

# From trust to cooperation

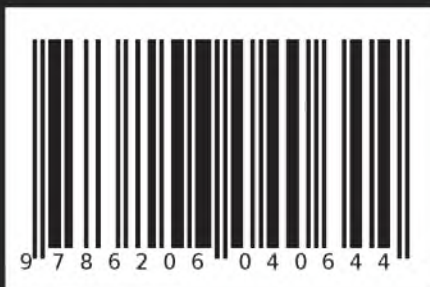
Export is one of the main development priorities of the Belarusian economy. In its structure, it traditionally accounts for more than half of the gross domestic product, being one of the main sources to ensure sustainable economic growth in the country. Foreign trade in the Republic of Belarus has undergone certain structural transformation during the post-crisis period of world trade development. Today, a course has been taken to increase the share of science-intensive, high-tech products in the structure of export, diversification of deliveries to new markets. Belarus has traditionally pursued a multi-vector foreign economic policy, maintaining foreign trade contacts with the majority of foreign countries and taking an active part in international integration processes. Fundamental changes in foreign trade associated with Belarus' participation in the Eurasian Economic Union, the formation of a common economic space, and forthcoming accession to the World Trade Organization are the most important developments, which have a significant impact on the conditions for export activities. How are these tasks and related issues dealt with in practice today? This study is about that.



## **Boris Zalessky**

He has almost fifty years of professional experience in journalism.

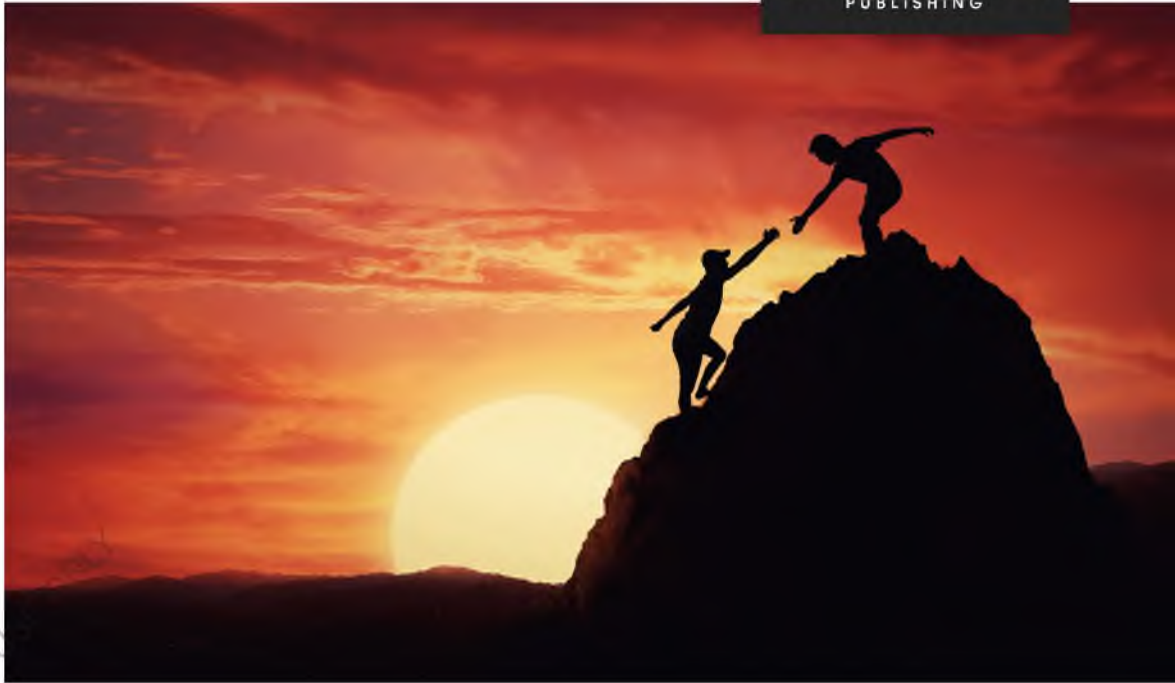
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*Collection of articles*

**Boris Zalessky**

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one billion dollars in January-September, are achieving high results in 2021. The geography of these supplies is very wide: Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Germany, Denmark, Egypt, Italy, Lithuania, Great Britain, and Turkey. "Over 9 months a foreign trade surplus of \$540 million has been recorded, which is the best figure among Belarus' FEZs.<sup>4</sup> . As a result, FEZ residents already account for over 43% of exports and over 30% of industrial output of the entire Grodno Region. The machine-building segment is developing especially dynamically in this FEZ. Suffice it to say that here "the export of computer, electronic and optical equipment has doubled in nine months of this year [2021]"<sup>5</sup> . In total, nine companies have so far registered in Grodnoinvest in the mechanical engineering sector and another seven in metalworking. In total, there are 75 companies with investments from 40 countries that are residents of the free economic zone. They successfully implement investment projects in woodworking and furniture production, mechanical engineering and metalworking, food, chemical and light industry, 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.

It is noteworthy that new investment projects are being established in the FEZ "Grodnoinvest", which in the near future will have a very positive impact on the export component of both the FEZ itself and the entire Grodno region. In particular, at the Smorgon site of the FEZ, Europlastex Invest LLC has already taken up its second project as a resident of Grodnoinvest. The first involves the construction of a vertically integrated complex for the production of cotton yarn and cotton products. The second project is to set up a metal processing plant in

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<sup>4</sup> Exports by residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest in January-September exceeded \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksporthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-v-ianvare-sentiabre-prevysil-1-mlrdrezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-v-ianvare-sentiabre-prevysil-1-mlrd-472551-2021/>

<sup>5</sup> Residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest double exports of electronic and optical equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sezhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-udvoili-eksport-grodnoinvest-udvoili-eksport-elektronnoj-i-opticheskoj-apparatury-i-opticheskoj-apparatury-473562-2021/>

Smorgon, the total value of which will exceed five million euros. The first products are expected to be manufactured there in 2022. Most of it "will be oriented towards exports to Central Asia, Western Europe, the Middle East."<sup>6</sup> . To this end, new production facilities will be built and existing ones will be modernised and state-of-the-art process equipment will be purchased for the production of steel pipes and profiles. 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 already successfully operating 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"<sup>7</sup> . This is where almost half - 48 percent - of all industrial production in the Grodnoinvest FEZ was produced in 2020. As for other FEZ industrial sites, "the city of Grodno accounts for 29% of production and the Lidsky District for 8%. The leaders in terms of growth rate for 2020 were Smorgon (136%), Grodno (123%) and Svisloch (123%) districts"<sup>8</sup> .

And there is good reason 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 the residential area with the FEZ industrial

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<sup>6</sup> A foreign investor will set up steel pipe production in Smorgon [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/inostrannyjhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/inostrannyj-investor-organizuet-v-smorgoni-proizvodstvo-stalnyh-trubininvestor-organizuet-v-smorgoni-proizvodstvo-stalnyh-trub-454884-2021/>

<sup>7</sup> The second part of the infrastructure project of FEZ Grodnoinvest is completed in Smorgon [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vtoraia-ocheredhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/vtoraia-ochered-infrastrukturnogo-proekta-sez-grodnoinvest-zavershena-v-smorgoni-455912-2021/>

<sup>8</sup> Industrial production of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents increased by 14% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/promyshlennoehhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/promyshlennoe-proizvodstvo-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-vyroslo-naproizvodstvo-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-vyroslo-na-14-430320-2021/>.

park and includes a modern four-lane road, engineering infrastructure networks, landscaping and landscaping of the adjacent territory, and lighting was put into operation in Smorgon. In 2021, the third stage of the project will be launched here, involving the creation of a roundabout, as well as the provision of the industrial park with additional electricity. All of this will make the operating conditions for both existing and potential FEZ residents even more attractive.

The FEZ industrial site in Grodno also continues to develop, with two new residents registered in 2021. The first one, the company Unis Trade, is setting up production of metal constructions in Grandichi. The second one, OV-PlastSnab LLC, was registered here in June 2021 and will set up an enterprise to produce a wide range of products from synthetic polymers. In addition to exporting finished products and import substitution, the investment project of the new resident will make it possible to form

additional prerequisites for the development of a chemical cluster in the FEZ on the industrial site in the Auls area, where projects are already being successfully implemented by residents such as PCC Concentr ProducteNavigator LLC ,

Belagrofert LLC , OAO

"Grodnoraiagroservis", PT Taifun Ltd. And "the construction of a unique plant for the production of glass products has recently begun"<sup>9</sup> . So, the prospects for growth of the export component are very serious here as well.

Residents of the **Free Economic Zone "Vitebsk"** have increased export supplies by more than 60 percent in the first three quarters of 2021, bringing their volume to \$623 million and cooperating with partners from 73 countries. As a result of export diversification efforts, FEZ participants managed to increase shipments of their products to the far-abroad countries by almost half, and to Great Britain, the United Arab Emirates, India, Pakistan, Israel, Brazil -

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<sup>9</sup> A new FEZ resident "Grodnoinvest" will create an innovative production of synthetic polymer products in Grodno [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyi-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-sozdast-v-grodno><https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyi-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-sozdast-v-grodno-innovacionnoe-proizvodstvo-izdelij>

by three times and more. In addition, "for the first time, fibre-optic cables were supplied to Afghanistan, gas and smoke analysers were shipped to Poland, furskins to China, linen to Chile and insulated cables to France"<sup>10</sup>. It seems that the more than 50 investment projects being implemented in this FEZ will soon be joined by a number of new ones, as foreign investors are showing interest in setting up production of composite materials and in the field of steel construction,

In particular, "a Swedish investor, in cooperation with a partner in China, is willing to invest about \$100 million to build a plant for processing low-grade timber. In particular, "a Swedish investor, in cooperation with a partner from China, is ready to invest about \$100 million in the construction of a plant for processing low-grade wood. Representatives of the Netherlands are looking for a site for furniture production with an investment volume of about €100 million. <...> A German company is planning to set up the production of decking worth about \$9 million"<sup>11</sup>. In addition, Chinese businessmen have already registered a legal entity in Vitebsk to implement a woodworking project with an expected investment of about \$26 million. All in all there are "about 8 more projects in the pipeline, the implementation of which will attract at least \$160 million to the economy of the Vitebsk region"<sup>12</sup>.

It is worth mentioning that currently 56 investment projects are being implemented in this FEZ in 16 sectors with participation of investors from 15 countries, including Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia, Poland, Lithuania, the UK, Israel, Cyprus and Spain. In the first quarter of 2021, three new residents registered here with projects to develop the production of special

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<sup>10</sup> Residents of the Free Economic Zone "Vitebsk" increased exports of goods by almost 62% in January-September [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez--v-janvare-sentjabre-uvlechili-eksport-tovarov-pochti-navitebsk-v-janvare-sentjabre-uvlechili-eksport-tovarov-pochti-na-62-471298-2021/>

<sup>11</sup> Investors from 4 countries show interest in implementing projects in the FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource ]: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investory-iz-4-stran-proiavlaiut-interes-k-realizatsii-proektov-na-ploschadkah-sez-vitebsk-472892-2021/>

<sup>12</sup> Residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" increased production by more than 40% in 9 months [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-za-9-mesiatsev-narastili-proizvodstvo-produktsii-bole-chem-na-40-471323-2021/>.

hydraulic press equipment, construction materials and modernization of facilities for the production of import-substituting components for agricultural machinery and cars. "The projects attracted \$12.2 million in foreign direct investment on a net basis, which was more than 40% of the figure for the Vitebsk region as a whole."<sup>13</sup> .

The residents of **FEZ Gomel-Raton** also exported more than half of the goods produced in January-September 2021. More than USD 1.1 billion worth of goods were shipped to the markets of 63 countries. The top five importers here are Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and China. It is not a bad indicator if you consider that on October 1, 2021, 69 economic entities, of which 30 - the companies with foreign capital from 16 countries worked in the Free Economic Zone. In 2021 three more resident companies with about \$50 million in investments were registered here. All in all "\$76.3 million of direct foreign investment has been attracted in FEZ Gomel-Raton for 9 months for the realization of investment projects"<sup>14</sup> . This is almost half of the total volume of investments in the Gomel region.

By the end of 2021, the FEZ was expected to increase production by 18.5 percent by upgrading existing facilities and registering new residents with promising investment projects. For example, "the Alkopak company is building a new building in which it plans to produce new medical products. "Polikap is working on a project to produce disposable tableware made of cellulose"<sup>15</sup> . Residents such as Veza-G and Multipak will also expand their production. MIRTEK-Engineering LLC, which produces energy metering devices, has already been supplying more than half of its output to foreign markets - Russia,

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<sup>13</sup> Residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" increased production by more than 40% in 9 months [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-za-9-mesiatsev-narastili-proizvodstvo-produktsii-bole-chem-na-40-471323-2021/>.

<sup>14</sup> Residents of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" for 9 months increased the production of industrial products by more than 42% [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-za-9-mesiatsev-uvlechili-proizvodstvo-promproduktsii-bole-chem-na-42-471389-2021/>

<sup>15</sup> The residents of FEZ Gomel-Raton intend to increase production by 18.5% in 2021 [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-namereny-uvlechit-objem-proizvodstva-na-185-v-2021-godu-434576-2021/>

Kazakhstan, Armenia, and European countries. Recently, it has started outsourcing manufacturing of SMD and DIP components - a promising direction, which is relevant to all companies involved in the production of electronic modules and assemblies. Note that "in 2020, \$230 million of investment has been invested in the Gomel-Raton FEZ"<sup>16</sup>.

As for **FEZ Brest**, its potential was presented in January 2022 at the World Expo 2020 in the United Arab Emirates for the first time on the platform of the Belarusian national exposition with a separate pavilion. The numerous visitors to the world forum saw such FEZ resident-companies as Santa Bremor JV LLC, STiM group of companies, and Barhim JSC demonstrate their capacities and exhibits. The very presence of FEZ "Brest" at "EKPO-2020" eloquently illustrates the growing role of this "multi-profile economic territory, where manufacturing, technological, logistical activities can develop"<sup>17</sup>, for the economy of Brest region.

It should be reminded that in 2021 the residents of this FEZ accounted for one fifth of the total industrial output of this Belarusian region. "Goods worth \$936 million were delivered outside the country (growth rate - 123.9%). The share of the FEZ in the total exports of Brest Oblast was 29%, with the foreign trade surplus of \$289 million"<sup>18</sup>. In December 2021 there were 72 residents, including 42 with foreign capital, and 21.5 thousand people working there. An additional 700 jobs were created in the FEZ in 2021. At the end of December 2021 the 73rd resident of Brest free economic zone was "Green-Glass" LLC with the investment project on modernization of the production of glass articles up to the full cycle. "The investor intends to invest over €500,000 in the

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<sup>16</sup> FEZs are a driver of territorial development - Asluk [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-iaвлиaiutsia-draiverom-razvitiia-territorii-asliuk><https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-iaвлиaiutsia-draiverom-razvitiia-territorii-asliuk-434551-2021/>.

<sup>17</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Free economic zones and special economic zones as points of growth in the regions / B.L. Zalesky // Social and Humanitarian Studies. - 2020. - №3. - C. 67.

<sup>18</sup> The investment potential of Brest FEZ to be presented at an exhibition in Dubai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investitsionnyjhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/investitsionnyj-potentsial-sez-brest-predstaviat-na-vvstavke-v-dubaepotentsial-sez-brest-predstaviat-na-vvstavke-dubae-480588-2022/>.

business within three years. The product range includes processed sheet glass, tempered and multi-layered flat glass, glass mirrors, single- and double-glazed windows"<sup>19</sup> .

Prior to that, in October 2021, Cesar Industrial LLC, a company with Belarusian-Israeli capital, based in Kobrin and specializing in lumber, became a resident of the FEZ. The new resident has leased a plot of land and acquired ownership of the buildings on it, where, after reconstruction, production of "furniture boards made of laminated chipboard and glued laminated timber products, which have a wide range of applications, will be transferred. A large proportion of the products will be exported to foreign markets"<sup>20</sup> . The production of these products is planned to start within three years. Kesar Industrial, s.r.o. intends to invest more than half a million euro in the first phase of this investment project. Interestingly, the new resident will be the fifth company operating in the FEZ in the wood processing sector.

It should be noted that the Brest FEZ today is characterized not only by the emergence of new residents, but also by the expansion of the activities of companies that have already been operating here for a long time. The fact is that in 2016, its territory was expanded mainly due to companies that had vacant space. In five years, about 80 companies have settled on the unused facilities of former industrial giants, including the Electric Lamp Factory, Carpet Factory and Electromechanical Factory. In general, residents of Brest FEZ are now located both in the regional centre and Brest district, and in Baranovichi, Pinsk, Kobrin and Ivatsevichi.

For example, in August 2021, Anrex FLLC, which has been a FEZ resident for a quarter of a century, bought production and administrative and household premises from Brest-based Tsvetotron OJSC and set up furniture production

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<sup>19</sup> New resident registered in FEZ Brest [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogo-rezidenta-zaregistririvali-v-sez-brest><https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogo-rezidenta-zaregistririvali-v-sez-brest-476969-2021/>

<sup>20</sup> Woodworking company joins the ranks of Brest FEZ residents [Электронный ресурс]. -2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/derevoobratyvaiushee-predpriatie-popolnilo-chislo-rezidentov-sez-brest-462782-2021/>

there. "It is planned to invest about Br60 million and create 500 jobs in the project. The first start-up complex has already been commissioned..."<sup>21</sup>. As a result, the city got rid of unprofitable buildings of the former factory and got a new production facility. Another example in this context is Arlait & K LLC, a company with Russian-Chinese capital, registered in the Brest FEZ in November 2015 and located in the Aeroport Industrial Zone. Over the past six years, the company has created a high-tech LED production facility here, which is used to produce LED strips and lighting devices that are in demand not only in Belarus, but also in Russia, as well as in Poland and Germany. Suffice it to say that in 2020 it shipped \$3.7 million worth of its products to foreign partners. In 2021, a new line was commissioned here, which "will double the capacity of the plant and produce up to 3,000 linear lights and 350 km of LED strip per month"<sup>22</sup>. This will make it possible to increase the number of employees to 250.

A number of other existing resident companies are also planning to expand their production facilities. Polipol Mebel Bel LLC, registered here in the summer of 2020 and the "seventh company in the FEZ with German capital"<sup>23</sup>, is building a large plant for the production of upholstered furniture in Ivatsevichi with a planned investment of 26 million euros. "A new line for the production of smoked sausages is going to be launched by IE "Inko-Food" Ltd. Santa Bremor JV Ltd. is investing at least \$5 million annually in the development of production"<sup>24</sup>. All these facts clearly show what serious investment and production potential FEZ "Brest" has today in terms of prospective

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<sup>21</sup> An investor on the premises of the Brest "Tsvetotron" created a furniture production [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investor-na-ploschadijah-brestskogo-tsvetotrona-sozdal-mebelnoe-proizvodstvo-457323-2021/>.

<sup>22</sup> A manufacturer of LEDs in the Brest FEZ plans to double production [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvoditel-svetodiodev-v-sez-brest-planiruet-udvoit-obiem-proizvodstva-450766-2021/>.

<sup>23</sup> Zalessky, B.L. FEZ "Brest": prospects inspire optimism / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Modern European science - 2020", June 30 - July 7, 2020: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Five new enterprises to be launched in Brest FEZ this year [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/piat-novyh-predpriatii-zapustiat-v-etom-godu-v-sez-brest-433948-2021/>.



development. And which, once demonstrated at the world exhibition Expo 2020 in Dubai, may get new powerful impulses in terms of further development.

