital region with the help of the Chinese side. In particular, the adopted document envisages "construction of an infectious diseases hospital in Barysau and a surgical block in the regional hospital, export-import trade in agricultural products, establishment of a baby food factory and solution of the garbage processing problems"⁶². Let us remind you that in our country, SAMSE - a subsidiary of China National Machinery Corporation Sinomach - owns the shares of SZAO Industrial Park Development Corporation, acted as the general contractor for the construction project of the sulfate bleached pulp plant at Svetlogorsk Paper Mill and at such facilities in the Great Stone Industrial Park as the engineering and transport infrastructure, the administrative management building, the plants of Zumlion Bel-Rus LLC and MAZ-Veichai 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 the Minsk Region "pays special attention to the Chinese market, which is promising for the supply of food products"⁶³.

In particular, all milk processing enterprises of Myasomolprom Holding have already received permission to export butter, cheese, milk whey, skimmed and sterilized milk powder to this country. As for the meat processing enterprises and poultry farms of Minsk Oblast, they are actively working on the accreditation for the

62_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-zdravoohraneniya-449374-2021/>

63_Foreign economic activity [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <http://www.minsk-region.gov.by/ekonomika-i-finansy/vneshneekonomicheskaya-deyatelnost5898/>

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.

There is a great potential for intensification of cooperation with Chinese partners in the existing twinning arrangements between the Minsk Region and the regions of this East Asian country. 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, where today more than 30 million people live. 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 business representatives from both sides signed the Cooperation Roadmap for 2019-2029, cooperation agreements between the Chongqing International Chamber of Commerce and the Minsk branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Chongqing Education Committee and the Main Department of Education of the Minsk Region Executive Committee, as well as a number of "product supply agreements between business representatives totaling USD 24 million" ⁶⁴. 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

64. 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/>

for promotion of products of Minsk region enterprises to the Chongqing market. Chongqing" ⁶⁵.

In August 2019, the two sides signed two investment cooperation agreements under 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 the prototypes of the development, respectively. ⁶⁶And in China one of the dominants of the future village will be an exact copy of the Nesvizh Castle. However, the arrival of the pandemic somewhat slowed down the implementation of the plan. And in 2020 the interaction of the parties expressed itself in rendering humanitarian aid 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 from Minsk Region to Chongqing in response to the request of 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 of supplies of Belarusian agricultural products to China and establishment of a joint dairy processing enterprise"⁶⁷. Let us hope that the effective implementation of Minsk Region's cooperation plans with this Chinese region is not far off.

65 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>

66_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/>

67 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>

Minsk - Changchun: twinning with a view to the future

One of the positive trends in the development of the Belarusian capital's foreign economic relations in 2021 is the active interaction between Minsk enterprises and Chinese partners. Suffice it to say that "in January-May this year [2021] the trade turnover between Minsk and China amounted to \$730.6 million, whereas last year it was \$613.8 million over the same period⁶⁸. The main exporters are RUE Bellesexport, Best Meat Company, Meat and Dairy Company, Mobiora, Integral. The basis of Minsk supplies to China included timber, meat and edible by-products of poultry, milk and condensed cream, rapeseed oil, electronic integrated circuits and micro assemblies, tanned or dressed fur skins, measuring and control devices, collections and collectibles for zoology, equipment for measuring or monitoring electrical values, finished media for sound recording. It is important in terms of consolidating this trend in the future to intensify the ties between the Belarusian capital and Chinese twin cities, of which Minsk has four - Changchun (1992), Shenzhen (2014), Beijing (2016) and Shanghai (2019).

Changchun, the administrative center of Jilin Province in northeast China, which is home to about eight million people, occupies a special place in the list of twin cities. May 2022 will mark the 30th anniversary of the agreement on twinning arrangements between Changchun and the Belarusian capital. In 2010 a Belarusian-Chinese technopark was opened in the hi-tech production zone of this Chinese city in order to become a platform for joint projects and further promotion of products not only in China, but also in the neighboring countries. It was based on about 15 companies that were part of the zone and had longstanding sustainable ties with Belarusian scientific and innovation companies. At that time, among the joint projects planned in the technopark was "establishment of an enterprise to produce medical laser equipment, and an agreement on setting up a joint venture to produce high precision electric motors. At the first stage, around 30 hectares of land were allocated

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

to the project for the construction of office and production facilities, and an additional 30 hectares may be further allocated" ⁶⁹. Speaking more specifically, the technopark is divided into six functional zones: Research and Development Center, Project Incubator, Museum, and three complexes - international cooperation, regional interaction, and service. In addition, an art gallery, bookstore, exhibition and concert halls are planned to be created on its territory. But the main thing is that here, "the development is based, among other things, on a fund of 80 Belarusian projects"⁷⁰.