In general, it remains to add that free economic zones in Belarus, as a model of economic relations in the regions, have already become an effective tool for the development of the national economy. And the adoption of amendments to the law "On Free Economic Zones" will certainly only contribute to maintaining the positive development dynamics that they have already managed to achieve in the past more than 20 years since the emergence of FEZs in Belarus.

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## CHAPTER 2

### Free trade in services, innovation, science, education

The presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which was based on the principles of continuity and aimed to implement the long-term elements of the development strategy of this integration association in the post-Soviet space in various areas, ended in 2022. The measures taken in 2021 under the auspices of the Belarusian presidency combined with the efforts of the states at the national level have made it possible to secure the growth of the main macroeconomic indicators in the CIS in January-August. "Thus, industrial output grew by 4.3%, cargo transportation (excluding pipeline transport) by 5.2%, retail trade turnover by 8.5%"<sup>25</sup>. The CIS free trade zone, which provides favourable conditions for the development of the economies of its member states, has contributed greatly to these positive trends.

In 2021, thanks to Belarus' chairmanship of the CIS, active work continued with other states on a draft **agreement on free trade in services**, which is designed to provide additional opportunities for sustainable economic development in the post-Soviet space. An important detail here is that "work on the preparation of this agreement has been going on for nine years, since 2012"<sup>26</sup>. The result of this work should be the signing of this document in May 2022. Its particular relevance lies in the fact that trade in services now accounts for about half of the CIS countries' gross product. Lifting barriers in this area will further boost economic cooperation in the post-Soviet space where integration links have been steadily restored. "Thus, in the first half of this [2021] year, mutual trade grew by almost 27%, foreign trade turnover by more than a quarter, the volume

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<sup>25</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus has always advocated the development of the CIS and aims to develop regional integration [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10051>.government.by/ru/content/10051

<sup>26</sup> Lebedev: CIS free trade in services agreement may be signed in May 2022 [electronic resource]. -2021. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/politics/view/lebedev-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-uslugami-v-sng-mozhet-byt-podpisano-v-mae-2022-godamozh-et-byt-podpisano-v-mae-2022-goda-469260-2021](https://www.belta.by/politics/view/lebedev-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-uslugami-v-snghttps://www.belta.by/politics/view/lebedev-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-uslugami-v-sng-mozhet-byt-podpisano-v-mae-2022-godamozh-et-byt-podpisano-v-mae-2022-goda-469260-2021)

of gross domestic product in the whole Commonwealth increased by almost 4.5%, cargo transportation and industrial production are growing"<sup>27</sup> .

Another very important document developed during the presidency of Belarus in this international organization is **the Complex Action Plan for 2021-2025** to implement the CIS Interstate Innovation Cooperation Program until 2030, which was approved by the CIS Council of Heads of Government in November 2021. It is worth recalling that the October (2021) meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government adopted a Statement on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Commonwealth, in which, while considering trade and economic cooperation as a key factor in further deepening economic integration and sustainable development of the CIS member states, the leaders of the said states stated the need "to direct efforts towards stable economic growth through green economy development , digitalisation, industrialisation cooperation, the widespread use of innovation..."<sup>28</sup> .

As a reminder, **the Interstate Programme for Innovative Development** was completed in 2020.

The main objective of the **CIS cooperation agreement, which was** approved in October 2011, was to "create an interstate space that combines the capabilities of national innovation systems, gives a sustainable systemic character to innovation development and promotes the effective use of scientific and technological developments and inventions"<sup>29</sup> . During its implementation, certain results have been achieved. These include the formulation of a functioning mechanism for the implementation of interstate projects, the creation of a legal framework for successful interaction between the participants, and the formation of an innovation infrastructure.

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<sup>27</sup> Mishustin: a free trade agreement on services will stimulate economic cooperation in the CIS [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mishustin-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-uslugami-prostimuliruet-ekonomicheskoe-vzaimodejstvie-v-sng-469224-2021/>

<sup>28</sup> CIS Heads of State adopted a Statement on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Commonwealth [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/glavy-gosudarstv-sng-priniali-zaiavlenie-v-sviaz-s-30-letiem-sodruzhestva-464684-2021/>

<sup>29</sup> Interstate Programme of Innovation Cooperation of CIS Member States for the period until 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/19142cis.minsk.by/page/19142>

With respect to the participation of the Republic of Belarus in the implementation of the provisions of the completed programme, Belarusian organizations have become executing agencies in nine out of ten inter-State projects. Among the most significant of them is the development and implementation of an integrated information system for aerospace forecast monitoring of natural emergencies, which makes it possible to reduce damage from such situations and the cost of dealing with their consequences by up to 20 per cent through timely measures. Another interesting example in this context is the development of a highly sensitive test system for the detection of hepatitis E in humans, wild and domestic pigs, rabbits and deer, on the basis of which Belarus has developed a system of anti-epidemic measures for the population. A continuation of systematic work in this area was the adoption in November 2020 by the Council of CIS Heads of Government of the decision on **the Interstate Programme for Innovation Cooperation of the Member States Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for the period up to 2030**. This document is "a system of interlinked objectives, resources and timelines, taking into account lessons learned. In particular, much attention is paid to attracting extra-budgetary sources of financing for interstate innovation projects"<sup>30</sup>. The main task of the new program is organization of large-scale production of knowledge-intensive competitive goods and perspective developments in the common Eurasian innovative space. One of the innovations that distinguish the new document from the previous one is that the new program has become more flexible in its implementation. Whereas previously there was a strict condition that at least three Commonwealth countries participate in an innovation project, now it "envisages the possibility of launching projects involving two CIS member states, and other interested countries can join later"<sup>31</sup>. The focus on

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<sup>30</sup> On the outcome of the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/page/3758/89205/e-cis.info/page/3758/89205/>

<sup>31</sup> CIS innovation cooperation programme made more flexible and adaptive - Shumilin: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/programma-innovatsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-stran-sng-stalabolee-gibkoj-i-adaptivnoj-shumilin-421456-2020/>

measures to increase the efficiency of innovative activity is dictated by the fact that, in the period until 2030, world economic processes will be characterized by increased uncertainty and instability, even possible radical changes under the influence of geopolitical factors. But the most important trends, which in the next decade can really affect the development of world processes, will remain new technologies, innovative solutions in the economy, creation of a large number of own high-tech industries.<sup>32</sup> And in this respect, the Commonwealth still has a lot to do in order to get rid of those obstacles in the field of innovations, which even today the CIS member states continue to face, where there is still "a certain inertness, the time factor is not taken into account, the level of strategic planning in the spheres of innovative development and international scientific and technical cooperation is low, the measures to support small and medium, including youth, science and technology and innovative entrepreneurship are not effective enough". Successful implementation of the provisions of the new programme would help to achieve the anticipated effect in 14 directions at once, including: increasing the number of breakthrough technologies, discoveries and promising developments by providing promotion of research results in the market; building capacities within the CIS to increase the number of companies - world technological leaders; expanding scientific, technological and innovation cooperation as a basis for creating joint competitive products, including in third countries' markets.

As for the approved Integrated Action Plan 2021-2025, which contains specific activities, initiatives and projects with responsible actors and deadlines, they are structured into five main

The legal and regulatory areas ,  
Organisational, informational, financial and personnel support for the implementation of the programme. The successful implementation of this plan is expected to strengthen the position of the CIS in the new architecture of the

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<sup>32</sup> Interstate Programme for Innovation Cooperation of CIS Member States for the period until 2030. - M., 2020. - C.8.

world economic system, as well as to create conditions for to achieve outcomes such as "development interstate innovation cooperation, the creation of scientific, technical and technological reserves to organize large-scale production of knowledge-intensive competitive goods and services within the common innovation space of the Commonwealth"<sup>33</sup>. Complementing these provisions, a programme for the development of industrial complexes until 2025 is also envisaged within the framework of this integration association, which will be another step in the development of the CIS.

Another priority objective of Belarus' presidency of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 2021 was to achieve a synergetic effect from the cooperation of its member states in various areas in the post-Soviet space in order to involve the widest possible range of participants in the deepening of integration, while respecting the principle of multi-level and multi-speed integration. In the area of **science and technology**, the aim has been to "create effective mechanisms to link the efforts of CIS member states in the fields of science, technology and innovation, to strengthen the innovation component of economic growth through the creation of national innovation systems and the implementation of inter-state innovation projects".<sup>34</sup> This is one of the first concrete steps towards this goal. One of the practical steps was the organization in Minsk during the last decade of November 2021 of several important events aimed at strengthening links and expanding contacts between the community of scientists and scientific organizations of the CIS countries, including the 3rd Forum of Scientists, the 9th Meeting of the Council for Cooperation in

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<sup>33</sup> The CIS has approved a five-year action plan for innovative cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-utverzhdenu-meroprijatij-na-piatiletku-po-innovatsionnomu-sotrudnichestvu-469337-2021/>

<sup>34</sup> Concept of the Presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/19314cis.minsk.by/page/19314>

Fundamental Science and the 29th session of the Interstate Council for Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation.

**The 3rd CIS Scientists Forum** brought together over 150 participants - heads and leading scientists of academies of sciences, major scientific and research centres, educational organizations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. Its main objectives were to: 1) intensify scientific and technical cooperation among Commonwealth states; 2) stimulate new collaborative research; 3) propose ways of developing innovation policy in the post-Soviet space; 4) form an "international

mobility of scientists and young specialists in the professional community"<sup>35</sup> .

At the three round tables - "Status and Prospects of Basic Science Development", "Improvement of Scientific Cooperation in the Digital Age", "Innovative Scientific Research" - it was noted that in the context of the transition to a digital model of the Commonwealth economy, the importance of science increases dramatically, where interaction is based on a strategy of mutually beneficial and equal cooperation and where the basic principles are such as 1) preservation and further development of historical and cultural ties of the peoples of the CIS countries; 2) joining efforts to implement national interests in the implementation of scientific programs and projects; 3) formation of mutually beneficial partnerships of scientific organizations of the Commonwealth countries; 4) flexibility of collective cooperation formats and decision-making mechanisms in the implementation of joint scientific research. The Declaration "Science in the Context of Global Challenges", adopted at the end of the 3rd Forum, noted that "the scientific and technical policy pursued by the Commonwealth states is aimed at uniting the efforts of scientists of the CIS

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<sup>35</sup> CIS scientists to adopt a declaration on cooperation in science [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/uchenve-stran-snghttps://www.belta.by/society/view/uchenve-stran-sng-...-deklaratsiju-o-sotrudnichestve-v-nauchnoi-sfereprimut-deklaratsiju-o-sotrudnichestve-v-nauchnoi-sfere-471428-2021/>

countries in the search for new forms of interaction in the sphere of scientific research to solve problems in modernizing national socio-economic systems and increasing the level of well-being and quality of life of people"<sup>36</sup>.

The **9th meeting of the CIS Council for Cooperation in Fundamental Science** noted the increasing role of fundamental science in the development of society as the basis of prosperity and well-being of future generations of our countries and proposed to develop a two-year cooperation plan in this area, focusing on areas of particular interest to the CIS scientific community - ecology, space exploration, biotechnology, digitalization, and aimed at addressing existing problems of interaction in the scientific sphere in the region. "One of them is the lack of centralized funding for scientific development"<sup>37</sup>. In December 2021, a draft list of promising research projects corresponding to the priority areas of basic research of the CIS countries was finalised and sent to the Commonwealth states for completion of intra-state coordination. "Six states take part in the work on the draft list: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan"<sup>38</sup>. The agreed draft includes research in such areas as physical, mathematical and chemical sciences, information and communication technologies, new substances and materials, biological, agricultural and medical sciences, biotechnology and genetic engineering, environmental management and protection, nuclear, alternative and renewable energy, mechanical engineering and instrumentation, socioeconomic and human sciences, and space exploration.

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<sup>36</sup> Representatives of the CIS scientific community adopted a declaration in the context of global challenges [Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/predstaviteli-nauchnogo-soobschestva-stran-sng-prinjali-deklaratsiju-v-kontekste-globalnyh-vyzovovov-471791-2021/>

<sup>37</sup> The CIS intends to develop a plan for cooperation in the basic sciences [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-namerenyhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-namereny-razrabotat-plan-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-fundamentalnyh-naukrazrabotat-plan-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-fundamentalnyh-nauk-471803-2021/>

<sup>38</sup> CIS experts have finalised the list of projects in priority areas of basic research [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/eksperty-sng-dorabotali-perechen-proektov-po-prioritetnymhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/eksperty-sng-dorabotali-perechen-proektov-po-prioritetnym-napravlenijam-fundamentalnyh-issledovaniinapravlenijam-fundamentalnyh-issledovani-473644-2021>



At the **29th meeting of the Interstate Council for Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation**, a draft concept of scientific-technical and technological cooperation of the CIS countries was announced, which envisages addressing such tasks as "development and introduction of new breakthrough technologies in priority directions of scientific and technological activities, as well as creation of new high-tech industrial enterprises to produce knowledge-intensive and innovative products"<sup>39</sup>. The system for training highly qualified scientific and engineering personnel will also undergo significant changes in the near future.

The concept of Belarus' presidency in the CIS in 2021 also assumed that one of the priorities of the presidency in this international organization would be to further strengthen humanitarian ties and expand contacts in the field of education and science. In this case, it is about the continuation of work on the development of the legal framework aimed at the formation of a **common educational space** of the Commonwealth, promotion of "partnership relations between educational organizations of the CIS member states, implementation of joint educational projects and programs"<sup>40</sup>.

It should be recalled that the **Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Education** between the Commonwealth Member States was signed in May 1992 in Tashkent. In this document, the parties agreed to support joint scientific research, "to contribute in every way to the maintenance and development of direct educational partnerships between the territories and educational institutions of the member states"<sup>41</sup>. Five years later, in January 1997, the legal framework for cooperation in this area was supplemented by the **Agreement on Cooperation in the Formation of a Common (Common)**

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<sup>39</sup> The CIS has drafted a concept for scientific and technical cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-podgotovilihttps://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-podgotovili-proekt-kontseptsii-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestvaproekt-kontseptsii-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-471701-2021/>

<sup>40</sup> Presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2021 [Electronic resource]. 2020. - URL: <https://www.mfa.gov.by/multilateral/belaruscischairmanship2021/>

<sup>41</sup> Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Education [Electronic resource]. - 1992. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/7570cis.minsk.by/page/7570>

**In the CIS educational space**, in which the parties to this document declared their intention to create "a mechanism for the coordination of integration processes in the field of education, training and attestation of scientific and scholarly

of pedagogical staff"<sup>42</sup> and established **the Council for Cooperation in the Field of Education** of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Since then, at the initiative of this coordinating body, some forty documents have been adopted in the CIS. These include: decisions on the concepts of development of adult education (2006) and distance learning (2007); agreements on the coordination of work in the field of informatization of educational systems (2007), on professional development of teachers of educational organizations (2007), on the mutual recognition of documents on higher/higher

In addition, 17 institutions of higher education within the Commonwealth have been granted the status of basic organisations in various areas of educational activity. In addition, within the Commonwealth, 17 institutions of higher education have been given the status of basic organisations in various areas of educational activity, including Belarusian universities: the Sakharov International State Environmental Institute of the Belarusian State University - basic in the CIS in environmental education; the Republican Institute of Professional Education - basic in professional training, retraining and professional development in vocational and secondary education and training of teachers in the CIS.

Another interesting project in the Commonwealth's educational sphere is **the CIS Network University**, which was created in 2009 by a consortium agreement signed by the rectors of 11 leading universities of the Commonwealth with the aim of training highly qualified personnel and developing a common CIS educational space. Initially, it was planned to train personnel in the

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<sup>42</sup> Agreement on Cooperation to Form a Common (Common) Educational Space of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 1997. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/7552>

humanities and social disciplines. However, in 2010, the technical vector began to develop, and such areas as oil and gas engineering and construction began to appear. The essence of training specialists here is that "when students from Commonwealth countries study at a network university, they have an opportunity to obtain a bilateral education document, and this automatically improves their competitiveness in the labour market"<sup>43</sup>. We note that from 2010 to 2019, 1,100 Master's students have studied here. And today 38 universities from 9 CIS member states "participate in this project"<sup>44</sup>, including two domestic universities - Belarusian State University and Belarusian National Technical University. In particular, undergraduates of Belarusian State University study international law in the fields of "Management", "Economics", "Philology" and "International relations". And "upon successful passing the state examination and defending a master's thesis a graduate receives two diplomas: Russian and Belarusian"<sup>45</sup>.

In May 2020, during the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government, the Agreement on the Establishment and Operation of the CIS Network University was signed, which effectively legalised at the governmental level the interuniversity project that had existed for more than a decade. In December 2020 the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus ratified this document, which should give a new impetus to the development of educational interaction in the Commonwealth. The entry into force of this agreement, signed in order to improve the quality of training in higher education institutions, the implementation of joint scientific and scientific-technical projects of priority to the participating countries, support the learning of languages, culture and traditions of the peoples of the CIS countries,

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<sup>43</sup>. More than 800 people were trained at the CIS Networking University [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-800-chelovek-proshli-oboobchenie-v-setevom-universitete-sng-337497-2019/>.

<sup>44</sup> Information on the activities of the Council for Cooperation in the Field of Education of the Commonwealth of Independent States to Form a Common Educational Space in the CIS [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://e-cis./cooperationinfo/cooperation/3063/79383/>

<sup>45</sup> CIS Network University [Electronic resource]. -2020 . - URL: <https://ums.bsu.by/ru/am/cis-net-university>

"will create the necessary conditions to expand and deepen contacts between the countries in the humanitarian and educational sphere"<sup>46</sup> , will strengthen cooperation and inter-university relations in the field of higher education in Eurasia. As a result, it will facilitate the implementation of the task of creating a common CIS educational space.

Among the concrete steps that have been taken in 2021 to promote the formation of a common Commonwealth educational space is also the **6th Congress of CIS Teachers and Education Workers**, which was held in late October in Dushanbe and brought together representatives of the education system from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with its main theme being 'The Commonwealth of Independent States Education Space - a Strategic Resource for Sustainable Development'. We should say at once that holding such an event is a unique phenomenon in world practice, as 'in no other region of the world is there inter-state cooperation in the field of education, covering the entire spectrum of educational services, from childhood to vocational guidance for young people, higher vocational education and adult education'<sup>47</sup> .

The Fifth Congress was held in Bishkek in October 2018. The past three years have shown that the national education systems of the Commonwealth countries have successfully developed in a number of areas: from improving management and updating the content of education, introducing innovative information technologies to creating a modern educational environment ,

enhancing professional development, and improving the quality of education.

The positive trends of this period include 'intensification of cooperation between the CIS countries through bilateral and multilateral agreements on education'.

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<sup>46</sup> Deputies ratified the agreement on the establishment and functioning of the CIS Network University [e-resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/deputaty-ratifikirovali-soglashenie-ob-uchrezhdenii-i-funktsionirovanii-setevogo-universiteta-sng-420406-2020/>

<sup>47</sup> Congress of Teachers and Education Workers of the CIS Member States [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/show?id=7774> [cis.minsk.by/page/show?id=7774](https://cis.minsk.by/page/show?id=7774)

Among the positive trends of this period is the "intensification of interaction between the CIS countries on the basis of bilateral and multilateral agreements on education"<sup>48</sup>. In particular, over the past period, the Belarusian education authorities have concluded 10 cooperation agreements and contracts, including an agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan on cooperation in secondary vocational education.