Today there "has already been built a complex of buildings of the technology park, and now one of the pressing issues is to fill it with joint high-tech projects"⁷¹. And it has already received its first three residents: The Sino-Belarusian centre for research and development of precision medical equipment of the BNTU Politechnik technopark and the Belarusian-Chinese technopark in Changchun; the Belarusian-Chinese centre for joint development and application of carbon-carbon composite materials between JSC "SvetlogorskHimvolokno" and the Jilin Lenke company; Belarusian-Chinese center for the development of functional berry crops between the Central Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences, Poleski Zhuraviny LLC and the North-Eastern Institute of Geography and Agricultural Ecology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. To support this growing dynamics of bilateral cooperation, the Belarusian and Chinese sides have set a goal "to focus on improving the conditions for mutually beneficial cooperation, expansion and deepening of contacts, including among young people"⁷². And today, the main thematic areas of the technopark already include such areas as "photoelectronics, laser technology, new

69 Polezhai, T. Belarusian-Chinese Technopark opened in Changchun / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. - - 2010. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/president/view/belorusko-kitajskij-tehnopark-otkrylsja-v-gorode-changchun-134192-2010>

70_China-Belarus Technopark is being built in Changchun [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://primgazeta.ru/news/v-chanchune-stroyat-kitajsko-beloruskij-tehnopark-08-07-2019-05-00-12>

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

72 _About 300 applications were submitted to the Sino-Belarusian Youth Innovation Projects Contest [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/okolo-300-zajavok-podano-na-kitajsko-beloruskij-molodezhnyj-konkurs-innovatsionnyh-proektov-442132-2021/>

materials, construction and energy, agricultural technology and biotechnology, informatics" ⁷³.

The Belarusian-Chinese technology park in Changchun is not the only area for Minsk's cooperation with this twin city. Back in June 2014, the parties agreed to develop business cooperation, for which they planned to hold business forums. "During such events, businessmen will have an opportunity to agree on the implementation of specific projects. In addition, the forums will further strengthen the economic basis of our cooperation" ⁷⁴. In June 2017, the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Changchun People's Government adopted an agreement to establish cooperation in tourism and the development of cultural relations in order to expand twinning relations. And within the framework of the bilateral business forum that took place in the Chinese city, "memorandums of cooperation with Chinese partners were signed by Kommunar'ka Joint Stock Company, Minsk'khlebprom PMC, Zapadnaya Wholesale Base PMC, Belryba OJSC, Minotel OJSC" ⁷⁵. So, the opportunities for expanding cooperation between the two twin cities are undoubtedly very extensive. It is only necessary to use them without losing time, and with mutual benefit.

73 Belarus-China Science and Technology Park in Changchun [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <http://changchun.park.bntu.by/about-technology-park/>

74 Minsk and China's Changchun plan to develop business cooperation [Electronic resource]. -- 2014. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitajskij-chanchun-planirujut-razvivat-biznes-sotrudnichestvo-47498-2014/>

75 Minsk and China's Changchun signed an agreement on cooperation in tourism and culture [Electronic resource]. -- 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitajskij-chanchun-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-turizma-i-kultury-250871-2017/>

Belarus-South Korea: Business Cooperation Council as a Platform for Addressing Topical Issues

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 areas"⁷⁶. 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.⁷⁷ 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

76 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/>

77 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/>

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"⁷⁸.

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"⁷⁹. 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

78 Pak, C.H. Programmatic approach / C.H. Pak // [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: https://export.by/programme_approach

79_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/>

organize digital transformation of machine building enterprises throughout our country"⁸⁰. 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 production sphere in this process"⁸¹. 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.

80 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/>

81 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/>

Belarus - Oman: Business Cooperation Council as a tool for enhancing interaction

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 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"⁸². 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"⁸³. 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"⁸⁴.

82 Cooperation in trade and economic sphere [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: https://egypt.mfa.gov.by/ru/blr_oman/economical/

83 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-uvlicheniju-tovarooborota-211012-2016/>

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

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. 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 complex⁸⁵. 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"⁸⁶.

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"⁸⁷. 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"⁸⁸. There was also talk about the possibility to establish a

85 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/>

86 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/>

87 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/>

88 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/>

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"⁸⁹. 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"⁹⁰.. In addition, the Omani delegation included "a company that is interested in the development of innovative technologies and the IT-sphere"⁹¹.

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.

89_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/>

90_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/>

91 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 - Austria: on the way to mainstream regional cooperation

Interaction between Belarusian and Austrian regions is an important area for the development of bilateral cooperation between the two countries, which Minsk and Vienna appear keen to actualize in the second half of 2021. This is evidenced, among other things, by the meetings and talks that took place in September this year in the Austrian federal state of Vorarlberg, which, along with Upper Austria and Styria, is among the most developed regions in this European country, where about 20 thousand enterprises operate and last year they exported goods and services worth ten billion euros. In this case, it was a question of finding additional ways to promote direct contacts between the business communities of the two countries.

The fact is that Vorarlberg has a number of large industrial companies that already fruitfully cooperate with Belarusian partners and are interested in new joint trade and manufacturing projects with them. Among them is a group of companies Burch Holding, whose leadership has discussed with the Belarusian side in September 2021 the preparation for implementation of projects "related to the optimization of technological and energy processes at Belarusian chemical and oil refineries, energy saving measures in the cement industry, the supply of high-tech equipment for the Belarusian dairy and meat industry"⁹². In addition, these meetings with Austrian industrialists in the federal state of Vorarlberg included talks about opportunities for the organization of high-tech productions in the free economic zones Brest, Grodnoinvest, Minsk, as well as in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park Great Stone.

It should be reminded that in 2020, the trade turnover between the two countries exceeded \$155 million. At the same time, "the volume of Belarus's export to Austria increased by a quarter and amounted to USD 26.3 million. THE VOLUME OF THE BELARUSIAN EXPORT TO AUSTRIA INCREASED BY A QUARTER

⁹² Belarus and the Austrian state of Vorarlberg agree on new joint projects in industry [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-avstrijskaja-zemlja-forarlberg-dogovorilis-o-novyh-sovmestnyh-proektah-v-promyshlennosti-460361-2021/>

AND AMOUNTED TO \$26.3 MILLION⁹³. It happened due to deliveries from Belarus of metal products, insulated wires and cables, oil products, potash fertilizers, furniture, and other woodworking products. It is also important that Austria became the third largest investor in the Belarusian economy in 2020. Austrian investments increased almost by half over this period and totaled nearly \$650 million. It goes without saying that today those investments play "an important role in modernization of Belarusian enterprises in a whole range of industries (energy, transport infrastructure, petrochemistry, machine building, wood and metalworking, food processing, construction, environmental protection, etc.)"⁹⁴. Besides, 82 enterprises with the Austrian capital operate on the Belarusian land as well as 20 representative offices of Austrian companies. All this makes Austria an important trade and investment partner of Belarus in Europe.

In November 2019, during high-level negotiations, an agreement was reached to expand business ties between the Austrian and Belarusian regions. It should be noted that today this interaction is particularly interesting developed in the framework of the cooperation agreement between the Minsk Region and Carinthia, as well as in the framework of twinning relations between the Oktyabrsky District of Minsk and the city of Linz. The agreement on cooperation between Minsk region and Carinthia Federal Land was signed in 2008. Among the promising areas of cooperation the parties mentioned the construction of power sources on local fuels in the Belarusian capital, which helps to reduce dependence on natural gas. The fact is that "there are companies in Carinthia working on generation of heat and electricity from wood, and they not only produce the relevant equipment, but also operate it. In addition, these companies are investors"⁹⁵. In addition, the parties outlined renewable energy sources, electronics, microelectronics, mechanical engineering, metal and wood processing,

93 On the meeting of the Belarusian Ambassador with the leadership of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://austria.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/d59603c902137459.html>