Among other projects implemented by the Belarusian side in the period between the Congresses, we should mention a few more. In terms of the implementation of modern approaches in the field of education in Belarus, a series of manuals "Competence-based approach" for grades 1-9 in all curricula has been published. In 2019, a scientific study "Development of scientific and methodological support for the formation of supraprofessional competencies of specialists for innovative industries in the process of continuous professional education" was carried out. Speaking about formation of common approaches to assessment of results of competence-based education and development of state and independent systems of education quality assessment, it should be noted that the World Bank project "Modernization of Higher Education in the Republic of Belarus" planned to create a new national agency for education quality assurance and to join the European Association of Quality Assurance Agencies. And at the beginning of December 2021, "the government agreed on the establishment of a National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education by the Ministry of Education"<sup>49</sup>.

In developing the digital infrastructure and technology in education management, Belarus has been developing a unified information and education resource

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<sup>48</sup> The CIS countries intend to intensify cooperation in the field of education [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/strany-snghttps://www.belta.by/society/view/strany-sng-namereny-aktivizirovat-vzaimodejstvie-v-obrazovatelnoj-sferenamereny-aktivizirovat-vzaimodejstvie-v-obrazovatelnoj-sfere>467074-2021

<sup>49</sup> The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education will be created in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/natsionalnoehttps://www.belta.by/society/view/natsionalnoe-agentstvo-po-obespecheniju-kachestva-obrazovanija-sozdatut-v-belarusiagentstvo-po-obespecheniju-kachestva-obrazovanija-sozdatut-v-belarusi-473393-2021>

methodological support for the educational process, and as of September 1, 2020, a "Profile Learning" resource has been in operation to provide educational and methodological support for the study of academic disciplines at an advanced level in the tenth grade. In pre-school education, tools are being developed for the evaluation of its quality in the context of the competence-based approach, as well as scientific and methodological support for the development of a national system for the evaluation of the quality of education at the pre-school, general secondary and special education levels. It is expected that, on the basis of the results obtained, a national system for the evaluation of the quality of preschool education will be created in the country by 2030.

In Belarus, additional education programmes for children and young persons are supported in the following areas: technical, sports and technical, tourism and local history, environmental and biological, physical education and sports, art, socio-economic, socio-pedagogical, culture and leisure, military and patriotic, natural and mathematical, and social and humanitarian. A special type of educational institution, the National Children's Technology Park, is being created to work with gifted children and young people on a systematic basis. The integration of education and science in the CIS has been actively pursued over the past three years, including through cooperation between scientific institutions and universities. For example, Belarusian participants have interacted particularly effectively and will continue to expand these partnerships with institutions and organizations in Azerbaijan, Russia and Uzbekistan under agreements on scientific, scientific-technical and innovative cooperation. The resolution adopted by the 6th Congress outlines a detailed programme of action for the development of the Commonwealth's common educational space, where much attention is paid to international cooperation. In particular, it provides for 'expanding the range of educational programmes, including joint programmes, to develop the import and export of educational services in the CIS Member States'<sup>50</sup>. All this will make it possible to form a common educational space here at all levels: pre-school, school, secondary and higher professional, postgraduate and academic.

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<sup>50</sup> Resolution of the VI Congress of Teachers and Education Workers of the Commonwealth of Independent States (28-29 October 2021, Dushanbe) [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/cooperation/3173/96167/e-cis.info/cooperation/3173/96167/>

## On the way to the first forum of the regions

In December 2021, the tenth meeting of the Council for Interregional and Border Cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was held to discuss preparations for the first CIS Forum of Regions. Due to the unfavourable epidemiological situation, the forum will be held in 2022. The draft programme of the forum envisages four panel sessions, an exhibition of agricultural products and achievements of CIS regions. The sessions will focus on the development of regional cooperation in industry, transport and transit, agriculture and entrepreneurship. The focus of the Council on this topic is explained by the fact that "it is inter-regional cooperation which is the basis for further development of mutual trade and entails cooperation in the market of production, investment and labour resources"<sup>51</sup>. The figures show how relevant this issue is for the Republic of Belarus. More than 800 documents on trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian cooperation with partners in the CIS countries are in force in Belarusian regions. In January-October 2021 the foreign trade turnover with these countries increased by 36 per cent and came close to forty billion dollars. Particularly active is this interaction with the regions of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

In particular, **Russia accounts for** about 80 per cent of all inter-regional cooperation documents, and one of the most successful forms of developing these partnerships has been the holding of bilateral regional forums. The eighth such forum took place in 2021, during which contracts in the real sector worth \$800 million were signed, facilitated by the fact that "there are about 80 regions involved in this interregional cooperation on the Russian side"<sup>52</sup>. One of the leaders on the Russian side is **Moscow**. Over ten months of 2021 trade turnover between the Republic of Belarus and Russia increased by 27 per cent at once

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<sup>51</sup> Strahar: Interregional cooperation is the basis for developing CIS mutual trade [Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/strahar-mezhregionalnoe-sotrudnichestvo-javljaetsja-bazisom-dlja-razvitiia-vzaimnoj-torgovli-v-sng-474946-2021/>

<sup>52</sup> Zalessky, B.L. From forum of regions - to the expansion of cooperation / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVII International scientific and practical conference "Proceedings of academic science - 2021", August 30 - September 7, 2021: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 16.

and exceeded \$3.7 billion, with a surplus of over \$1.2 billion for the Belarusian side. This was due to deliveries from Belarus of cars, footwear with natural leather uppers, non-alloy steel bars, railway and tram cars, cheese and cottage cheese, hosiery, dried, salted and smoked fish, butter, furniture and parts thereof. It is also a fact that "some 20 per cent of the Russian capital's food imports come from Belarus, especially dairy products. <...> A lot of Belarusian-made vehicles are used by the city's public utilities and services, and modern eco-friendly electric transport is particularly valued by the population..."<sup>53</sup> . It should be assumed that all these positive trends will be preserved and continued in the new cooperation programme of the parties for 2023-2025, which will be developed in 2022.

As for **Kazakhstan**, its regions interact with Belarusian partners under some 20 documents on interregional cooperation. A good example in this regard is demonstrated by the **Kostanay** and **Grodno** regions, which signed a cooperation roadmap for 2022-2023 at the end of September 2021. For the Belarusian region, this Central Asian country is generally one of the five largest foreign economic partners, with trade turnover having increased by half over the last five years. At the same time, "now Grodno Region supplies its products to 13 regions of Kazakhstan. The main commodity positions include meat and dairy products, woodworking and mechanical engineering products. In the first six months of 2021, exports to Kostanay Region totaled \$3.1 million."<sup>54</sup> . It is believed that the adoption of the road map, which deals with the intensification of cooperation in investment and trade and economic spheres, as well as in agriculture, tourism, culture, healthcare and education, will give new impetus to this interaction and lead to new supplies of products from Grodno Region

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<sup>53</sup> Industry, Transport, Humanitarian Sphere: Minsk Discussed Areas of Cooperation between Belarus and Moscow [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/promyshlennost-transport-gumanitarnaja-sfera-v-minske-obsudili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-s-474907-2021/>.

<sup>54</sup> Grodno and Kostanay regions have signed a road map for cooperation development [Electronic resource]. - 2021. : <https://www.belta.by/society/view/dorozhnuju-kartu-po-razvitiiju-sotrudnichestva-podpisali-grodnenskaj-a-i-kostanajskaja-oblasti-462339-2021/>



enterprises and possible organization of joint assembly production in Kostanay Region.

The capitals of **Minsk** and **Bishkek** remain the flagships in the development of cooperation between the regions of Belarus and **Kyrgyzstan**. In November 2021, the twin cities reached new practical arrangements in the implementation of the partnership. The fact is that the Kyrgyz capital needs about 1,200 units of urban public transport today. Both CNG buses and electric buses are needed. A number of Minsk enterprises have already expressed their willingness to provide necessary assistance to their partners from Bishkek. All the more so because "several watering cars manufactured in Belarus" have recently appeared there<sup>55</sup>, which the capital's residents liked. As a result, Minsk discussed not only supplies of certain vehicles from the Belarusian capital, but also establishment of joint ventures in Bishkek to service and assemble them. In this regard, we would like to remind you that "an assembly facility for BELARUS tractors has already been set up in Bishkek. Machines for the needs of the municipal sphere can also be assembled there. The site is ready, there are qualified specialists, a service centre. To start production, we need to solve the issues related to the supply of components"<sup>56</sup>.

The partnership ties between the regions of Belarus and **Uzbekistan** developed in an interesting way in 2021. In particular, in May, the Belarusian **Gomel Region** and the Uzbek **Navoi Region** outlined the main areas for the development of bilateral cooperation in trade and economic, investment, education, tourism, and agriculture, as well as in the operation of technology parks and the creation of favourable conditions for the development of the IT industry. These agreements were a logical continuation of the agreement on cooperation in trade, economic,

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<sup>55</sup> Mayor of Bishkek: we are interested in buying Belarusian machinery [Electronic resource] . URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mer-bishkeka-my-zainteresovany-v-zakupke-belorusskoi-tehniki-469870-2021/>

<sup>56</sup> Bishkek plans to purchase machinery from MTZ for street cleaning [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bishkek-planiruiut-zakupit-u-mtz-tehniku-dlja-uborki-ulitsdlja-uborki-ulits-470601-2021/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bishkek-planiruiut-zakupit-u-mtz-tehnikuhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/bishkek-planiruiut-zakupit-u-mtz-tehniku-dlja-uborki-ulitsdlja-uborki-ulits-470601-2021/).

scientific, technical and humanitarian spheres, which the two regions signed in 2019 at the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan. Now, the Gomel and Navoi regions have expressed their intention to significantly intensify their partnership.

Gomel residents are developing cooperation with other Uzbek partners, cooperation agreements with which were signed at the First Forum of Regions of the two countries. Back in July 2020, an online forum of representatives of business circles of the Gomel and **Fergana regions** was held, with Belarusian business entities such as Gomel Meat and Milk Holding Management Company OJSC, Gomeloblprom state enterprise, and Sozh Trading House OJSC among its participants. The participants of the online forum constructively considered "the issues of bilateral cooperation in terms of trade in fruits and vegetables, textiles, meat and dairy products, construction materials, agricultural machinery and equipment. The parties also discussed the possibility of opening a trading house of Fergana region in Gomel"<sup>57</sup>. In particular, one of the major exporters of fruit and vegetable products in Ferghana Region - Uz-Segang JV LLC - proposed cooperation with partners in Gomel Region in the form of establishment of a single distribution centre for Uzbek vitamin products. Gomeloblprom applied to textile company A. Akbarali Ltd. Akbarali to establish supplies of cotton yarn to the Belarusian region.

**Khorezm** Region is Gomel Region's third Uzbek partner. The cooperation agreement signed by the parties in July 2019 named "trade and economic, scientific and cultural spheres, tourism, and healthcare" among promising areas for cooperation<sup>58</sup>. At the same time, Gomselmash entered into a cooperation

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<sup>57</sup> Uzbek companies are interested in cooperation with partners from the Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/uzbekskiethttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/uzbekskie-kompanii-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-s-partnerami-iz-gomelskoi-oblastikompanii-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-s-partnerami-iz-gomelskoi-oblasti-398194-2020/>

<sup>58</sup> Gomel region will sign three agreements with Uzbekistan at the First Forum of Regions [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskai-a-oblasta-oblast-podpishet-tri-soglasheniija-s-uzbekistanom-na-i-forume-regionovpodpishet-tri-soglasheniija-s-uzbekistanom-na-i-forume-regionov-356296-2019/>

agreement with Urgenchkormmash, a joint-stock company from Khorezm Region, a forage harvester plant. All in all, in preparation for the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, Gomel Oblast companies signed contracts with their Uzbek partners worth nearly 1.5 million dollars.

All of these facts suggest that the Uzbek market is very promising for enterprises in the Gomel region. In 2020, the trade turnover of the Belarusian region with this Central Asian country grew by almost 65 percent and exceeded 17 million dollars. "Polymers, dairy products, wallpaper, screws, hardware, timber are exported to Uzbekistan. Among the exporters are KolorMaster JLLC (polyvinyl chloride), Svetlogorsk Welding Electrode Plant LLC (mechanical devices, machine tools), Milkavita OJSC, Kalinkovichi Dairy Plant UE (milk powder), SvetlogorskHimvolokno OJSC (chemical yarns)"<sup>59</sup>.

Obviously, the first Belarus-Uzbekistan Regions Forum, already mentioned above, which took place in Minsk in July 2019 and opened up "new horizons of cooperation in such areas as industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, food industry, etc., has contributed significantly to boosting cooperation between specific regions of the two countries industry, as well as in the cultural, humanitarian, information and communication and scientific spheres"<sup>60</sup>. The Forum was attended by over two hundred participants from Uzbekistan alone, including representatives from Andijan, Bukhara, Jizzax, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana and Tashkent provinces. The forum's impact is borne out by the fact that 26 direct agreements between the regions were adopted at the forum. In addition to the three documents of Gomel Oblast, agreements on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian spheres were signed by the

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<sup>59</sup> Gomel Region and Navoi Region of Uzbekistan intend to develop cooperation in IT-industry [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-navoijskij-region-uzbekistana-namerenv-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-it-otrasli-440395-2021/>

<sup>60</sup> The Forum of Regions has opened new horizons for Belarus and Uzbekistan in many areas - Safaev [e-resource]. -2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/forum-regionov-otkrvl-novve-gorizonty-dlja-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-vo-mnogih-oblastjiah-safaev-356612-2019/>

regions of Grodno with Samarkand and Andijan, Vitebsk with Namangan, Brest with Bukhara and Syrdarya. Similar documents have been signed between the Mogilev, Andijan, and Dzhizak regions. Minsk Oblast Executive Committee has agreed on cooperation in the social sphere with Tashkent Oblast. An action plan has been signed for 2019-2020 to implement the agreement between the Tashkent Khokimiyat and the Minsk City Executive Committee on trade, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation"<sup>61</sup> .

The growing importance of Uzbek partners for the Belarusian regions as a whole is evidenced by these 2021 figures. According to the results of the first quarter, the volume of mutual trade between Belarus and Uzbekistan increased by another quarter to \$67.5 million. An important detail: "The export of Belarusian goods during this period rose by 37.4% to \$58.7 million <...>. The balance of Belarus' foreign trade in goods was positive and totaled \$49.8 million"<sup>62</sup> . This happened due to the increase of supplies of chilled and frozen beef, medicines and polymers, tractors and trucks to the Uzbek market. Without the most committed involvement of Belarusian regions, it would have been extremely difficult to achieve such results.

**Tajikistan** is also among those countries in Central Asia whose trade and economic relations with the regions of the Republic of Belarus have been developing particularly intensively over the past year and a half. Thus, while in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between them increased "almost threefold and exceeded \$111 million"<sup>63</sup> , in January-August 2021 alone, the turnover came

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<sup>61</sup> Package of interregional agreements on cooperation signed at the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/paket-mezhregionalnyh-soglashenii-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisan-na-i-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-356632-2019/>

<sup>62</sup> Belarus-Uzbekistan trade turnover in the first quarter increased by 25.3% to 67.5 million

[Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-mezhdu-belarusiiu-i-uzbekistanom-za-i-kvartal-uvlichilsj-a-na-253-do-675 -mln-440482-2021/>

<sup>63</sup> Ambassador: Belarusian projects in Tajikistan are not justified, they have an economic impact

[Electronic resource ]

URL:

<https://www.belta.by/politics/view/posol-belorusskie-proektv-v-tadzhikistane-ne-prosto-obosnovanv-a-daj-ut-ekonomicheskij-effekt-459969-2021/>

close to \$110 million, "including Belarusian exports - \$107.5 million"<sup>64</sup> . Supplies from Belarus such as tractors and tractor trucks, sugar, motor vehicles designed to carry ten or more people, oil products, insulated wires, cables, paper and cardboard stationery and tyres played a major role in achieving those figures. The fact that there are already "about 20 dealers of Belarusian manufacturers - in Tajikistan - speaks volumes. We are talking about assembly of tractors, Bobruiskagromash and Gomselmash machinery. Joint projects in the dairy industry are also being prepared,"<sup>65</sup> , in each of which cooperation between specific regions of the two countries should play a decisive role.

Recall that the theme of intensifying interregional

In April 2021, the 14th meeting of the Tajik-Belarusian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation discussed "topical issues of cooperation in industry and production cooperation, agriculture and transport, health and education, investment and information technology"<sup>66</sup> . An important detail: today such regions of Tajikistan and Belarus are developing trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural ties within the framework of signed agreements on cooperation: Sughd region - with Vitebsk, Minsk and Mogilev regions, Khatlon and Gomel regions, the cities of Minsk and Dushanbe, Khujand and Mogilev, Yavan and Uzden districts.

**Minsk Region is one of** the most active participants in Belarus-Tajikistan interregional cooperation, whose foreign trade turnover with Tajikistan more than tripled and exceeded USD 22 million in the first eight months of 2021. Implementation of the cooperation agreement with **Sughd Region**, signed in 2014, played a key role in achieving such indicators. At the same time, the

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<sup>64</sup> Trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://tajikistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/https://tajikistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/reasons/belarus\\_tajikistan/tajikistan/trade\\_economic/economic/](https://tajikistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/https://tajikistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/reasons/belarus_tajikistan/tajikistan/trade_economic/economic/).

<sup>65</sup> Denisenko: friendship of the leaders of Belarus and Tajikistan is a good basis for all-round cooperation [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/denisenko-druzhiba-liderov-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-horoshaja-osnova-dlja-vsestoronnego-sotrudnichestva-460655-2021/>

<sup>66</sup> Zalessky, B.L. In the Course of Positive Dynamics of Cooperation / B.L. Zalessky // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Efektivni nastroje modernich ved - 2021". Volume 5: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 13.

parties do not intend to rest on their laurels, outlining new plans for mutually beneficial partnerships. In particular, at a meeting between regional leaders A. Turchin and R. Ahmadzoda in early November 2021, they discussed a number of new promising areas of cooperation. One of the obvious priorities is the Belarusian light industry, which can use Tajik cotton as its raw material. Belarus also expressed its interest in setting up joint ventures to process cotton in Tajikistan. As for

of the Tajik partners of the Belarusian capital region, they are interested "in supplying vegetables and fruits to Belarus, as well as receiving quality Belarusian potato seeds. Within 3-4 years, the region plans to increase its potato output to 1 million tonnes"<sup>67</sup>. Overall, the two sides plan to seriously expand their bilateral ties in the near future. This is evidenced by the fact that at a business meeting held in November 2021, "representatives of over 30 Tajik and Belarusian companies held talks on possible cooperation in mechanical engineering, healthcare, woodworking, food and processing industries"<sup>68</sup>.

The memorandum of cooperation between the cities of **Zhodino** and **Gulistan**, signed in November 2021, should also enhance cooperation between the two regions.

**Mogilev Region** also intends to actively develop partnerships with Sughd Region. The parties signed a cooperation agreement in 2017. And in the three quarters of 2021, trade turnover between them increased by almost a third more. And in this case we are talking about an active search for new opportunities for cooperation. One of the priorities is to set up joint production facilities. Given that Mogilev is home to Mogotex, the largest Belarusian textile producer, Mogotex is seriously interested in supplying cotton from Tajikistan. And the

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<sup>67</sup> Cotton, fruit, potato seeds: Minsk region plans to increase cooperation with Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/hlopok-frukty-semena-kartofelja-minskaja-oblast-planiruet-naraschivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-tadzhikistanom-467756-2021/>

<sup>68</sup> Enterprises of Minsk and Sughd oblasts are interested in cooperation in the sphere of industry [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predprii-atij-a-minskoi-i-sozdij-skoi-oblastej-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-promyshlennosti-468050-2021/>.