94 Trade and Economic Cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the Republic of Austria [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: https://austria.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/austria/economics/

95 Minsk Region and Austria's Carinthia show interest in cooperation in alternative energy [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-i-avstrijskaja-karintija-projavljajut-interes-k-sotrudnichestvu-v-alternativnoj-246860-2017/>

and the recycling of plastics as promising areas for the development of partnerships. In September 2016, all these plans were reinforced at a joint meeting of the governments of the capital region and the federal state with the intention to pay considerable attention to "issues of interaction in the economic direction"⁹⁶. And in June 2019 in the administrative center of Carinthia - the city of Klagenfurt - a presentation of the economic and tourism potential of the Minsk region was held in order to intensify cooperation between the business communities of the two regions and exchange experiences. For this purpose, "in the Lakeside Science & Technology Park, the Belarusian delegation got acquainted with the Austrian experience of innovation support"⁹⁷. As for cooperation between the Oktyabrsky District of the Belarusian capital and the administrative center of the federal state of Upper Austria - the city of Linz, the project was launched a couple of years ago. Characteristically, the first joint initiative in the framework of this partnership was "the establishment of cooperation between educational institutions of Minsk and Linz. On the Belarusian side it includes Gymnasium No. 56. Contacts have been established with the universities of Linz, BSU, the Academy of Management, the Belarusian Academy of Arts. In future cultural exchanges and economic events are also planned"⁹⁸. So there is a basis for activation of relations between the regions here.

96_Minsk Region and the Austrian state of Carinthia intend to intensify economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-i-avstrijskaja-zemlja-karintija-namereny-aktivizirovat-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-212611-2016/>

97 Grishkevich, A. Economic and tourist potential of Minsk region presented in Austrian Klagenfurt / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ekonomicheskij-i-turisticheskij-potentsial-minskoj-oblasti-prezentovan-v-avstrijskom-klagenfurte-353265-2019/>

98 Kupchina, E. Belarus - Austria: from close political dialogue to humanitarian contacts / E. Kupchina // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belarus-avstrija-ot-tesnogo-politicheskogo-dialoga-do-gumanitarnyh-kontaktov-6767/>

Belarus - Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Fund for International Development: cooperation has begun

One of the sources of investments in the Belarusian economy are resources of international financial institutions. Suffice it to say that "over the last four years alone, credit agreements worth over EUR 1 billion have been concluded. These are projects in the field of road reconstruction, energy efficiency, solid waste⁹⁹...". In 2020 alone, 190 million euros were raised from the World Bank for social sector projects, including supporting the health system during the pandemic. Other international financial institutions, on whose support the Belarusian side counts today, include the Eurasian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the Fund for International Development of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

The OPEC Fund is a new creditor for Belarus, which it has never worked with before and which Minsk considers "very important in terms of future prospects of diversification of borrowing sources"¹⁰⁰. This international financial institution was created in January 1976 on the basis of the Solemn Declaration adopted by the heads of OPEC member countries in March 1975 at a conference in Algiers. Its purpose is to promote cooperation in all areas of the economy with other developing nations. "The main objective of the Fund is to support projects significant for the socio-economic development of non-OPEC countries without significant oil and gas natural resources"¹⁰¹. As a rule, the Fund's resources are allocated for the implementation of projects in the energy, transport, agriculture and health care sectors. The example of

99. Belarus negotiates to attract resources of international financial institutions for infrastructure projects [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-vedet-peregovory-po-privlecheniju-resursov-mezhdunarodnyh-finorganizatsij-na-infrastruktturnye-431523-2021/>

100. Belarusian Ministry of Finance prepares first loan agreement with the OPEC Fund [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minfin-belarusi-gotovit-pervoe-kreditnoe-soglasenie-s-fondom-opek-401543-2020/>

101. Sinkevich S.A. Fund of international development of Organization of countries - exporters of oil (OPEC) - potential partner of Republic of Belarus / S.A. Sinkevich S.A. // Belarus in modern world: Theses of reports of V International scientific conference, devoted to 85-th anniversary of Belarus state university, Minsk, 3 November 2006 / Ed. by: A. Sharapo [et al.]. Editor: A.V. Sharapo [et al.]. - Minsk: Belarusian State University, 2007. - - C. 140.

other post-Soviet countries shows that this international cooperation allows attracting considerable financial resources to the national economy.

For example, **Uzbekistan** has been cooperating with the OPEC Fund since 1999. In recent years funding has been allocated for implementation of two projects in this Central Asian country to the total amount of 26 million dollars. These are the organization of water supply to rural settlements of Kasan and Mubarek districts of Kashkadarya province and development of drinking water infrastructure in Kushrabad district of Samarkand province. And in March 2019, "a project to provide drinking water to 22 settlements in Yangikurgan district and Namangan city at a total cost of \$54 million was approved. USD" ¹⁰². **Armenia** has been cooperating with the OPEC Fund since 2015, when the first loan agreement was signed to promote the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in wholesale trade, manufacturing, food industry and hotel business. And in June 2019, a new "\$25 million loan agreement aimed at promoting foreign trade in Armenia" was signed ¹⁰³. In September 2019, the government of **Tajikistan** signed an agreement to implement a \$10 million project "Improving Water Management in Khatlon Region" with the OPEC Fund. "The goal of the project is to improve water resources management taking into account climate change, as well as to contribute to the growth of agricultural production and increase farmers' income and access to water supply" ¹⁰⁴. In total, the OPEC Fund is currently operating in 135 countries, providing funding as well as grants to support vital projects consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. As of early 2021, it had "approved some 4,000 projects and also

102. OPEC Fund will assist in the implementation of infrastructure projects in Uzbekistan [Electronic draft]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.uzreport.news/economy/fond-opek-okajet-pomosh-v-realizatsii-infrastrukturnih-proektov-v-uzbekistane>

103 Ameriabank and OPEC Fund for International Development enter into \$25 million agreement to develop trade finance in Armenia [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: https://arka.am/ru/news/business/ameriabank_i_fond_mezhdunarodnogo_razvitiya_opek_zaklyuchili_dogovor_na_25 mln_na_razvitie_torgovogo/

104 OPEC Fund will help Tajikistan financially [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <http://kabar.kg/news/fond-opek-pomozhet-tadzhikistanu-finansovo/>

allocated \$1 billion to fund recovery and clean-up efforts for COVID-19 in developing countries" ¹⁰⁵.

In December 2020, the **Republic of Belarus** also signed its first loan agreement with the OPEC Fund. In June 2021, this document took the form of a law after its ratification by the deputies of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus. The \$20 million loan will be used to finance the first phase of the Emergency Public Health Care Program. It is important that these "funds are provided on rather comfortable terms - for 18 years and at an effective interest rate of 4%"¹⁰⁶. It is also important that the loan agreement is not tied to intended use. The loan "must be used for repayment of budget expenditures on COVID-19. That is, there is no restriction that it is only for medicines, equipment or payroll projects" ¹⁰⁷.

Having established the necessary legal framework for cooperation with this international financial organization, the Belarusian side plans to continue the dialogue with the OPEC Fund, both to provide additional funding for health care projects and to attract credit resources to finance priority infrastructure projects.

105_MPs ratified the framework agreement between Belarus and the OPEC Fund [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/deputaty-ratifikirovali-ramochnoe-soglasenie-mezhdu-belarusju-i-fondom-opek-446368-2021/>

106_Yaroshevich: Cooperation with the OPEC Fund is of great value for Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/jaroshevich-sotrudnichestvo-s-fondom-opek-predstavljaet-bolshuju-tsennost-dlja-belarusi-446455-2021/>

107_Pinevich tells what the \$20 million OPEC Fund loan will be spent on [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/pinevich-rasskazal-na-cto-potratjat-20-mln-kredita-fonda-opek-432347-2021/>

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: Far Abroad as the Benchmark for Cooperation

In 2021 the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) is taking active steps to expand cooperation with business partners in non-CIS countries - Asia, Europe, Africa.

For example, the People's Republic of China is among such states in Asia, and its market is considered to be one of the most promising on the BSE. After all, "45 Chinese companies are accredited at the exchange, and more than half of them regularly participate in trading. Besides, every two weeks there are special trading sessions for selling sawn timber in the People's Republic of China¹⁰⁸. 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 dollars, which is almost twice as much as for 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 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.