Tajik partners, who annually increase the cultivation area of this crop, have their own interest: to set up a joint venture with the Belarusian side to process cotton. "This will make it possible to create several thousand new jobs here [in Sughd Oblast].<sup>69</sup> . Mogilevliftmash is also planning to set up joint production of lifts in the Tajik region. This is just a part of the proposals voiced in November 2021 at a business meeting in Mogilev, during which the cooperation agreement was signed by the Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Sughd Oblast Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Besides, "Mogilev plant Strommashina OJSC and Nord Asia Metal CJSC have agreed to sign a letter of intent for the implementation of the project on production and supply of technological equipment for the production of asbestos-cement sheets"<sup>70</sup> . And representatives of other Mogilev enterprises from a number of industries have established contacts for trade in finished products and raw materials. And this is encouraging.

As we can see, the links between the regions of the post-Soviet space are gradually being filled with concrete projects, stimulating integration processes in the Commonwealth today and demonstrating the relevance of holding the First CIS Forum of Regions in 2022.

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<sup>69</sup> Zayats: Mogilev Region and Sughd Region of Tajikistan are interested in close cooperation and implementation of projects [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/zajats-mogilevskij-region-i-sogdijiskaja-oblast-tadzhikistanahhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/zajats-mogilevskij-region-i-sogdijiskaja-oblast-tadzhikistana-.-v-tesnom-sotrudnichestve-izainterestovan-v-tesnom-sotrudnichestve-i-467893-2021/>

<sup>70</sup> The Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Sughd Oblast Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tajikistan signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource ]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mogilevskoe-otdelenie-beltp-p-i-tp-p-sogdijiskoi-oblasti-tadzhikistana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-468065-2021/>

### **To build on cooperation mechanisms already in place**

The Strategic Guidelines for the Development of Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, approved in December 2020, set out among the main objectives the further formation of a legal and contractual framework for the Eurasian economic union (EEU) with third countries and their integration associations on the creation of preferential trade regimes for the development and comprehensive deepening of trade and economic cooperation. In fact, the intensification of economic cooperation with foreign countries and international organisations over the next five years should become one of the most important areas of the EAEU, which "will allow coordinated work on the issues of conjugation of integration processes in the Eurasian space"<sup>71</sup>.

In December 2021, a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council approved the main directions of the EAEU's international activities for 2022, which deal with the development of already established cooperation mechanisms with third countries, regional integration associations and international organisations, as well as identify potentially promising partners. In particular, "cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the European Union (EU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Asia-Pacific Forum will be a priority for the EAEU in 2022.

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<sup>71</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Eurasian integration in the context of the great partnership on the continent / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Naukowa myśl informacyjnej powieki - 2021", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C.24.



economic cooperation (APEC)..."<sup>72</sup>. At this The international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as the development of exports, transport and energy infrastructure, industrial cooperation, introduction of new technologies, as well as creating conditions for joint entry of member states' enterprises into third countries' markets, including those of South-East Asia, the Middle East, the Indian-Pacific region, North Africa, the Latin American continent.

In 2022, the presidency of the EAEU passed to Kyrgyzstan, which intends to focus primarily on achieving the goals laid down in the strategic directions of Eurasian economic integration until 2025. <sup>72</sup>An indisputable priority in this regard is international cooperation, which is "important to develop both the dialogue format of cooperation and trade and economic relations with third countries by signing trade agreements in order to enter new promising markets..."<sup>73</sup>, so that producers from the countries that are part of this integration entity, including Belarus, "receive the most favorable conditions when exporting their products to foreign markets and consumers receive safe, high-quality and inexpensive goods" xml-ph-0

As a reminder, by early 2022, the EAEU had already concluded preferential agreements on free trade zones (FTAs) with Vietnam, Serbia, Singapore, and an interim agreement with Iran. An agreement on trade and economic cooperation with the People's Republic of China has also entered into force. Regarding the search for potential partners, "negotiations for a FTA with Egypt and Israel are at an active stage, work is underway to prepare the first round of negotiations with India, and negotiations have started to prepare for a full free trade

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<sup>72</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Vectors of Eurasian integration - Indonesia, Chile, Egypt / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XV Mezinárodní vědecko-praktická konference "Vědecký průmysl evropského kontinentu - 2019". Volume 6: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 11.

<sup>73</sup> Address by President Sadyr Japarov to the Heads of the EEU Member States on the occasion of Kyrgyzstan's Presidency of the Union in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/obrashhenie-prezidenta-sadyra-zhaparova-k-glavam-gosudarstv-%E2%80%93-chlenov-caes-po-sluchu-predsedatelstvovanija-kyrgyzstana-v-organakh-sovuzav-2022-godu/>.

agreement with Mongolia and Indonesia.<sup>74</sup> . And intensive work continues on identifying and negotiating new partners.

Thus, in December 2021, following the Second Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)-Latin America and the Caribbean (LACB) Forum: Removing Barriers and Building Bridges for Business Cooperation", the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) signed a joint statement with the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System, in which the parties reaffirmed their commitment to developing and strengthening all-round cooperation, noting the strategic importance of relations between the two regions. Note that for the EAEU, the Latin America and Caribbean region is strategically important. This is evidenced by the fact that the dynamics of trade between the parties "reached a peak in 2018 of \$17.6 billion. USD 17.6 BILLION. Agricultural products, fruits and nuts, oilseeds and fruits, meat and fish remain the main imports. The EAEU countries in turn export to LACB fertilizers, ferrous metals, mineral fuels, cereals and other goods"<sup>75</sup> . Recently, cooperation has been growing in such areas as pharmaceuticals, mechanical engineering and information and communication services. Bioengineering, green technology and services, including tourism and education, could be new areas of cooperation. Among the main reasons for the still insufficient level of trade and economic cooperation, the joint statement noted the "low level of awareness of the subjects of economic relations about the needs and opportunities for business in the EAEU and LEC, <...> lack of modern trade and economic agreements between the countries and the integration associations of the EAEU and LECB"<sup>76</sup> . As a result, an

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<sup>74</sup> Gorelik, Y. Without industrial lockdowns and reduction of export activity / Y. Gorelik // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bez-promyshlennyh-lokdaunov-i-snizhenija-eksportnoj-aktivnosti-predstavitel-mid-o-vneshnetorgovoi-477276-2021/>.

<sup>75</sup> The EAEU and Latin American countries aim to reach pre-crisis trade performance in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-strany-latinskoj-ameriki-namereny-vyti-na-dokrizisnvehttps://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-strany-latinskoj-ameriki-namereny-vyti-na-dokrizisnve-pokazateli-torgovli-po-itogam-2021-godapokazateli-torgovli-po-itogam-2021-goda/>.

<sup>76</sup> ECE and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System declare the move to substantive negotiations on trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/cek-i-postovannyjhttps://eec.eaeunion.org/news/cek-i-postovannyj-sekretariat-latinoamerikanskoj-ekonomicheskoi-sistemy-zavavili-o-perehode-k->

agreement was reached to move from agreeing on general areas of cooperation to substantive negotiations involving interested business representatives. Possible areas of cooperation included post-commodity and green economy, economic methods of combating climate change, ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth, and expanding the participation of small and medium-sized businesses in foreign trade.

The EAEU's 2025 Joint Action Plan with Cuba, signed in December 2021, which covers 34 areas of cooperation, appears to be a kind of complement to the development of relations with the LACB. For Cuba, the document is important in the context of implementing the country's National Economic and Social Development Plan until 2030 and the Economic and Social Strategy to stimulate the economy and overcome the global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, "the Cuban side has shown a particular interest in strengthening the sectoral dialogue, in particular in the areas of technical regulation and the regulation of the circulation of medicines in the EAEU"<sup>77</sup> .

Other international organisations with which the EEU plans to intensify mutually beneficial cooperation in the near future include the International Sugar Organisation (ISO), which now brings together 87 states and promotes international cooperation in terms of sugar production, consumption and circulation. In December 2021, the EEC and the ISO signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which sets out the main directions and activities for cooperation to take the two organisations to "the horizon of practical cooperation <...> to develop effective measures to develop a common market for sugar and sugar products"<sup>78</sup> .

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[predmetnymsekretariat-latinoamerikanskoi-ekonomicheskoi-sistemy-zavavili-o-perehode-k-predmetnym-peregovoram-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskom-sotrudnichestvepereregovoram-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskom-sotrudnichestve/](#).

<sup>77</sup> The EEU and Cuba signed a plan of joint actions until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-kuba-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyhhttps://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-kuba-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvii-do-2025-godadejstvii-do-2025-goda-/>.

<sup>78</sup> ECE and the International Sugar Organisation signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeekhttps://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-mezhdunarodnaya-organizatsiya-po-saharu-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimaniiii->



products, certain types of confectionery and chocolate, electronic and mechanical equipment, as well as metals and cosmetics"<sup>81</sup>. In December 2021, this temporary agreement was extended until 2025. The past two years have shown that the cooperation between the parties is developing at an exceptional pace. For instance, in the first half of 2021 "exports of the union's member states increased by almost 47% to \$1.35 billion and imports by 34% to \$825 million"<sup>82</sup>, which shows great prospects for this cooperation.

Another promising EAEU partner in Asia is Mongolia, with which a memorandum of cooperation was signed back in 2015. In December 2021, the 4th meeting of the joint working group on cooperation between the EEC and the Mongolian government was held, at which it was noted that in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between the parties was one and a half billion dollars. And "in the first nine months of this year [2021] the trade turnover between the EAEU countries and Mongolia increased by 23%, while the potential of mutual trade is clearly not fully exploited"<sup>83</sup>. To maintain this positive trend, it was decided to update the plan of joint activities to implement the aforementioned Memorandum until 2025. The sides have identified intensification of contacts between business circles and business associations as a key reserve for the development of trade and economic ties. In 2022, the Mongolian side suggested that Ulaanbaatar host a business forum for this purpose.

Also in December 2021, the first meeting of the joint ECE-Bangladesh Government Working Group on the Implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation, signed in May 2019, took place. It was noted that the volume of

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<sup>81</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Vectors of Eurasian integration - Serbia, Iran, China / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XV Międzynarodowej naukowej-praktycznej konferencji "Perspektywiczne opracowania sa nauka i technikami - 2019", Volume 6. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 20.

<sup>82</sup> Pivovarov, E. Validity of temporary free trade agreement between EEU and Iran extended until 2025 / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/deistvie-vremennogo-soglasheniia-o-svobodnoi-torgovlehttps://www.belta.by/society/view/deistvie-vremennogo-soglasheniia-o-svobodnoi-torgovle- mezhdu-caes-i-iranom-prodleno-domezhduecaes-i-iranom-prodleno-do-2025- godagoda-474217-2021>

<sup>83</sup> EEC and the Government of Mongolia discuss plans for cooperation until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/EEK-i-pravitelstvohttps://eec.eaunion.org/news/EEK-i-pravitelstvo-mongolii-obsuzhdavut-planuy-vzaimodejstviva-do-2025-godamongolii-obsuzhdavut-planuy-vzaimodejstviva-do-2025-goda/>

trade between the two sides has increased sixfold in the last ten years. In 2020, it continued to grow by another 11 per cent to more than two and a half billion dollars. And "in January-September this year [2021], trade turnover between the EAEU and Bangladesh increased one and a half times to \$2.2 billion. USD 2.2 BILLION"<sup>84</sup> . The parties are now considering increasing this figure to three billion dollars as a realistic goal. There are reserves for this: agricultural products, machinery, equipment, vehicles, pharmaceuticals, as well as other types of products with a relatively high share of added value.

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Among the international organisations with which the EAEU plans to actively develop cooperation in 2022 - the European Union (EU) should also be mentioned. In particular, we are talking about the development of dialogue between the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and the European Commission (EC), including interaction with specialised EU bodies, "in the areas of technical regulation, application of sanitary and veterinary measures, circulation of medicines and medical products, competition, some aspects of trade policy, as well as in other areas of the Union's activity"<sup>85</sup> .

The relevance of the European vector of EAEU international cooperation is already explained by the fact that 'the European Union continues to be the key trade and economic partner of the Eurasian Economic Union, accounting for 35.5% of EAEU imports'<sup>86</sup> . EU member states are the main buyers of goods exported from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. In 2021, trade between them increased by another 40 percent or so, and "is expected to reach about \$330 billion. US\$330 BILLION."<sup>87</sup> . And this is far from being a

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<sup>84</sup> EEU countries and Bangladesh have the potential to increase trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/strany-eaes-i-https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/strany-eaes-i-bangladesh-imevut-potentsial-dlva-dostizheniva-tovarooborota-v-3-mlrd-dollarov-sshabangladesh-imevut-potentsial-dlva-dostizheniva-tovarooborota-v-3-mlrd-dollars-ssha/>

<sup>85</sup> . Strategic directions for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025. - M., 2020. - C. 53-54.

<sup>86</sup> Sergey Glazev: "Strategy-2025 is in the interests of both Eurasian and European business" [Electronic resource]. -2021 .- URL:

<https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sergej-glazev-%C2%ABstrategiya-2025-otvechaet-interesam-kak-evrazijskogo-tak-i-evropejskogo-biznesa%C2%BB/>

<sup>87</sup> The management of the Eurasian Economic Commission's trade bloc met with the Association of

limit if a number of pressing issues in trade between the parties are resolved. Many of these were discussed in December 2021 during the 8th round of technical dialogue between the EEC and the EC, where the parties addressed the difficulties businesses face in their operations. In particular, they talked about the registration of medicines and medical devices in the EEU countries, as well as the operation of the technical regulation "On the safety of alcohol products". Topics of technical regulation in the field of railway transport in the EU countries, e-commerce, development of the "single window" mechanism as a tool to simplify trade procedures were discussed. An important detail: having been convinced of the usefulness of the technical dialogue, "both sides plan <...> to continue interaction in this format in 2022, as well as to consider the possibility of holding specialised webinars on topical topics"<sup>88</sup>.

The same December 2021 meeting with the Association of European Businesses discussed in practical terms issues related to free trade agreements, responses to climate change, labelling, e-commerce, rules for the import of certain types of goods, and determination of customs values.<sup>89</sup> A meeting was also held at the EEC with executives and representatives of the Russian-German Chamber of Commerce, the Franco-Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Association of Italian Industrialists in Russia, the Working Group on the Common Economic Space from Lisbon to Vladivostok to discuss a wide range of issues relevant to European business communities, including "intellectual property, taxation, labour migration, regulation of pharmaceuticals circulation".

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European Businesses [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sostoivalas-vstrecha-rukovodstva-torgovogo-bloka-evraziyskovhttps://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sostoivalas-vstrecha-rukovodstva-torgovogo-bloka-evraziyskov-ekonomicheskoy-komissii-s-associaciyev-evropeyskogo-biznesaekonomicheskoy-komissii-s-associaciyev-evropeyskogo-biznesa/>.

<sup>88</sup> The EEC and the European Commission hold consultations on topical issues of business operations [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eek-i-evrokommisiihttps://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eek-i-evrokommisii-konsultacii-po-aktualnym-voprosam-raboty-biznesaproveli-konsultacii-po-aktualnym-voprosam-raboty-biznesa/>.

<sup>89</sup> Ruslan Beketaev: "Direct dialogue is an effective tool of interaction between EEC and European entrepreneurs and investors". [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/ruslan-beketaev-%C2%ABpryamoi-dialog-%E2%80%93-effektivni-instrument-%20vzaimodejstviva-eek-s-evropeiskimi-predprinimateljami-jeffektivni-investorami%C2%BBinvestorami%C2%BB/>.



Among the individual EU member states with which the EAEU intends to seriously intensify interaction in the near future is Portugal. In November 2021, the 4th Russo-Portuguese Innovation Forum "New Opportunities and Challenges in Innovation" addressed the promotion of high-tech products, as well as the promotion of diversification of trade and economic relations between the EAEU and Portuguese-speaking countries. It was stressed that "the business community of Portugal and Portuguese-speaking countries is building its commercial strategies, taking into account the factor of Eurasian economic integration and opportunities associated with them."<sup>90</sup> . As a result, the forum participants were able to consider promising cooperation projects in such areas as information and communication technologies, bioenergy, agriculture, healthcare, transport infrastructure and interregional cooperation. In the same line of promising partners of the EAEU in the European direction, German business, whose representatives in September 2021 became participants of the seminar held by the EEC, can also be mentioned. The exchange of views focused on such areas of cooperation as "digital agenda, green economy, customs cooperation"<sup>91</sup> . One of the outcomes of this event was the consolidated opinion of its participants on the importance of continuing the dialogue between the EAEU and German business in various formats in order to promote mutual trade and facilitate the foreign economic activities of business entities, as well as to create a dialogue mechanism for resolving contentious issues.

It is clear that all these measures aimed at expanding foreign markets and diversifying exports of the EAEU member countries are extremely important for Belarus, which is taking a very active part in all the systemic work to create free trade zones with third countries and interact with international organizations.

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<sup>90</sup> Gohar Barseghian: "Portuguese business captures new opportunities in the EEU market". [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/goar-barsegvanhttps://eec.eaeunion.org/news/goar-barsegvan-C2%ABportugalskij-biznes-fiksiruet-novve-vozmozhnosti-na-rynke-eaes%C2%BB%C2%ABportugalskij-biznes-fiksiruet-novve-vozmozhnosti-na-rynke-eaes%C2%BB/>.

<sup>91</sup> The EEC held a seminar for German businesses on the regulation of foreign economic activity in the EEU [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/EEK-provela-seminar-dlya-germanskogo-biznesa-po-voprosamhttps://eec.eaeunion.org/news/EEK-provela-seminar-dlya-germanskogo-biznesa-po-voprosam-regulirovaniya-vneshneekonomicheskoi-devatelnosti-v-eaes-/>.



### **Direct regional partnerships as a tool to strengthen economic interaction**

In September 2021 the Council of Ministers of the Union State of Belarus and Russia approved the guidelines for the implementation of the provisions of the Union State Treaty for 2021-2023 and 28 Union Programmes aimed at carrying out large-scale tasks to enhance Belarus-Russia integration. At the same time, the parties stressed that "direct partnership between the regions is becoming an increasingly important factor for strengthening mutual trust and economic cooperation"<sup>93</sup>. This is confirmed by the specific practice of Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation in 2021, which is being implemented in a variety of formats. Let us consider some of them.

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 Fifth 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 almost 160 million dollars with a share of supplies from Belarus amounting to almost 102 million dollars. "The bulk 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; and butter."<sup>94</sup>.

In addition to trade in goods, other areas of cooperation are also actively developing here, in particular construction services. The fact is that Voronezh

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<sup>93</sup> Joint statement by Roman Golovchenko and Mikhail Mishustin on current developments and further steps to deepen the integration processes within the Union State [Electronic resource     ]: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9960>

<sup>94</sup> Pivovar, E. Belarusian delegation headed by Semashko will visit Voronezh / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. -     URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskajahttps://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskaja-delegatsija-vo-glave-delegatsija-vo-glave-s-semashko-posetit-voronezh-semashko-posetit-voronezh-457530-2021/>.

Oblast, along with Kaluga, Pskov and Leningrad Oblasts, is among those Russian regions that have "a proven scheme for the construction of social facilities that is acceptable to both Belarusian builders and customers"<sup>95</sup>.<sup>96</sup> In February 2021 a delegation of the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of Belarus visited Voronezh region to discuss with the Voronezh partners opportunities of "implementation of a joint pilot project in urban village Strelitsa of Semiluki district to build a 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 prospects for the use of Belarusian prefabricated construction sets for construction of a kindergarten in Semiluki district". On the eve of the new school year - at the end of August 2021 - a secondary school was opened in Strelitsa, which became a pilot project of cooperation in the construction sphere between Belarus and Voronezh region based on the investment and construction principle - with the use of export credits.

The Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus, as well as such Belarusian producers of construction materials and equipment as Mogilevliftmash, Gomelstroymaterialy, Keramin.

The general contractor for the construction of this school in quite a short time - less than a year - was the Mogilev Construction Trust No. 12, which has already gained a good image outside Belarus. In the Voronezh region "even at the stage of construction the clients are more than satisfied with the quality and progress of works and invite Mogilev residents to participate in the tender for the construction of several more facilities"<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>95</sup> Belarus' exports of construction goods and services in January-June amounted to \$637 million [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksporthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-tovarov-i-uslug-belarusi-v-ianvare-ijune-sostavil-637-mlnstroitelnyh-tovarov-i-uslug-belarusi-v-ianvare-ijune-sostavil-637-mln-452543-2021/>

<sup>96</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Russian vector of export of construction services / B.L. Zalessky // *Materialy XVII Miedzynarodowej naukowi-praktycznej konferencji "Aktualne problemy nowoczesnych nauk - 2021"*, Volume 3. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - C. 7.

<sup>97</sup> Rusiy: sustainable work of the workforce is at the heart of the country's economic prosperity [Electronic resource]. - URL :

The Strelitsa experience with the investment-construction principle showed that it was beneficial for all parties involved. The Russian side has received stable financing and a two-year deferral of payments, as well as high quality 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 delivery 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 Oblast.

One of such new facilities will be a 2,560-seat megashool in Voronezh. In August 2021, OOO Stroyengineering, established with the participation of the Belarusian side, received the right to build it. The facility, a two- to four-storey building, which is estimated at three and a half billion Russian rubles, will be one of the largest educational institutions in Russia. "The megashop will have 110 classes, studying in one shift, with 220 teachers to teach the children. <...> The project envisages segregated learning units, the creation of a barrier-free environment, conditions for the development of children's creative potential and sports"<sup>98</sup>. In addition, the Belarusian specialists are expected to reconstruct the region's main sports ground. At the same time, "the reconstruction of the Fakel football stadium is estimated at 812 million Russian rubles"<sup>99</sup>. Another school and a kindergarten are to be built with 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

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<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rusvi-ustojchivaja-rabota-trudovyh-kollektivov-v-osnove-ekonomicheskogo-blagopoluchija-strany-450830-2021/>

<sup>98</sup> Pivovar, E. Belarusian specialists will build one of the largest schools in Russia / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource ] :

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusskie-spetsialisty-postrojat-odnu-iz-krupnejshih-shkol-v-rossii-456043-2021/>

<sup>99</sup> Pivovar, E. Belarus reconstructs stadium in Voronezh region and builds educational institutions / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-rekonstruiuet-v-voronezhskoj-oblasti-stadion-ihttps://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-rekonstruiuet-v-voronezhskoj-oblasti-stadion-i-postroit-obrazovatelnye-postroit-obrazovatelnye-uchrezhdenij-aa-457654-2021/>

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"<sup>100</sup>. This is because oilseed meal, fodder supplements, cereals and grains are traditionally in demand in the Belarusian market, and Voronezh Region, as we know, is 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% by the level of 2021 on the basis of bilateral projects"<sup>101</sup>. The outlined concrete plans show that the parties have everything they need to achieve this objective.

In the North Caucasian Federal District (NCFD) of the Russian Federation, cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the **Kabardino-Balkarian Republic** (KBR) is developing in an interesting way. In October 2021, a meeting of the joint working group for interaction between the parties was held, at which an action plan was signed to implement the Agreement on cooperation in trade and economic, scientific and technical and socio-cultural spheres, adopted at the VII Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which was held in September 2020. It will be recalled that in 2020, trade turnover between the two countries decreased by more than a quarter to \$8.6 million. At the same time, "the balance is positive for the Republic of Belarus - "plus" 3.1 million dollars"<sup>102</sup>. As a matter of fact, these trends have determined the desire of both sides to return engagement in the economic sector to a growth trajectory. The more so since "Belarus and Kabardino-Balkaria are united not only by longstanding traditions of friendship and mutual assistance, but also by

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<sup>100</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Regional orientation 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.

<sup>101</sup> Belarus and Voronezh region signed an agreement to increase trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/12260267>[tass.ru/ekonomika/12260267](https://tass.ru/ekonomika/12260267)

<sup>102</sup> Topical issues of cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic discussed in remote format [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/rostov/news/bdc349beac26.html>[russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/rostov/news/bdc349beac26.html](https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/rostov/news/bdc349beac26.html)

multilateral economic partnership"<sup>103</sup>, which the two sides plan to further develop. This trend is characteristic of the entire North Caucasus Federal District, one of the key factors in its development being its integration into the Eurasian economic space. "At the same time, the Republic of Belarus can be one of the effective partners of the entities of the North Caucasus Federal District"<sup>104</sup>

As far as the partnership between Belarus and the CBD is concerned, it is based on a variety of economic ties between specific enterprises on both sides. Thus, the products of the diamond tools manufacturer, Terekalmaz JSC, are well known both at the Minsk plants - tractor, automobile and motor works, and at the Baranovichi Auto Aggregate Plant, Borisov Auto Aggregate Plant, as well as at the enterprises Avtogydrousilitel, Belkard, Machine-Tool Plant Krasny Borets, Beltran and Belgeo. The Belarusian market has been actively developing the presence of JSC Kavkazkabel cable plant and JSC Nalchik plant of high-voltage equipment. Another interesting example in this regard: "Prokhladnensky plant of semiconductor devices JSC (production of integrated voltage regulators) has been a partner of JSC "Integral" for more than 20 years, buying transistor and microchip crystals"<sup>105</sup>. In order to actively develop partnerships in the agricultural sector, the first international "Prokhladnaya Fair" was held back in 2014 in Prokhladny, which included an exhibition of Belarusian agricultural machinery for crop production, horticulture and animal husbandry and a demonstration of energy-saturated machines from the Minsk Tractor Plant.

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<sup>103</sup> Belarus and Kabardino-Balkaria intensify economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-ihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kabardino-balkariia-kabardino-balkariia-aktivizirui-ut-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvout-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-466948-2021/>

<sup>104</sup> Zalesky B.L. SCFD - Belarus: topical media topics of cooperation / B.L. Zalesky // Mediachteniya SCFU: Materials of the Third International Scientific and Practical Conference (Stavropol, 23-25 May 2019) / ed. by O.I. Lepilkina, A.M. Gorbachev, N.N. Borisenko, D.A. Shevtsova. - Stavropol: Servyshkola, 2019. - C. 174.

<sup>105</sup> Rahaev, B. Mutual economic interests are based on historically established economic ties and are successfully developing / B. Rahaev // Interaction of Regions: Union State - the locomotive of Eurasian integration: inform.-integration project / coauthors, interviewing: B. Zaleski, M. Valkouski, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2016. - C. 25.

Since then, measures have also been taken to breed original seeds of Belarus zoned hybrids of various ripeness groups, which will make it possible to "supply up to 15 thousand tons of maize seeds to the Belarusian market"<sup>106</sup>.

Among the Belarusian regions that are planning to intensify their cooperation with the CBD is Brest Oblast, which is "working on the successful development of business initiatives, implementation of projects aimed at the production of competitive products, and introduction of innovations, expansion of sales markets, as well as the establishment of joint ventures"<sup>107</sup>. To effectively develop partnerships with this Russian region, the Brest branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a cooperation agreement with the union "Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic" in April 2018. This structure is one of the centres of business activity in the Russian region, "created to support and assist entrepreneurs and to develop business contacts both in the republic and with other regions, as well as with the CIS and non-CIS countries"<sup>108</sup>. We must assume that with the appearance of the action plan, the results will not be long in coming.

An important area of partnership with the Kabardino-Balkaria is the socio-cultural one. After all, it is in this Russian region that the only Belarusian centre in the North Caucasus Federal District - the Kabardino-Balkarian public movement "For Unity - Syabry" - operates, which annually holds a number of events to strengthen cultural ties between the sides. For example, in February 2021, the centre organised a meeting 'Syabry Gathering Friends' with the participation of other national and cultural centres at the Kabardino-Balkarian

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<sup>106</sup> Rahaev, B. Mutual economic interests are based on historically established economic ties and are successfully developing / B. Rahaev // Interaction of Regions: Union State - the locomotive of Eurasian integration: inform.-integration project / coauthors, interviewing: B. Zaleski, M. Valkouski, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2016. - C. 27.

<sup>107</sup> Investment agreements worth over Br20 million signed at the forum-exhibition of business contacts in Brest [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investsoglasheniya-na-summu-svyshe-br20-mln-podpisany-na-forume-vvstavke-delovyh-kontaktov-v-breste-300386-2018/>

<sup>108</sup> Mission, Directions for Action [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://kbr.tpprf.ru/ru/mission/kbr.tpprf.ru/ru/mission/>

Cultural Foundation, at which "the young winners of the 'Shores of Friendship' International Youth Festival of Poetry and Poetic Translations were presented, paintings and works of arts and crafts were presented, and poetry and songs were heard"<sup>109</sup>.

Speaking of other priorities in the socio-cultural sphere, we should also recall such an interesting format as the annual international summer school at the local state university "The roots of friendship between our peoples are in our history", involving students, postgraduate students and young scientists from Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. In August 2019, as part of the fourth such summer school, the master class "Patriotic Education of Youth through the Prism of the Projects of the Union State of Belarus and Russia", which was "conducted by Tatiana Senkevich, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Philology at Pushkin Brest University, and Alla Senkevich, Deputy Head of Educational Work of the Main Department for Education of Brest Regional Executive Committee", was of particular interest to the students.<sup>110</sup>. All these facts show that the necessary prerequisites for successful cooperation are in place.

Diverse opportunities for cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the regions of the Far Eastern Federal District are opening up. This is confirmed by the fact that the first "Days of the Republic of Belarus in **Primorsky Krai**" were held in the first decade of October 2021 in Vladivostok, where 160 representatives of different fields - trade and economic, investment, cultural - took part from the Belarusian side. The most important events within the framework of the Days were: 1) meeting of the working group on cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the Primorsky Territory; 2) trade fair and sale of

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<sup>109</sup> The Foundation for Culture of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic hosted a traditional evening "Syabry Gathering Friends" [Electronic resource] . - URL:

<https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/rostov/news/c0da3dd2bc7b.html>

<sup>110</sup> Representatives of A.S. Pushkin Brest University participated in the summer school in Kabardino-Balkaria [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/rostov/news/652289590c9c.html> <https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/rostov/news/652289590c9c.html>

Belarusian goods and equipment exhibition with participation of 18 largest Belarusian enterprises; 3) business forum of Belarusian and Primorsky business circles on expansion of cooperation with already existing partners and search of new ones.

A good backdrop for all these events was the fact that in 2021 Belarusian companies' exports to this Russian region increased by 43 percent to \$13 million. However, judging by how keenly and concretely the working group discussed in Vladivostok the prospects of further interaction between the parties, this value is just a starting point in terms of the implementation of new joint projects. Let us name some of them. In particular, a full-fledged exhibition and service centre is to be set up in Primorye Territory to sell and support Belarusian equipment. This will make it possible not only to sell the equipment, but also to service it and present it to a wide circle of Primorye consumers. A project to promote Mogilevliftmash products is expected to be implemented in the industrial sector. "It concerns both lifts and lift equipment, as well as rotary and carousel-type car parks, a new direction mastered by the enterprise"<sup>111</sup>. In the field of agriculture, the promotion, testing and implementation in

The project also includes the development of Belarusian potato varieties in Primorsky Krai, expert support and scientific assistance in the cultivation of orchards, and the conversion of agricultural machinery to tracked cultivation.

As for the exhibition of products of Belarusian enterprises, the main square of Vladivostok displayed municipal, agricultural and construction machinery of machine-building factories of Belarus. Another number of enterprises - Babushkina krynka Holding, Kobrin Butter and Cheese Plant, Domochay Company, Krasny Pischevik OJSC, Kommunarka OJSC, Brest, Bobruisk, Mogilev and Pinsk meat packing plants - presented Belarusian confectionery, dairy and meat products, which are well known here and are traditionally in high

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<sup>111</sup> Mogilev Oblast exports to Primorsky Krai increased by 84% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-mogilevskoj-oblasti-v-primorskij-kraj-velichilsja-na-463897-2021/>



demand. Suffice it to say that in 2020, "\$2.1 million worth of Belarusian food was supplied to Primorye. Compared to 2019, this was an increase of 63%. This year, in the first eight months alone, supplies have increased by 34%, they have already traded for \$2 million."<sup>112</sup> .

The business forum held as part of the Days of the Republic of Belarus in the Primorye Territory demonstrated high interest of the local trading networks in increasing supplies of Belarusian foodstuffs. Negotiations held by representatives of business circles to increase the range of products supplied make it possible to count on a multiple growth in their volume in the near future. The Belarusian holding AMKODOR, which incorporates 30 legal entities, should be mentioned among those companies that have worked very fruitfully in Vladivostok, including

21 plants in Belarus, Russia, Uzbekistan and Lithuania. In particular, "a contract has been signed for the supply of another 15 vehicles of the holding company to one of the economic organisations. In addition, another dealer's contract was signed, the needs of Primorsky Krai in special vehicles AMKODOR for 2022 and the volume of their delivery were specified"<sup>113</sup> . A few weeks later - at the end of October 2021 - a presentation of a wide range of AMKODOR machines was held in Vladivostok. It allows "to provide comprehensive support for the forestry industry, which, in turn, increases productivity and efficiency of the equipment purchased by the customer at each stage of the production process"<sup>114</sup> . It appears that new contracts are just around the corner.

The fact that Primorsky Krai is seriously interested in Belarusian machinery is

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<sup>112</sup> Belarus counts on a multiple increase in food supplies to Russia's Primorye Territory [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarushttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschitvvaet-na-rasschitvvaet-na-kratnyj-rost-postavok--rost-postavok-prodovolstvij-a-v-a-v-primorskij--kraj\\_rossii-rossii-463698-2021/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarushttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschitvvaet-na-rasschitvvaet-na-kratnyj-rost-postavok--rost-postavok-prodovolstvij-a-v-a-v-primorskij--kraj_rossii-rossii-463698-2021/)

<sup>113</sup> "AMKODOR will deliver another shipment of machinery to Primorsky Krai [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amkodor-postavit-ocherednuju-partij-u-tehniki-v-primorskij-u-tehniki-v-primorskij-kraj-463805-2021/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amkodor-postavit-ocherednujuhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/amkodor-postavit-ocherednuju-partij-u-tehniki-v-primorskij-u-tehniki-v-primorskij-kraj-463805-2021/)

<sup>114</sup> Presentation of the Belarusian timber industry machinery was held in Vladivostok [Electronic resource]. - URL: <https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/vladivostok/news/e6bb6d0efeea1757.html>

also confirmed by the fact that Bobruiskagromash Holding Management Company OJSC signed a dealer agreement with Utyos LLC with the right to sell machines for spreading dust chemical meliorants in Primorsky Krai. An important detail: "For 22 years, OOO "Utes" has been developing the "Gora Glubinnaya" quarry and has proved to be a reliable producer of mineral fertilizers: limestone dolomite meal, limestone grit and mineral powder for asphalt plants"<sup>115</sup>. Now, this Russian company uses Western European machinery, which is seven times more expensive than the Belarusian machinery, as its main machines for applying mineral fertilizers. So, there are good prospects for Bobruiskagromash machines in the seaside market. We remind that the VIII Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia held in the summer of 2021 showed "extensive potential in terms of further development of interaction between the specific regions of the two countries that are members of the Union State"<sup>116</sup>, which should be fully used in the near future. This is exactly the approach we see today in the cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Primorsky Krai.

The twinning movement is also a very effective tool for the development of Belarusian-Russian interregional relations. In October 2021 the Belarusian city of Zhodino hosted their 10th meeting, which was attended by representatives of 52 cities of the two countries - Moscow, Kaluga, Grozny, Novorossiysk, Zaslavl, Mogilev, Vileika, Kolomna, Smolensk and many others. It should be recalled that the previous nine meetings were held since 1998, in Gomel, Mytishchi, Vitebsk, Bryansk, Novopolotsk, Smolensk, Minsk, Podolsk and Mogilev. And almost all of them "have become an eloquent illustration of the conclusion that Belarusian-Russian town twinning creates a unique environment for productive trade and economic interaction as well as for spiritual component

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<sup>115</sup> Primorsky Krai is interested in Belarusian agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/primorskij-kraj-zainteresovan-https://www.belta.by/economics/view/primorskij-kraj-zainteresovan-v-belorusskoj-selhoztehnike-464889-2021/>

<sup>116</sup> Zalesky, B. Time for new opportunities. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 26.

of the brotherhood of the two peoples and development of national diplomacy"<sup>117</sup>. In particular, the 9th meeting held in March 2017 in Mogilev brought together representatives of 24 Belarusian and 35 Russian cities, including from Moscow, Vologda, Tula, Smolensk, Volgograd, Penza, Pskov and Vyazma.

The topic of the meeting in Zhodzina was "Twinning as an important potential for strengthening the Union State of Belarus and Russia and the unity of the peoples. The Belarusian public organization "Twin Cities" (BOPC) suggested such areas of discussion as economy and business, promotion of mutual investments, expansion of production cooperation, "interaction in the social sphere, infrastructure development, as well as cultural, educational cooperation and twinning as a platform to improve work with young people"<sup>118</sup>. Note that at the end of 2020, there were 36 cities in the BOPAG, which have established twinning and partnership links with over 450 cities in 38 countries, with Russia being the clear leader.

Belarus assumes that such bilateral meetings of the twin cities are very important for the development of the twinning movement as a whole, as they represent new opportunities for expanding cooperation in the implementation of investment, trade and economic relations, cultural and educational programs. After all, "twin cities are an important and effective sector of international cooperation, a feature of which is openness, mutual trust, tolerance and kind-heartedness"<sup>119</sup>. In the Union State these relations are even more pronounced and should be used within the framework of the Union integration as an

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<sup>117</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Twin-cities of Belarus and Russia: in an atmosphere of trust - to mutually beneficial projects / B.L. Zalesky // *Materials XII Miedzynarodowej naukowij konferencji "Perspektywiczne opracowania sa nauka i technikai - 2016"* Volume 3. Ekonomiczne nauki. Zarzadzanie. Politologia. Historia. Filozofia : Przemysl. Nauka i studia. - C. 42.