There is another fact concerning Asian vector of BUTB activity: in June 2021 the first company from the Republic of Korea - Nam Chang Co. Ltd., which is a large supplier of timber products to the Korean market, as well as having its own production facilities and a branched warehouse 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."¹⁰⁹. It is interesting that with the appearance of this Korean participant, the geography of exchange trade on the BUTB started covering 65 countries.

¹⁰⁸ 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/>

¹⁰⁹ 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-lesoproduktsii-v-respubliku-koreja-444466-2021/>

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"¹¹⁰. In the future the range of goods bought through the 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 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"¹¹¹. 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

110_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/>

111_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/>

semi-finished leather goods "vet-blue" worth \$35,000"¹¹². 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"¹¹³. And the goods were safely delivered to the end user. In June 2021 the delegation of 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"¹¹⁴. 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.

112 Italy starts buying Belarusian leather products at ButB [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/italija-nachala-pokupat-belorusskuju-kozhevennuju-produktsiju-na-butb-444946-2021/>

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

114 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-razvitii-birzhevoj-torgovli-s-belarussiju-444144-2021/>.

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: Focus on Regions as a Prerequisite for Successful Partnership

The intensification of work with companies from the regions was one of the main trends in the interaction of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) with the Russian Federation in the first half of 2021. All in all, the 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 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."¹¹⁵. 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 leaders in this segment"¹¹⁶. 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.

115_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/>

116 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/>

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"¹¹⁷. 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 products, fodder additives, electrical equipment, BOPET films and polyester produced by Pskov companies" through the BUTB¹¹⁸.

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"¹¹⁹. The fact that the interest in business cooperation between the parties continues to grow is evidenced by the BUTB seminar for St.

117_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-birzhevujutorgovlju-molochnoj-produktsiej-s-jaroslavskoj-oblastju-450278-2021/>.

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

119_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-torgovopromyshlennaja-palata-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-445340-2021/>

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" to Belarus¹²⁰. 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 provide them with an additional sales channel and an opportunity for direct access to the largest Belarusian consumers.

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".¹²¹ In the next five years, the Belarusian government will continue to pursue the most important objective in terms of the development of foreign economic activity and international cooperation, and plans for joint activities are envisaged for both sectors of the economy and the Russian regions.

120_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/predpriyatija-orlovskoj-oblasti-rossii-planirujut-prodavat-metalloproduksiju-i-oborudovanie-cherez-445119-2021/>

121 Zalesky, B. With the purpose of sustainable development. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - – C. 29.

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange as a tool to increase exports

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 Russia¹²². 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 period of 2020"¹²³. 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.

122_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/>

123_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/>

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 the BUTB, 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 growing¹²⁴.

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 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 products¹²⁵.

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

124 BUTB almost 4 times increased the export 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/>

125 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/>

stockbroker in April 2021, announced 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"¹²⁶. At the same time, the company intends to buy raw materials and sell the finished product exclusively through the BUTB.

Finally, another trend that eloquently demonstrates that the Belarusian 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" ¹²⁷. As for the industrial and consumer goods, the subject of 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.

¹²⁶ 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/>

¹²⁷ The amount of transit transactions on the BUTB has increased 3.5 times since the beginning of the year [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/summa-tranzitnyh-sdelok-na-butb-s-nachala-goda-vyrosla-v-35-raza-452802-2021/>

Great Stone Industrial Park: Towards a Medical Cluster

In June 2021, the Republic of Belarus adopted a decree that improves the legal regulation aimed at improving the investment climate in the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone. In particular, this document provides for: 1) making the park's administration more independent by transferring additional powers from local authorities in terms of administrative procedures; 2) expanding the types of activities of the industrial park; 3) supporting start-ups; and 4) creating preferential conditions for large investment projects with investments of over USD 50 million.

New areas of Great Stone's activities include, first of all, creation and development of productions in the fields of biopharmaceuticals, medical products and medical services. A very attractive innovation in this regard are special conditions for the development of medical activities on the territory of the park, where it will be possible to provide medical services using medicines, medical equipment and products, treatment methods of foreign countries without mandatory registration in Belarus and without the need to obtain a license for medical services. For the manufacturers the terms will be significantly reduced and the procedures for registration and re-registration of medicines and medical devices, as well as for clinical trials, will be simplified. In other words, all these changes "open up great opportunities for the development of a medical and pharmaceutical cluster in the park, and primarily in the field of traditional Chinese medicine" ¹²⁸.