<sup>118</sup> Grishkevich, A. Belarus and Russia at the meeting of twin-cities in Zhodino will discuss expansion of interaction / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-rossija-na-vstreche-gorodov-pobratimov-vhttps://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-rossija-na-vstreche-gorodov-pobratimov-v-.-obsudjat-rasshirenie-vzaimodejstvijazhodino-obsudjat-rasshirenie-vzaimodejstviija-462834-2021/>

<sup>119</sup> Batura, B. Twinning - small links of big friendship / B. Batura // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/pobratimskoehttps://www.belta.by/interview/view/pobratimskoe-dvizhenie-malenkie-zvenija-bolshoj-druzhbydvizhenie-malenkie-zvenija-bolshoj-druzhby-7603/>

effective tool of local authorities for the development of constructive dialogue and implementation of various cooperation projects. The main goal of cooperation between the cities in this regard is "comprehensive development of urban environment, infrastructure, social sphere, culture, education, sports, leisure and recreation opportunities in order to improve the well-being of the population, strengthen tolerance, deepen business cooperation"<sup>120</sup>.

One of the concrete results of this twinning meeting in Zhodino was the signing of a cooperation agreement between the cities of Grodno and Ukhta from **the Republic of Komi**. The first agreement to establish and develop trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural relations between them was adopted in September 2017 during the International Investment Forum "Grodno Region at the Crossroads of Borders". The new document primarily envisages trade and industrial cooperation. The fact is that Grodno has quite a few twins and partners in Russia today. Among them are Dzerzhinsk (2005), Khimki (2005), Moscow Schukino (2005), Vologda (2007), Cheboksary (2009), the Tuapse region of the Krasnodar Krai (2012) and Tambov (2015). As we can see, few of them are located in the northern part of the neighbouring country. Thanks to the new agreement, supplies from Grodno are expected to increase, not only of meat and dairy products, but also of other products. "Among the companies whose products may soon appear in large quantities in the Russian city [Ukhta] are OAO Molochny

Mir, Grodno Meat Processing Plant, Quinfood, Conte Spa<sup>121</sup>.

The intensification of partnerships between Grodno and Ukhta is an interesting form of deepening cooperation between the Grodno region and the Republic of Komi on the municipal level. The fact is that back in April 2021 the Grodno

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<sup>120</sup> Surikov, A. City diplomacy - effective way of regional integration of not only the Union State, but also the Eurasian Economic Union / A. Surikov // Belarus - Russia: city diplomacy: informational-interactive project / co-comp. and interviewer: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovski, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2013. - C. 4-5.

<sup>121</sup> Grodno and Russia's Ukhta signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/grodno-i-rossijskaja-ukhta-podpisali-dogovorhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/grodno-i-rossijskaja-ukhta-podpisali-dogovor-sotrudnichestveo-sotrudnichestve-463558-2021/>.

Oblast Executive Committee noted that this Russian region is interested in cooperating in wood processing and furniture production. "There are plans to establish ties with the business community of Grodno region for this purpose. The Russian side is ready to share the Grodno experience in this field. A joint venture for furniture production is also possible."<sup>122</sup> . In September 2021, the Belarusian and Russian regions held the second working group meeting to discuss specific areas of cooperation. The partners from the Komi Republic intend to share the experience of Grodno Oblast in agricultural business from design and construction of agricultural facilities to implementation of technologies for processing of raw materials; they also plan to interact in the construction industry. "Great potential is inherent in cooperation in education, culture, tourism and sports"<sup>123</sup> . It goes without saying that Grodno and Ukhta are planning to make their considerable contribution to the development of all these business ties between the republic and the oblast, which will fully correspond to the contents of the agreement signed in the framework of the 10th twin-cities meeting in Zhodino.

Another driver of engagement with Russian regions in 2021 is the activities of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE). Suffice it to say that from January through August 2021 the commodity turnover between Belarus and Russia increased by half and reached 375 million dollars. It is the highest index among 68 countries represented on the BUCE. The fact that more than a half of all foreign clients of the exchange - over 2,600 - are Russian non-resident companies - speaks volumes. At the same time, "the largest volume of transactions is accounted for by representatives of the Leningrad, Moscow and

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<sup>122</sup> A meeting on cooperation between Belarus and the Komi and Tyva republics was held at the regional executive committee [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://grodno-region.by/ru/https://grodno-region.by/ru/oblispolkom\\_newsnews-ru/view/v-oblispolkome-proshlo-zasedanie-po-sotrudnichestvu-belarusi-i-respublik-komi-iru/view/v-oblispolkome-proshlo-zasedanie-po-sotrudnichestvu-belarusi-i-respublik-komii-.tvva-31118-2021/](https://grodno-region.by/ru/https://grodno-region.by/ru/oblispolkom_newsnews-ru/view/v-oblispolkome-proshlo-zasedanie-po-sotrudnichestvu-belarusi-i-respublik-komi-iru/view/v-oblispolkome-proshlo-zasedanie-po-sotrudnichestvu-belarusi-i-respublik-komii-.tvva-31118-2021/)

<sup>123</sup> The Republic of Komi intends to adopt the Belarusian experience in the agrarian and construction spheres [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/respublikahttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/respublika-komi-namerena-perenimat-belorusskoi-opvt-v-agraranoi-i-stroitelnoi-sferahkomi-namerena-perenimat-belorusskoi-opvt-v-agraranoi-i-stroitelnoi-sferah-267750-2017/>

Smolensk regions"<sup>124</sup> .

To a large extent, all these positive trends can be explained by the fact that "today there are no obstacles to use the technological and intellectual potential of commodity exchanges as a tool for the implementation of integration programmes of the Union State"<sup>125</sup> . Russian partners are also attracted by the opportunity to use the BUTB as a kind of springboard to enter third-country markets. "In the eight months of 2021, the amount of transit transactions made by bidders from the Russian Federation was \$5.5 million. These were mainly supplies of woodworking, petrochemicals, construction products, as well as equipment and machinery"<sup>126</sup> . All of these were successfully sold through BUTB to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. In particular, about 30 companies from the Smolensk, Moscow, Leningrad and Bryansk regions have used this mechanism. And, to all appearances, in the near future these areas of Belarusian-Russian exchange cooperation will get new impulses for development in other Russian regions as well.

For example, there is great interest in cooperation with the BUTB in the **Samara region**, which is one of the leaders in terms of exports of agricultural products in the Volga Federal District. In November 2021, 30 production and trade enterprises of the region expressed their readiness to use the potential of the BUTB to expand the volume and geography of their exports, including "sales of agricultural products of the Samara region to the European Union. In particular, the BUTB has already formed a pool of regular buyers of vegetable oils from the Baltic States, Poland and Switzerland, who could purchase Samara

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<sup>124</sup> Zalessky, B. In search of new points of growth. The Potential of Multi-vector Foreign Trade / B.

Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 112.

<sup>125</sup>Exchanges of Belarus and Russia discuss the creation of a unified exchange commodity market SG [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/economics/view/birzhi-belarusi-rossii-obsudili-sozdanie-edinogo-birzhevogo-tovarnogo-rynka-s-gi-rossii-obsudili-sozdanie-edinogo-birzhevogo-tovarnogo-rynka-s-g-467052-2021/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/birzhi-belarusihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/birzhi-belarusi-rossii-obsudili-sozdanie-edinogo-birzhevogo-tovarnogo-rynka-s-gi-rossii-obsudili-sozdanie-edinogo-birzhevogo-tovarnogo-rynka-s-g-467052-2021/)

<sup>126</sup> Russia leads in exchange trade with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossiia-lidiruet-po-obiemam-birzhevogo-tovarooborota-s-belarusijubirzhevogo-tovarooborota-s-belarusiju-462016-2021/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossiia-lidiruet-po-obiemamhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossiia-lidiruet-po-obiemam-birzhevogo-tovarooborota-s-belarusijubirzhevogo-tovarooborota-s-belarusiju-462016-2021/)

sunflower oil as part of transit deals".<sup>127</sup> . It should be noted that so far these countries mostly have been supplied with Belarusian oilseed products, the volume of which may exceed 70 million dollars in 2021. The Russian region can also see considerable potential in attracting metallurgical companies to the BUTB to sell ferrous and non-ferrous rolled metal products, which are annually used in the Belarusian industry in considerable quantities. So far "as a rule, the way of the Samara metal to the Belarusian buyer is through intermediaries, which makes it more expensive and less competitive... ",<sup>128</sup> .

The development of exchange trade with Belarus in the **Stavropol Territory** is seen as a factor contributing to the growth of mutual trade turnover and diversification of its structure. Updating contacts with the BUTB in November 2021, representatives of the regional Export Support Center expressed confidence that this exchange platform "will become "one window" for Stavropol companies, through which they will get access not only to the Belarusian market, but also be able to successfully trade with countries in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, where it is quite difficult to do business without their own distribution network"<sup>129</sup> .

As for the **Pskov Oblast**, they see the prospects for active use of the BUTB's potential in selling the products of the region's timber industry enterprises. This is evidenced by the fact that 30 Pskov Oblast companies took part in the business forum held in October 2021, where it was described in detail how "the exchange mechanism will allow Pskov companies to supply their goods not only

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<sup>127</sup> . BUTB and the Samara Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry intend to jointly develop exchange trade in agricultural products [Electronic resource ]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tpp-samarskoi-oblasti-namereny-sovmestno-razvivat-birzhevui-u-torgovliju-produktsiej-apk-471097-2021/>

<sup>128</sup> The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Samara region sees significant potential for the development of exchange trade with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tpphttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/tpp-samarskoi-oblasti-vidit-znachitelnyi-potentsial-razvitiia-birzhevoi-torgovli-s-belarusiiusamarskoi-oblasti-vidit-znachitelnyi-potentsial-razvitiia-birzhevoi-torgovli-s-belarusiiu-464619-2021/>

<sup>129</sup> The Stavropol Territory is interested in developing exchange trade in agricultural products with Belarus [Electronic resource ]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/stavropolskij-kraj-zainteresovan-v-razvitiibirzhevoi-torgovli-selhozproduktsiej-s-belarusiiu-467948-2021/>

to the Belarusian market, but also to European and Asian countries, where the exchange has already formed a network of business partners who are ready to purchase timber products in almost any volume"<sup>130</sup> .

**The Republic of Karelia** also has an interesting project at the BUTB, which is primarily interested in the possibility of applying the exchange mechanism to the sale of raw milk from nearby Russian regions in the region. It is likely that this initiative to sell raw milk from the Vologda, Kaliningrad, Pskov and other regions of the North-Western Federal District has all the chances of success, since the BUBS considers raw milk to be a commodity position with a great potential, which has yet to be discovered on the exchange trading floor. In addition, in November 2021 the Belarusian exchange confirmed its readiness "to organize separate trading sessions specifically for participants from the Republic of Karelia, which will allow <...> companies to maximize the economic effect of the exchange mechanism"<sup>131</sup> . So, hopefully, the results will not be long in coming.

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<sup>130</sup> BUTB expects to increase sales of timber products from the Pskov region [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butbhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasschityvaet-velichit-prodazhi-lesoproduktsii-iz-pskovskoj-oblastirasschityvaet-velichit-prodazhi-lesoproduktsii-iz-pskovskoj-oblasti-464211-2021/>

<sup>131</sup> Karelia is interested in selling dairy products through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kareliia-zainteresovana-vhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/kareliia-zainteresovana-v-realizatsii-realizatsii-molochnoj-produktsii-cherez--produktsii-cherez-butb-469068-2021/>



## CHAPTER 5

### **A factor of trust and cooperation**

Direct partnerships between the regions of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation are identified in the September (2021) Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of the two countries as an increasingly important factor for mutual trust and economic cooperation within the framework of the Union State. The following fact speaks volumes in this regard: "There are about 80 regions involved in this interregional interaction on the Russian side"<sup>132</sup>.

**The Astrakhan region**, which signed the Agreement on trade and economic, scientific and technical and cultural cooperation with the Republic of Belarus in May 1999, is one of its active participants. In December 2021, it adopted a new 3-year plan of joint actions on its implementation for 2022-2024. Note that the adoption of the new 3-year plan of joint actions took place at a time of very positive development of the bilateral relations between Belarus and the region. After all, "trade turnover between Belarus and Astrakhan Region in January-September this [2021] year amounted to \$23.1 million, which is nearly 29% higher than during the same period in 2020."<sup>133</sup>. The bulk of Belarusian exports to the Russian region consisted of chipboard, household appliances, machines and devices for lifting, moving, loading and unloading, wool, and construction plastic parts. For example, "shipments of uncoated paper and paperboard in the first 9 months of this [2021] year alone increased 11.7 times over the same period last year"<sup>134</sup>. These figures are largely due to the dealer network of Belarusian companies operating in Astrakhan region, including Minsk Automobile and Tractor Plants, Gomselmash, Bobruiskagromash, AMKODOR, and "work is underway to establish a trade and service centre for MTZ, which is

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<sup>132</sup> Zalesky, B. Partnership benchmark - success. Chronicle of multi-vector interaction / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 15.

<sup>133</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus intends to strengthen trade and economic ties with Russian regions [Electronic resource ]:

<http://www.government.by/ru/content/10081>

<sup>134</sup> Governor: Astrakhan Oblast and Belarus have long-standing partnership relations [Electronic resource ]. -2021 . - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gubernator-astrahanskuj-obl-ast-s-belarusiju-svjazyvajuthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/gubernator-astrahanskuj-obl-ast-s-belarusiju-svjazyvajut-mno-goletnie-partnerskie-otnoshenija-goletnie-partnerskie-otnoshenija-472693-2021/>

scheduled to become operational in 2022"<sup>135</sup> . In addition, the Belarusian footwear chain "Belwest", the Belarusian furniture salon "Megapolis", and five specialized shops "Belarusian foods" operate successfully in Astrakhan. Another "about 3,500 trading enterprises in the region sell Belarusian-made goods - linen, cosmetics, clothes, bedding, household chemicals"<sup>136</sup> .

The new 3-year joint action plan signed in December 2021 is expected to give a new impetus to bilateral cooperation and identify steps to further deepen cooperation in the most important and strategic areas. In particular, the document contains specific measures to "increase trade turnover, joint activities in agribusiness and use of innovative technologies"<sup>137</sup> . Thus, one of the paragraphs deals with the use of Belarusian experience in the organization of urban public transport, traffic and passenger transportation, automation of transport control and cashless payment of fares, which is very relevant today for the Russian region. Experience of Belarus in using modern technologies of production and laying of asphalt mixtures as well as restoration of operational characteristics of the rainwater drainage system will also be introduced in Astrakhan Oblast. Agricultural machinery and lift equipment are also promising areas for cooperation.

In addition, at the December (2021) meeting of the working group on cooperation between the republic and the region, the Astrakhan side made a proposal to the Belarusian partners "to take advantage of the international transport corridor North-South. The new container terminal at the Olya seaport

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<sup>135</sup> Governor of the Astrakhan Oblast: we associate success in agriculture with the use of Belarusian machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/gubernator-astrahanskoi-oblasti-uspehi-v-selskomhttps://www.belta.by/politics/view/gubernator-astrahanskoi-oblasti-uspehi-v-selskom-hozjajstve-my-svjazvvaem-s-ispolzovaniem-ajstve-my-svjazvvaem-s-ispolzovaniem-belorusskoi-472691-2021/>

<sup>136</sup> Zhilkin, A. Implementation of joint projects requires thorough elaboration / A. Zhilkin // Priority directions of regional cooperation as a key factor of Union construction: inform.-integration project / coauthored, interviewed by: K. Gusev, B. Zalessky. Gusev, B. Zalesskii. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 81.

<sup>137</sup> Belarus and the Astrakhan region signed a joint action plan for 2022-2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-astrahanskaja-oblast-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvij-na-2022-2024-godv astrahanskaja-oblast-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvij-na-2022-2024-gody-472832-2021/>

will be part of it"<sup>138</sup> . The point is that the North-South ITC links the Scandinavian countries and the north-western part of the Eurasian Economic Union with the states of Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. It includes rail, road and inland waterway transport infrastructure, seaports on the Caspian Sea, including Astrakhan, ports in the Persian Gulf, road and rail border crossings, as well as international airports. The main advantage of the North-South ITC in comparison with other routes, including the Suez Canal, is a significant reduction in transport time - from 30 to 45 days. At the same time, the port of Olya, located at the mouth of the Volga River, is one of the most promising Caspian ports. It already operates on the Turkmen and Iranian routes. "In the future, ferry service will be developed with

Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan"<sup>139</sup> . That is why new cargo flows are being actively attracted here and new technological complexes are being set up to handle cargoes which have so far been transported along other routes. The successful implementation of this port on the Caspian Sea is also facilitated by the fact that it is located in the special economic zone Lotos, which provides favorable conditions for investment projects in a wide range of areas in industrial production and transport support. So, the proposal from the partners for interregional cooperation from Astrakhan region looks very promising for the Belarusian business entities.

Another Russian region that plans to intensify cooperation with the Belarusian side in the near future is **the Republic of Bashkortostan**. In December 2021, a meeting of the working group for cooperation between the parties was held to discuss possible interaction in the main areas of trade and economic cooperation - in agriculture, machine building, machine tools, and construction. As a

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<sup>138</sup> The Astrakhan region has offered Belarus to use the port of Olya for exports to Southeast Asia [Electronic resource]. -2021 .  
- URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/astrahanskaja-oblast-predlozila-belarusi-ispolzovat-port-olja-dlja-eksporta-v-j-ugo-vostochnuju-aziju-472703-2021/>

<sup>139</sup> Vinokurov, E. North-South International Transport Corridor: Creating a Transport Framework for Eurasia. Report 21/5. / E. Vinokurov, A. Akhunbaev, M. Shashkenov, A. Zabojev. - Almaty, Moscow: Eurasian Development Bank, 2021. - C. 28-29.

reminder, Belarus and Bashkortostan signed an Agreement on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation back in June 1999. Since then, "Bashkortostan sees the potential for cooperation with Belarus in the fields where the maximum practical effect of the union integration can be achieved. It concerns first of all petrochemical, machine-building and agro-industrial complexes, robotics and electronics"<sup>140</sup>. And it has to be admitted that over more than twenty years of partnership development Belarus and Bashkortostan have advanced significantly in many areas. In particular, this Russian region is now home to assembly factories of MTZ tractors, Gomselmash and Lidselmash harvesters, Bobruiskagromash machinery, trolleybuses made of MAZ vehicles, and 14 enterprises set up with participation of Belarusian capital.

As for mutual trade, although "Belarus ranks third in terms of trade turnover with Bashkortostan, behind only China and Kazakhstan, there is still a long way to go to boost mutual trade"<sup>141</sup>. Indeed, the parties achieved their best figures for trade turnover in 2018 - almost \$750 million. In 2020, the figure was nearly \$427 million, and in the three quarters of 2021 it was just over \$280 million. At the same time, "in the first 10 months of 2021, Belarusian exports will amount to nearly \$427 million. 2021, exports of Belarusian products to the Republic of Bashkortostan totaled \$122.4 million, or 107 percent against the same period last year"<sup>142</sup>. Refrigerators, freezers and refrigeration equipment, plates, sheets and films made of plastic, cheese and cottage cheese made up the bulk of the supplies from Belarus. In addition, in January-September 2021, "there was a significant increase of supplies of wood-fibre boards (almost 14-fold compared to the same period last year), consoles, desks and panels for electrical equipment

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<sup>140</sup> Zalessky, B. International relations and media. Peculiarities of multi-vector international cooperation in the period of global challenges / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2016. - C. 90-91.

<sup>141</sup> Development of exchange trade between Belarus and Bashkortostan will boost mutual trade: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/razvitie-birzhevoi-torgovli-mezhdu-belarusiiu-i-bashkortostanom-posobstvuet-rostu-vzaimnogo-473580-2021/>

<sup>142</sup> The head of Bashkortostan visits Belarus with a large delegation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/ufa/news/f288069d32f80b7a.html>  
<https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/ufa/news/f288069d32f80b7a.html>

(10-fold)<sup>143</sup>. Overall, the enterprises of the Bellesbumprom Concern have increased their exports to this region of Russia by more than a quarter to almost two million dollars. "Of the new types of products that have started being supplied to Bashkortostan this year [2021] is wallpaper. The Belarusian Wallpaper Holding has signed a long-term contract with a company from Ufa to supply various assortments of wallpaper products"<sup>144</sup>.

In December 2021, taking into account the existing cooperation dynamics, the parties agreed to intensify work in a number of areas in order to restore the pre-crisis trade turnover as quickly as possible, and in the future to increase it to one billion dollars, based on several priorities. "The first one is to expand cooperation of industrial enterprises in the sphere of special-purpose and heavy-duty machinery supplies. The second is cooperation in the agro-industrial complex and participation in technical modernization of Bashkortostan's agro-industrial complex"<sup>145</sup>. Expansion of cooperation in petrochemistry and construction, including road construction, is also a priority area. And, it should be said, there are good prospects here. For instance, a Russian region with seven million hectares of arable land and where only Belarusian wheeled tractors are assembled at Bashkillakhoztekhnik, is in dire need of caterpillar-mounted machinery - "we need hundreds, not dozens, of caterpillar tractors"<sup>146</sup>. As a result, the issue of possible assembly of Belarusian caterpillar tractors on the territory of Bashkortostan has been raised in practice.

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<sup>143</sup> "Neither covid nor sanctions frighten us". Bashkortostan intends to deepen cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource ] : <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nas-ne-pugajut-ni-kovid-ni-sanktsii-bashkortostan-nameren-ugubljat-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusiju-473499-2021/>

<sup>144</sup> Exports of Bellesbumprom's enterprises to Bashkortostan in January-October grew by 27% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksporhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekspor-predpriatij-bellesbumproma-v-bashkortostan-v-janvare-oktjabre-vyros-napredpriatij-bellesbumproma-v-bashkortostan-v-janvare-oktjabre-vyros-na-27-473805-2021/>

<sup>145</sup> Equipment supplies, agribusiness and petrochemicals: Roman Golovchenko outlines priorities for cooperation with Bashkortostan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/10091.government.by/ru/content/10091>

<sup>146</sup> Bashkortostan wants to expand assembly of Belarusian tractors and is interested in drones [Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bashkortostan-hochet-rasshirit-sborku-belorusskih- traktorov-i-zainteresovalsja-bespilotnikami-473514-2021/>

Another promising topic concerns highways, the total length of which in this Russian region exceeds 50 thousand kilometres, and Bashkortostan ranks second in Russia in terms of the extensive network of local roads. All major federal highways pass through here. There are plans to begin reconstruction of the Kazan-Yekaterinburg section of the highway running through the Bashkir land. And in this regard they are interested in the Belarusian experience of using cement-concrete pavements, which began in our country in 2014. Then the first object was the second ring road around Minsk, followed by two more artificial runways - at the National Airport and in Orsha. Bashkortostan is determined to develop road construction with cement concrete, and is ready to step up cooperation in this direction with partners from Belarus. Besides, in view of the fact that the time between repairs of cement-concrete roads is much longer than that of asphalt-concrete ones, the Bashkir side expressed its interest in cooperation with Belarusian specialists "not only in construction of top class federal roads, but also in rehabilitation of regional roads with gravel and macadam surfacing, which demand better performance characteristics"<sup>147</sup>. And to all appearances, the Belarusian holding company Belavtodor is ready to share the experience of its organizations with its Bashkir partners in these matters. Note that all these facts are only a part of the agreements reached in December 2021 at more than 200 meetings of business people in Minsk to develop cooperation between Belarus and Bashkortostan.

In January 2022, the **Republic of Tuva**, a Russian region located in the south of Eastern Siberia and home to 330 thousand people, also made a significant bid for a significant increase in engagement with the Belarusian side. It is clear that geographic remoteness makes adjustments to the implementation of joint projects of the sides. This is evidenced by the volume of trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Tyva, which amounted to about 275 thousand dollars in 2020, and even less - only 47.5 thousand dollars for 11 months of

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<sup>147</sup> Bashkortostan is interested in studying the Belarusian experience of road maintenance [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bashkortostan-zainteresovan-v-izuchenii-belorusskogo-opyta-dorozhnogo-hozjajstva-473566-2021/>

2021. "The bulk of deliveries from our republic [Belarus] were supplies of machines and devices for lifting, moving, loading or unloading, metal structures made of ferrous metals, corsetry and women's knitwear."<sup>148</sup> .

The issue of the need to intensify cooperation between the parties was raised three years ago - in December 2018 - at a meeting of the Tyva leadership with representatives of the Belarusian commodity distribution network in the region, where it was noted that "70 BELAZ dump trucks are in operation at enterprises in the Republic of Tyva; in addition, the region has serious potential for further expansion of this machinery fleet"<sup>149</sup> . And in January 2022, during the first visit to Belarus by the head of the Russian region, V.

Hovalyg's intentions began to take quite concrete shape.

Minsk sees the prospects for the development of these partnerships in the near future in order to significantly increase the trade turnover with the Republic of Tyva. Especially since there is considerable potential in this area: from supplies of modern Belarusian road, municipal, construction, logging, and passenger machinery to implementation of joint projects "in the agro-industrial sector, water supply and sewage, housing and social facilities design"<sup>150</sup> . In particular, one of the concrete results of the Tyva representative delegation's visit to Belarus was the agreement that with the help of the Belarusian side a dairy farm will be built in the region, which will be "equipped with equipment produced in Belarus, as well as with Belarusian cattle. The project is to be implemented within a year, and then the experience can be replicated"<sup>151</sup> to fully satisfy the

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<sup>148</sup> Agriculture, Industry, Tourism: Grodno Region and the Republic of Tyva signed a protocol on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/selskoe-hozjajstvo-industrija-turizm-grodnenskaja-oblast-ihttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/selskoe-hozjajstvo-industrija-turizm-grodnenskaja-oblast-i-respublika-tvva-podpisali-protokol-orespublika-tvva-podpisali-protokol-o-480420-2022/>.

<sup>149</sup> The Republic of Belarus and the Tyva Republic of the Russian Federation plan to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/krasnovarsk/news/98cd50c57373.htmlrussia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/krasnovarsk/news/98cd50c57373.html>

<sup>150</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus intends to increase trade turnover with the Republic of Tyva [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10135.government.by/ru/content/10135>

<sup>151</sup> Belarus will help Tyva build a dairy farm [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-tvve->



demand of the region for milk and dairy products by setting up its own base. The Belarusian side has already expressed its preparedness to submit the project documentation for the construction of small dairy farms for about 200 cows, to be re-equipped with Belarusian milking and cooling equipment. Let us note that Belarus has a good experience of cooperation with Siberian regions in the agricultural sector. Suffice it to say that "to the Siberian Federal District, of which Tuva is a part,

Belarus [in 2021] supplied more than \$100 million worth of agricultural products"<sup>152</sup> .

Another promising area is the IT sphere. The fact is that the Belarusian experience related to the system of training of IT-specialists, where IT-education programmes are implemented at all levels, from universities to kindergartens, aroused great interest of the partners from Tyva. As a result of the meeting in the Hi-Tech Park in Minsk, "points of interaction between the two parties were found, which is especially important for the Russian delegation on the threshold and opening of its own IT park, planned for the next [2023] year"<sup>153</sup> .

Among the Belarusian regions, Grodno Region is very interested in cooperation with the Republic of Tuva. In January 2022, the two sides substantially considered possible joint projects in agriculture, "as the Tyva administration plans to triple its share in the gross regional product. In addition, participation of Belarusian specialists in the development of the infrastructure of the Ak-Sug mining and processing plant, which is under construction, is possible."<sup>154</sup> .

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<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-tyve-v-stroitelstve-molochno-tovarnoi-fermystroitelstve-molochno-tovarnoi-fermy-480369-2022/>.

<sup>152</sup> Belarus will help Tyva build a dairy farm [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-tyve-v-stroitelstve-molochno-tovarnoi-fermy-480369-2022/>.

<sup>153</sup> The Republic of Tuva is interested in the Belarusian experience of training IT-specialists [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/respublika-tyvahttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/respublika-tyva-zainteresovana-v-belorusskom-opyte-podgotovki-it-spetsialistovzainteresovana-v-belorusskom-opyte-podgotovki-it-spetsialistov-481053-2022/>.

<sup>154</sup> Karanik on cooperation with the Tuva Republic: we need to turn potential into concrete projects: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/karanik-o-sotrudnichestve-s-respublikoi-tyva-nado-prevratit-potentsial-v-konkretnye-proekty-480387-2022/>



Apparently, the dialogue between the two sides will continue as early as late June 2022 at the 9th Forum of the Regions of Belarus and Russia, which will be held in Grodno, where all the agreements reached in January may be formalized as a relevant agreement.

In January 2022, Gomel Region signed a protocol of intent on cooperation with the Republic of Tuva to actively develop mutually beneficial relations in a variety of areas. The nearest plans here include providing the Russian region with Gomselmash machinery, as well as developing high technologies, including in cattle breeding. The fact is that a company Agrokomplekt is located in the Gomel region. It designs dairy equipment, dairy farms "with various volumes of milk production and different capacities - from 200 to 1200 cows with different milking rates"<sup>155</sup>. It may well become an active participant in this inter-regional collaboration in order to accompany the implementation of projects in Tyva from the design to the start-up of the farm.

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<sup>155</sup> Economy, technology, agribusiness: the Gomel Oblast and the Republic of Tuva intend to develop cooperation [Electronic resource ]: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ekonomika-tehnologii-apk-gomelskaja-oblast-i-respublika-tyva-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-480782-2022/>

## CHAPTER 6

### **Opportunities for engagement are there, we need to seize them**

Asia is now the most important area for the Republic of Belarus to develop its trade and economic cooperation. For example, in 2020 alone, Belarusian exports to the countries of that continent amounted to about two billion dollars. Nevertheless, there are still many opportunities to promote Belarusian economic interests in this area. "In order to use them successfully, it is necessary to continue systematic and consistent work, developing mutual interest and initiating new formats of contacts, as is actually happening in the development of partnerships with a number of Asian countries,"<sup>156</sup> , including **Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia.**

In this context, we would like to recall that in October 2021, the fifth meeting of the Belarus-Pakistan Business Council was held, which was attended by representatives of more than 60 companies from that South Asian country, representing such economic sectors as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles, food processing, construction, transport, logistics and tourism. On the Belarusian side the meeting was attended by representatives of almost a hundred enterprises and companies. Such composition of the business council participants eloquently demonstrated that "the relations between Belarus and Pakistan are currently at a high level, especially in trade, investment and industry"<sup>157</sup> . This is largely facilitated by the very extensive legal and contractual framework, which already includes more than 80 agreements. Another "around 20 agreements/memoranda of understanding are in the final stages of negotiation"<sup>158</sup> . The established

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<sup>156</sup> Zalessky, B. The goal is sustainable growth. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 66.

<sup>157</sup> Pakistan is interested in strengthening economic cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pakistanhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/pakistan-ukreplenii-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusijuzainteresovan-v-ukreplenii-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-462939-2021/>

<sup>158</sup> Khan, S.H. On business plans, tractor deliveries and van painting master class / S.H. Khan // [Electronic resource] : <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/posol-pakistana-o-biznes-planah-postavkah-tractorov-i-master-klasse-po-rospisi-furgonov-7887/>

partnership implementation mechanisms in the form of commissions and working groups, as well as the existing system of interregional cooperation are also active.

As for the Business Council, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry held its fourth meeting in the online format in April 2021. There the parties "discussed not only the development of bilateral trade, but also possibilities to increase investment cooperation, industrial cooperation, creation of joint companies and productions, mentioning industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, as well as education, information technologies and logistics among the priority directions of cooperation"<sup>159</sup>. At the fifth session of the Council the Belarusian side made the key areas of cooperation with its Pakistani partners more specific and pointed out among them "the increase in mutual sales of traditional products, the establishment of joint productions of Belarusian equipment in Pakistan, and joint productions of surgical instruments and leather goods in Belarus. The creation of joint clusters to produce medicines in demand is promising, and it can take place both in Belarus and Pakistan"<sup>160</sup>. Attraction of Pakistani capital to implement projects aimed at modernization of Belarusian textile companies, development of joint ventures in the agricultural sector and joint projects in science and technology with access to the production cycle are also topical today. The project to establish a university of applied technologies in Pakistan is also relevant, in order to use it to reach a qualitatively new level of professional and technical training of Pakistani specialists using Belarusian educational technologies.

If we take agriculture as our priority, we note that in 2020 about three hundred

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<sup>159</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Key task - realization of cooperation potential / B.L. Zalessky // Proceedings of XVII International Scientific and Practical Conference, Novinata za nadpranalni nauk - 2021, 17 - 25 May 2021; Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 19.

<sup>160</sup> Barysievich: Belarus-Pakistan relations acquire strategic character [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/economics/view/borisevichhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/borisevich-\\_-belarusi-i-pakistana-priobretajut-strategicheskij-harakterotnoshenija-belarusi-i-pakistana-priobretajut-strategicheskij-harakter-462932-2021/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/borisevichhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/borisevich-_-belarusi-i-pakistana-priobretajut-strategicheskij-harakterotnoshenija-belarusi-i-pakistana-priobretajut-strategicheskij-harakter-462932-2021/)

units of Belarusian agricultural equipment - tractors and harvesters - were sold to Pakistan. In 2021, Minsk and Islamabad intend to increase this figure to three thousand units. At the same time, the idea of setting up an assembly factory of Belarusian tractors on Pakistani soil was discussed at the fifth meeting of the Business Council. "We are talking about assembling 10,000 tractors a year in Pakistan, this project is now in the works and preliminary documents have been signed,"<sup>161</sup> .

Another promising area for Belarusian-Pakistani business engagement is the development of exchange trade, which can give a new impetus to the development of bilateral trade and economic relations. In particular, the Pakistani side sees considerable potential here "primarily in such areas as agriculture, woodworking, metallurgy and petrochemistry."<sup>162</sup> . The fact is that, according to both sides, the trade turnover between Belarus and Pakistan is still small - a little over \$50 million in 2020. A significant potential for its growth through the exchange mechanism lies in the fact that "Pakistan is one of the world's largest exporters of rice, wheat and other grains"<sup>163</sup> . The textile industry is also developed there. The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) is ready to save Pakistani companies from most of the problems associated with entering the Belarusian market and to minimize their possible risks. Besides, exporters from Pakistan could use the Belarusian exchange platform to supply their goods to the European Union, where the BUCE has about four thousand accredited members. In turn, Belarusian companies could successfully export chemical and petrochemical products to the Pakistani market, which are traditionally in high demand there.

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<sup>161</sup> Belarus and Pakistan are considering setting up an assembly facility for Belarusian tractors:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-rassmatrivaiut-vozmozhnost-sozdaniia-sborchnogo-proizvodstva-belorusskih-tractorov-462934-2021/>

<sup>162</sup> Pakistan is ready to trade with Belarus through the BUTB platform [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pakistan-gotov-torgovat-s-belarusijuhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/pakistan-gotov-torgovat-s-belarusijuhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/pakistan-gotov-torgovat-s-belarusiju-cherez-ploschadku-butbcherez-ploschadku-butb-462927-2021/>

<sup>163</sup> BUTB opens broad prospects for development of mutual trade between Belarus and Pakistan - Ambassador [Electronic resource]

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-otkrvvaet-shirokie-perspektivy-dlja-razvitiia-vzaimnoi-torgovli-belarusi-i-pakistan-posol-453692-2021/>

It should be reminded that in the first eight months of 2021 the trade turnover between Belarus and Pakistan exceeded USD 53 million. At the same time, "export of Belarusian goods totaled \$44.3 million..."<sup>164</sup> , and the trade surplus for the Belarusian side exceeded \$35 million. The dynamics of these indicators demonstrate that the growth potential has not yet been exhausted. The opportunities for the expansion of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries are quite diverse, and the plans for their implementation are concrete and realistic.

As for the **United Arab Emirates** (UAE), trade and economic relations with this state located in the Middle East and Persian Gulf region have been developing particularly intensively in recent years. "Belarus is steadily increasing its supplies of goods and services to the UAE <...>. The main Belarusian exports are petrochemical products, wood processing products, foodstuffs and various types of equipment. In the services sector, computer and transport services are actively exported"<sup>165</sup> . The dynamics of the development of these bilateral ties is eloquently illustrated by the fact that "trade turnover over the last five years has tripled, investments since 2011 have increased more than tenfold"<sup>166</sup> .

A good example of the expansion of bilateral Belarusian-Emirati cooperation in recent years is

The largest construction and real estate project being implemented in Minsk under the patronage of the founder of the world-famous Emaar company<sup>167</sup> . Let

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<sup>164</sup> Trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade and economic bilateral relationsrelations/](https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade_and_economic_bilateral_relationsrelations/).

<sup>165</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus is interested in expanding cooperation with the UAE in trade and investment [Electronic resource ]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-s-oae-v-sfere-torgovli-i-investitsij-470873-2021/>

<sup>166</sup> Cherviakov: National Day of Belarus at Expo 2020 will allow to show the capacities of enterprises [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherviakov-natsionalny-den-belarusi-na-ekspo-2020-pozvolit-pokazat-vozmozhnosti-predpriyatij-470830-2021/>

<sup>167</sup> Roman Golovchenko: We are working on cooperation with the countries of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf at the Expo [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

us remind you that Minsk City Executive Committee has signed an agreement with the Emirati company Riverside Development Holdings Limited to build the facility "Experimental Multifunctional Complex "North Shore", which will be located within the boundaries of the Minsk Ring Road - Pobediteley Avenue - Orlovskaya Street - Tsnianskoye Reservoir. The cost of the project is four billion dollars. The complex will include "residential houses with all the necessary engineering and transport infrastructure, social facilities and public amenities with the total area of over 6 million square metres. There are also plans to build the National Exhibition Centre, the Institute of Artificial Intelligence and the Minsk International Trade Centre"<sup>168</sup> .

Among other Belarusian regions successfully developing mutually beneficial ties with partners from the UAE is Brest Region. "Last year [2021] the foreign trade turnover between the Brest region and the UAE increased 1.5 times and exceeded \$5 million. This is a small amount against the \$3 billion of exports in the region as a whole. But the market is promising..."<sup>169</sup> . The interest of Brest Region companies in the Emirati market is reflected in the fact that leaders and leading specialists of about ten leading companies from the region are expected to come to Dubai in January 2022 to participate in the "World Expo 2020". They include Santa Bremor JV LLC, Barhim OJSC, 1AK-GROUP, ST&M Group of Companies, Kobrin Butter and Cheese Plant, Brest Meat Factory, Brestmyasomolprom Concern, Brest Scientific and Technological Park and Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park. As a result they signed contracts worth

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<http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/10068.government.by/ru/content/10068>

<sup>168</sup> Construction of the exhibition centre in the Severny Bereg complex in Minsk is scheduled to start this year [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/stroitelstvo-vvstavochного-tsentra-v-komplekse-severnvihttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/stroitelstvo-vvstavochного-tsentra-v-komplekse-severnvi-bereg-v-minske-planirujut-nachat-v-etom-godubereg-v-minske-planirujut-nachat-v-etom-godu-470841-2021/>.