The focus on the development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the field of medicine in the context of the fight against the coronavirus epidemic is very timely. After all, Chinese traditional medicine "has unique advantages in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation after diseases. <...> It not only has a good therapeutic effect on mild COVID-19, but also has clear advantages in treating critically ill

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

patients, so that mortality in severe cases has dropped from 21% to 5%" ¹²⁹. Using the Great Stone platform to realize the existing potential of Belarusian-Chinese collaboration in the field of public health can give a serious positive result in terms of preventing new "waves" of the coronavirus epidemic.

It should be reminded that today the Velikiy Kamen industrial park has 73 residents, 12 of which operate in the medical area. "These are companies from Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Russia and the USA" ¹³⁰. An important component of the medical cluster being created here will be the company "Novoera Biotech", which became a resident of the industrial park in March 2021. Its founders include Jingtai Institute of Culture and Economy, Xishanqingxue Chinese Medicine Clinic LLC (Beijing) and Xishanqingxue Pharmaceutical Technology Company LLC (Beijing). The new resident will take up a project related to Chinese traditional medicine. "Medicines, supplements planned to be produced are based on environmentally friendly natural material. They will be in demand not only to help in the treatment of coronavirus, but also in the treatment of colds, flu, asthma" ¹³¹. In particular, the production of Linlan Yiqing, aimed at effectively treating coronavirus infection, will be organized. It is assumed that at the first stage, the produced drugs, the production of which is planned to start in 2021, will be exported to Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and India.

In March 2021, plans were also announced to set up the Eurasian Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine at Great Stone, which will provide medical services to the industrial park's residents, its Chinese and foreign employees, as well as interact with research institutions, healthcare institutions of Belarus and neighboring countries to share experience in traditional Chinese medicine. In May 2021, a

129_Xiaoyun, S. Belarus and China: growth of business cooperation and interaction in drug production in coronavirus treatment / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belarus-i-kitaj-rost-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-i-vzaimodejstvie-v-vypuske-lekarstv-pri-lechenii-koronavirusa-7873/>

130_Center for Expertise and Testing in Health Care and Great Stone Park have agreed to cooperate [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsentr-ekspertiz-i-ispytaniy-v-zdravoohraneni-i-park-velikij-kamen-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-441421-2021/>

131_New Great Stone resident launches Chinese medicine project [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachinaet-proekt-v-sfere-kitajskoj-mediciny-433283-2021/>

memorandum on cooperation was signed by the Industrial Park Development Company and the Centre for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare RUE. And in July, Great Stone signed an agreement to establish a Sino-Belarusian zone for advanced cooperation and an international park for traditional Chinese medicine and healthcare there, which imply a new model for cooperation between Belarus and China in the above area.

All these facts testify to active steps to deploy in the industrial park "an extensive cluster, which will gather the developments in the field of Chinese medicine. <...> A medical center for diagnostic services is expected to appear in the future. This area is already in the works"¹³². Besides, the development of medical tourism is also envisaged here, for which a kind of Medical Village will be built near Volmian Reservoir - clinics and different medical facilities in the area of rehabilitation.

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

Free Economic Zone "Grodnoinvest" as a platform for expanding the export component

The economic entities of Grodno Region increased their supplies to foreign markets by more than a third in the first half of 2021. As a result, the volume of exports amounted to about 1.2 billion dollars. "Goods of the region were delivered to 90 countries.¹³³ And the surplus of the foreign trade turnover approached \$500 million. Several positive trends can be singled out in the achievement of such high indicators of the Grodno region. One of them is a successful economic activity of the residents of Grodnoinvest Free Economic Zone that includes 75 companies from 40 foreign countries. They successfully carry out investment projects in woodworking and furniture production, machinery and metalwork, food, chemical and light industries, agriculture and export a wide range of products, with the largest share of foreign supplies being woodworking products and furniture, food and chemical products, machinery and equipment, textile products. In the first half of the year, their exports increased by half. "In January-June 2021, residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" exported products worth \$647 million. The key markets were Russia (60% of total exports), Poland (13%) and Ukraine (9%).¹³⁴ Deliveries to the European Union countries doubled - up to \$156 million. Among them are Belgium, Hungary, Spain, the Netherlands, and Latvia. The export of the FEZ residents has grown even faster in such countries as Italy, Egypt, Czech Republic, France, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Estonia, and Lithuania. It allowed to double the positive balance of foreign trade of free economic zone at once. It is noteworthy that new investment projects are currently being implemented in FEZ "Grodnoinvest" which in the near future will have a positive impact on the export component of the FEZ and the Grodno region.

In particular, at the FEZ site in Smorgon, Europlasteks Invest LLC is taking up its second project as a resident of Grodnoinvest. The first involves the construction of

¹³³ Exports of goods from the Grodno Region in the first half of the year increased by more than 30% [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-tovarov-grodnenskoj-oblasti-v-pervom-polugodii-uvelichilsja-bolee-chem-na-30-454994-2021/>

¹³⁴ Exports by residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest in the first half of the year increased by 1.5 times [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-v-pervom-polugodii-vozros-v-15-raza-455957-2021/>

a vertically integrated complex for the production of cotton yarn and cotton yarn products. The second project is an organization of metalworking production in Smorgon, the total cost of which will exceed five million euros. The first products are planned to be launched there in 2022. Most of it "will be oriented towards exports to Central Asia, Western Europe, the Middle East.¹³⁵ To this end, new production facilities will be constructed and existing facilities will be modernized and state-of-the-art process equipment will be purchased for the production of steel pipes and sections. As a result, the new investment project will create dozens of new jobs, bring unused facilities into use and partially replace imported products from abroad.

It should be noted that nine resident enterprises, including those with investments from the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and other countries, are successfully operating today on the industrial sites of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" in Smorgon District, which since 2015 "have invested over \$470 million in the creation of modern export-oriented enterprises"¹³⁶. It was here that almost half - 48 percent - of all industrial production of FEZ Grodnoinvest was produced in 2020. As for the other FEZ industrial sites, "the city of Grodno accounts for 29% of production, while the Lida District accounts for 8%. The leaders in terms of growth rate for 2020 were Smorgon (136%), Grodno (123%) and Svisloch (123%) districts"¹³⁷.

And there are good reasons to believe that new domestic and foreign investors will soon appear here. The fact is that in August 2021 the second start-up complex of a large-scale infrastructure project to reconstruct the city's main traffic artery - Industrial Avenue, which connects residential development with the FEZ industrial park and includes a modern four-lane road, engineering infrastructure networks, landscaping and landscaping of the adjacent territory, and lighting was put into

135_A foreign investor organizes steel pipe production in Smorgon [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/inostrannyj-investor-organizuet-v-smorgoni-proizvodstvo-stalnyh-trub-454884-2021/>

136 The second part of the infrastructure project of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" is completed in Smorgon [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vtoraja-ochered-infrastrukturnogo-proekta-sez-grodnoinvest-zavershena-v-smorgoni-455912-2021/>

137 Industrial production of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents increased by 14% [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/promyshlennoe-proizvodstvo-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-vyroslo-na-14-430320-2021/>

operation in Smorgon. In 2021, the third stage of the project, which envisages the creation of a roundabout, as well as the provision of the industrial park with additional electricity, will be launched here. All this will make the business environment for both existing and potential FEZ residents even more attractive.

The FEZ industrial site in Grodno also continues to develop, with two new residents already registered in 2021. The first one is the company "Unis Trade", which is setting up production of metal structures in Grandichi. The second one, OV-PlastSnab LLC, was registered here in June 2021. It will set up an enterprise that will produce a wide range of products from synthetic polymers. Besides export of finished products and import substitution, the investment project of the new resident will make it possible to form additional preconditions for development of the chemical cluster in the free economic zone at the industrial site in the "Auls" district, where such residents as PCC Consumer Products Navigator LLC, Belagrofert LLC, Grodnoraiagroservice JSC, PT Typhoon LLC are already successfully implementing their projects. And "recently the construction of a unique plant for the production of glass products began" ¹³⁸. So, the prospects for growth of the export component are most serious here as well.

138_A new FEZ resident "Grodnoinvest" will create in Grodno innovative production of products from synthetic polymers [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-sozdast-v-grodno-innovacionnoe-proizvodstvo-izdelij/>

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