<sup>169</sup> The foreign trade turnover between the Brest region and the UAE has grown by 1.5 times [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vneshnetorgovvi-oborot-mezhdu-oborot-mezhdu-brestskoi-oblastiiu-i-oae-vvros-v--oblastiiu-i-oae-vvros-v-15-raza-raza-479871-2022/>

\$18 million at the world exhibition. Four contracts with UAE residents worth eight million dollars were among them. "In particular, contracts were signed to supply dried milk, dried ice cream <...> to the Arab market. Santa Bremor and the ST&M Group will increase sales of products. "Barkhim has signed an agreement with a Dubai company to promote its products in the UAE market"<sup>170</sup>

The theme of attracting foreign investments into Brest Region's innovative projects was not left aside at the exhibition in Dubai. Thus, about two dozen Arab companies - logistics, investment, food distributors, trading in raw materials, working in the petrochemical industry - were able to learn in detail about the offers of the Brest Free Economic Zone, including the production of chargers for electric cars and ultrasound machines. Brest Science and Technology Park, which is the largest innovation centre and the main incubator for small businesses in the region, demonstrated SmartBrest project of smart city at EXPO 2020 demonstrating not only advanced technologies and solutions which are already available and work in Brest, but also something that can interest big investors. In particular, they talked about the territory of innovative development, which "could become the current factory quarter, bounded by Moskovskaya, Pionerskaya and Y. Kupala Streets. Kupala Street. The area of the area is about 120 ha. The production buildings on it remain unused"<sup>171</sup> . Potential investors are offered to set up enterprises here with pure manufacturing in such areas as IT, artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, electronics, and quantum computing. The attention with which this smart city project was greeted by the presentation participants allows us to hope that SmartBrest will be able to find interested investors not only in the UAE, but also in other

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<sup>170</sup> Brest region enterprises signed contracts worth \$18 million at an exhibition in Dubai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kontraktv-na-18-mln-zakliuchili-predpriiatiiia-brestskoi-oblasti-na-vvstavke-v-dubaemln-zakliuchili-predpriiatiiia-brestski-ooblasti-na-vvstavke-v-dubae-481397-2022/](https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kontraktv-na-https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kontraktv-na-18-mln-zakliuchili-predpriiatiiia-brestskoi-oblasti-na-vvstavke-v-dubaemln-zakliuchili-predpriiatiiia-brestski-ooblasti-na-vvstavke-v-dubae-481397-2022/)

<sup>171</sup> Brest Technopark to present a smart city project at an exhibition in Dubai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskijhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskij-tehnopark-prezentuet-proekt-umnogo-goroda-na-vvstavke-v-dubaetehtnopark-prezentuet-proekt-umnogo-goroda-na-vvstavke-v-dubae-480835-2022/>

countries.

When it comes to the relations between the Republic of Belarus and **the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**, one should recall that 2022 marks the quarter century since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. True, their level is still far from what it could be. But it is a fact that in January 2022 the sides expressed a mutual desire to deepen and develop contacts and intensify the dialogue. Minsk assumes that "the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a recognized leader in the Arab world, and Belarus is interested in developing relations in all areas"<sup>172</sup>. Today, the two sides consider several vectors of joint work to be top priorities: first, the contractual and legal framework for the relationship should be significantly expanded; second, partnership ties in the economic sector should be significantly stepped up, because the two sides "have a serious potential in trade and economic cooperation"<sup>173</sup>.

<sup>174</sup>As far as the legal and contractual framework of Belarusian-Saudi relations is concerned, today it includes the General Agreement, intergovernmental agreements on avoidance of double taxation and mutual protection of investments, on cooperation in science and technology, interagency memoranda in sports, education, on cooperation between the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and King Abdulaziz City of Science and Technology, as well as "the agreement on cooperation between the BelCCI and the Council of the CCI of Qatar, the Memorandum of Understanding on

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<sup>172</sup> Andreichenko: Belarus is interested in deepening and developing contacts with Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/politics/view/andreichenko-belarus-zainteresovana-uglubliat-i-razvivat-kontakty-s-saudovskoi-araviei-480335-2022/>

<sup>173</sup> Kochanova: Belarus attaches great importance to friendly relations with Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kochanova-belarus-pridaet-bolshoe-znachenie-druzheskim-otnosheniam-s-saudovskoi-araviei-480404-2022>

<sup>174</sup> Political cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

[https://uae.mfa.gov.by/ru/https://uae.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_/KSA/politicsrelations/KSA/politics/](https://uae.mfa.gov.by/ru/https://uae.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_/KSA/politicsrelations/KSA/politics/)



Speaking of the need to step up Belarus-Saudi trade and economic cooperation, we note that back in December 2020, the two sides agreed to "work on the next meeting of the joint intergovernmental committee."<sup>175</sup> . The fact is that the first two meetings of this committee were held in 2015 and 2016 in Riyadh and Minsk, respectively. At the first one, the parties agreed to establish a Belarusian-Saudi business council to become a platform for fruitful interaction between representatives of the business communities of the two countries. At the same time, "a contract was signed for the supply of soil mixes from the Belarusian company EridGrow Production"<sup>176</sup> . The second session of the intergovernmental committee considered a wide range of cooperation issues in economy, trade, investment, industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, water resources, higher education, science and technology. The Belarusian-Saudi business forum and the contact and cooperation exchange were held on the site of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. 18 Saudi and more than 70 Belarusian companies and organizations took part in the forum. At that time, "Belarus was supplying 37 commodity items to Saudi Arabia, including machinery and complex technical equipment"<sup>177</sup> . At the forum, the Saudi partners were offered a much wider range of machinery products, including special machinery, as well as high-tech goods in the field of instrument engineering. For its part, the Saudi side expressed its "interest in cooperation with Belarusian companies in the areas of information and communication technologies, real estate, security, agriculture and engineering"<sup>178</sup> .

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<sup>175</sup> Belarus and Saudi Arabia to work on holding a meeting of a joint intergovernmental committee [Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-saudovskaia-aravii-a-prorabotaiut-provedenie-zasedaniia-sovostnogo-mezhpravkomitet-420253-2020/>

<sup>176</sup> Belarus and Saudi Arabia agree to establish a joint business council [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-saudovskaj-a-aravij-a-dogovorilis-o-sozdaniia-sovmestnogo-delovogo-soveta-2523-2015>

<sup>177</sup> Kiseleva, O. Belarus intends to seriously expand the range of products on the market of Saudi Arabia / O. Kiseleva // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL:

[https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-namerena-seriezno-rasshirit-assortiment-produktsii-na-rvne-produktsii-na-rvne-saudovskoj-aravii-aravii-193602-2016/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-namerena-seriezno-rasshirit-assortimenthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-namerena-seriezno-rasshirit-assortiment-produktsii-na-rvne-produktsii-na-rvne-saudovskoj-aravii-aravii-193602-2016/)

<sup>178</sup> Belarus-Saudi Arabia Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.cci.by/o-palate/novosti/biznes-forum-belarus-saudovskava-araviva/#www.cci.by/o-palate/novosti/biznes-forum-belarus-saudovskava-araviva/#>

One of the most promising areas for stepping up trade and economic cooperation is an increase in food supplies from Belarus to the Saudi market. Suffice it to say that "export of Belarusian food products and agricultural raw materials to Saudi Arabia increased 3.1 times in 2020 compared with 2019 and reached \$6.2 million. Belarus supplied skimmed milk powder, whey, jams, fruit puree and eggs to Saudi Arabia. January-March 2021 exported products for \$1.7 million (24.3% growth),"<sup>179</sup> . Belarusian producers now plan to continue working with the Saudi Food and Drug Agency on the accreditation of their supplies. The main concerns are the following dairy products

The company's main focus is on Halal products such as butter, cheese, skimmed milk powder and whole milk powder and, in the long term, on meat products such as beef and poultry produced in accordance with Halal requirements.

It should be noted that a number of Belarusian exporters are already successfully developing the market of the Persian Gulf country. For example, in July 2021, the first batch of concentrated milk was sent to Saudi Arabia by the Rogachev Dairy Processing Plant. "This happened thanks to the contract concluded with one of the leaders in this country in distribution, which covers retail chains, shops, restaurants and cafes"<sup>180</sup> . Another interesting example in this row is the Polotsk Dairy Plant, which has more than doubled its export volumes in 2021, with its geography already reaching 22 countries. "There are also plans to ship dried milk to Saudi Arabia in the near future"<sup>181</sup> .

All these facts suggest that the parties have some room for the successful development of mutually beneficial relations in the post-Soviet period, the starting point for which could well be 2022. There are many proposals, directions and initiatives on both sides.

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<sup>179</sup> Belarus interested in increasing food supplies to Saudi Arabia - Kroupko [Electronic resource ]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-naraschivanii-postavok-prodovolstvii-a-v-saudovskui-u-aravij-u-krupko-441447-2021/>

<sup>180</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Export of food and agricultural products: growth of supplies and geographic expansion / B.L. Zalessky // Materials for XVII International Scientific Practical Conference, Scientific Potential for Light - 2021, 17 - 25 September 2021: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 5.

<sup>181</sup> Polotsk Dairy Plant more than doubled its exports in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/boleee-chem-v-dvahttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/boleee-chem-v-dva-raz-a-velichil-eksport-v-2021-godu-polotskij-molochnyi-kombinat-479923-2022>

### **Industrial park development and regional cooperation**

Directive No 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China", adopted in December 2021, listed the stepping up of trade, economic and financial relations as one of the priority tasks until 2025,

investment cooperation and expansion of interregional ties. Within the framework of the declared course to raise the status of Belarusian-Chinese relations to the level of iron brotherhood, exemplary all-round strategic cooperation and all-weather partnership, the activities of the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone, one of the main objectives of which is to ensure effective activities of its residents, attract new ones, actively develop innovation activities, startups, cluster cooperation, and attract Belarusian companies to participate in the project, are an important component. At the same time, a specific goal is set: "to ensure the number of Park residents is not less than 170 companies by 2025..."<sup>182</sup>.

It should be noted that a number of specific measures to achieve this objective were taken at Velikiy Kamen back in 2021. In particular, during the three quarters of this year, the industrial park's residents increased their investment in fixed assets by more than a third. At the same time, "the volume of industrial production grew by more than 2.5 times to Br222.6 million. <> Residents' exports of products and services increased by more than 16% and is carried out to 20 countries of the world"<sup>183</sup>. An important detail: if "at the end of 2020 [in the park] there were 68 companies from 14 countries registered"<sup>184</sup>, then as of mid-November 2021 there were already 81 companies from 15 countries as

<sup>182</sup> Presidential Directive No 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China". - Minsk. 2021. - C. 6.

<sup>183</sup> Investment in fixed assets in Great Stone increased by more than a third in 9 months [Electronic resource ]. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-za-9-mesjatsev-bolee-chem-na-tret-uvlechilis-investitsi-v-osnovnoj-kapital-470611-2021/>

<sup>184</sup> Zalesky, B. With a view to sustainable development. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 13.

residents. The work to expand Great Stone, on the other hand, continues.

For example, in October, the Belarusian-Latvian company SMD Bai LLC was registered here, which "plans to create high-tech production of electronic products (boards) of small and medium series"<sup>185</sup> widely used in telecommunications, medicine, automotive industry, instrument making, to supply them to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. In November, the list of residents of the industrial park was supplemented by several more business entities. One of them is Rufais LLC. The new resident's investment project involves production and application of advanced polymer materials in construction. Innovative approach here is that "the composite material is the company's own development, differs from the analogs with higher operational properties. It has a wide scope of application, including for the production of roofing and other elements of buildings and constructions"<sup>186</sup>, which gives good reason to hope for the sales of this product not only in the domestic market, but also in Russia and the European Union countries.

Among the new residents is the Belarusian LLC InKata, which was previously registered with Great Stone as an investor to build facilities here to support subjects of innovation activities of the industrial park. "The project will provide design, prototyping and technical documentation services, as well as provide jobs and equipment"<sup>187</sup>. Another resident of Great Stone in November is the China-Belarus Centre for Innovative Bioengineering Technologies LLC, which intends to cooperate closely with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. "The company will produce reagents for diagnostics of coronavirus and some

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<sup>185</sup> A new Great Stone resident will produce electronic circuit boards [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novji-rezident-velikogo-velikogo-kamni-a-budet-proizvodit-elektronnye-platva-budet-proizvodit-elektronnye-platv-465743-2021/>

<sup>186</sup> A new resident of Great Stone will produce composite materials [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novji-rezident-velikogo-kamni-a-budet-proizvodit-kompozitnye-materialy-velikogo-kamni-a-budet-proizvodit-kompozitnye-materialy-469205-2021/>

<sup>187</sup> InKata Ltd. became a resident of Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ooo-inkata-stalo-rezidentom-velikogo-kamni-a-471320-2021/>

other diseases, as well as for food safety diagnostics"<sup>188</sup>, which are supposed to be exported to the countries of the Eurasian Economic and European Union, as well as to China.

In the first half of December, the industrial park registered a new innovation entity - Needle Med LLC - which is going to implement a project in Velikiy Kamen to create a perfect simulator for practising practical manual skills by employees of various professions - surgeons, tattoo artists, medical students. Interestingly, this project was created in 2019 by a group of students. "Its idea is to create a simulator as close to real human tissues as possible to train professionals for practice"<sup>189 190</sup>. Thanks to the opportunities the industrial park offers to innovators, the development of the young specialists is likely to find widespread application in real life. In the second half of December, another resident was registered at Great Stone - Tianyu Changyin UAV Science and Technology Company (MSC) LLC, whose founder is one of China's leading enterprises in the development and production of intelligent unmanned systems - Beijing Tianyu Changyin UAV Science and Technology Company. The aim of this investment project in the industrial park is "to set up high-tech production of versatile unmanned aerial vehicle logistics systems and equipment".

Speaking of the development of cluster cooperation in the Great Stone, it should be recalled that back in June 2021, the Republic of Belarus adopted a decree that improves the legal regulation aimed at improving the investment climate in the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone. In particular, this document provides for: 1) making the

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<sup>188</sup> A new resident of Great Stone will produce reagents for diagnosing diseases [Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-reagenty-dlja-diagnostiki-zabolevanij-471849-2021/>

<sup>189</sup> Great Stone's new company will create simulators to practice manual skills in surgery [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/novaja-kompanija-velikogo-kamnja-budet-sozdavat-trenazheri-https://www.belta.by/tech/view/novaja-kompanija-velikogo-kamnja-budet-sozdavat-trenazheri-dlja-otrabotki-manualnyh-navykov-v-hirurgii-dlja-otrabotki-manualnyh-navykov-v-hirurgii-474239-2021/>

<sup>190</sup> A new Great Stone resident will begin manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles [Electronic resource ]. -2021 .- URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachnet-proizvodit-bespilotnye-letatelnye-apparaty-476043-2021/>

independence of the park administration through the transfer of additional powers from local authorities in terms of administrative procedures; 2) expansion of the industrial park's activities; 3) support for start-ups; 4) creation of preferential conditions for large investment projects with an investment volume over USD 50 million.

Among the new areas of Great Stone's activities should be primarily the establishment 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 in the park, where it will be possible to provide medical services with the use of medicines, medical equipment and products, treatment methods of foreign countries without mandatory registration in Belarus and without the need to obtain a license for medical services. The terms will be shortened considerably and the procedures for registration and re-registration of medicines and medical devices, as well as for conducting clinical trials, will be simplified for manufacturers. In other words, all these changes "open up great opportunities for the development of a medical and pharmaceutical cluster in the park, and primarily in the field of traditional Chinese medicine"<sup>191</sup> .

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 the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of diseases. <...> It not only has a good therapeutic effect on mild COVID-19, but also has clear advantages in treating severely ill patients, so that the mortality rate in severe cases has dropped from 21% to 5%"<sup>192</sup> .

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<sup>191</sup> Koroteev, K. Support for start-ups, preferences for investors, simplification of land relations - about innovations of the decree on development of Velikiy Kamen 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/>.

<sup>192</sup> Xiaoyun, S. Belarus and China: growth of business cooperation and collaboration 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-vvpuske-lekarstv-pri-lechenii-koronavirusa-7873/>.

Using the Great Stone platform to realise the existing potential of Belarus-China cooperation in the field of health could have a major positive impact in terms of preventing new "waves" of the coronavirus epidemic.

We would like to remind you that the Velikiy Kamen industrial park has 12 residents operating in the medical area. "These are companies from Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Russia, and the USA"<sup>193</sup>. 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 implement a project related to Chinese traditional medicine. "The 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"<sup>194</sup>. In particular, the production of Linlan Yiqing, aimed at effectively treating coronavirus infection, will be set up. At the first stage, it was planned to start producing medicines in 2021 and export them to Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and India.

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In March 2021, plans were also announced to create the Eurasian Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine at Great Stone, which will provide medical services to the industrial park's residents and its Chinese and foreign employees, as well as interact with research institutions and healthcare institutions in Belarus and neighboring countries to share experience in traditional Chinese medicine. In May 2021, a memorandum of cooperation was signed by the Industrial Park Development Company and the Centre for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare RUE. And in July, Great Stone signed an agreement to establish a

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<sup>193</sup> The Centre 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-ispvtanij-v-zdravooohranenii-i-park-velikij-kamen-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-441421-2021/>

<sup>194</sup> New Great Stone resident launches Chinese medicine project [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachinaet-proekt-v-sfere-kitajskoj-i-meditsiny-433283-2021/>



Sino-Belarusian zone for advanced cooperation and an international park for traditional Chinese medicine and healthcare there, which implies a new model for cooperation between Belarus and China in the said area.

All of these facts point to active steps to deploy an "extensive cluster in the industrial park, which will bring together expertise in the field of Chinese medicine. <...> a medical centre for diagnostic services is expected to follow. This area is already in the works"<sup>195</sup>. Besides, the development of the sphere of medical tourism is also envisaged here, for which a kind of medical village will be built near the Volmian reservoir - clinics and different medical institutions in the sphere of rehabilitation. We should also remind you that in the package of measures aimed at development of the national innovation system in Belarus for the years 2021-2025 the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" is designated "as a site for organization of innovative productions"<sup>196</sup>. Judging by the above facts, this site is developing quite successfully, confidently and dynamically in the current five-year period.

Turning to the task of expanding interregional ties, which is one of the priorities in the development of Belarusian-Chinese relations, we can note the successful experience of such Belarusian regions as Minsk and the Gomel Region. Speaking of the Belarusian capital, suffice it to say that "in January-May this [2021] year, trade turnover between Minsk and China totaled USD 730.6 million, whereas last year it was USD 613.8 million in the same period."<sup>197</sup>. The main exporters are RUE Bellesexport, Best Meat Company, Meat and Dairy Company, Mobiora, Integral. The basis of Minsk supplies to Belarus was formed by timber, meat and edible by-products of poultry, milk and condensed

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<sup>195</sup> Kryzhevich, I. Two new Great Stone residents will develop artificial intelligence and develop equipment for data processing and storage / I. Kryzhevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/zvanvy-biznes.html>

<sup>196</sup> Measures to develop a national innovation system by 2025 have been defined [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/opredeleny-meropriiitii-po-razvitiu-natsionalnoi-innovatsionnoj-sistemy-do-2025- goda-475735-2021>

<sup>197</sup> Kukharev and the Chinese ambassador discussed cooperation between Minsk and Chinese cities [Electronic resource] - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kuharev-i-posol-kitaia-obsudili-sotrudnichestvo-minska-s-gorodami-knr-453612-2021/>.



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, ready-made media for sound recording. It is important in terms of consolidating this trend in the future to intensify ties between the Belarusian capital and China's twin cities, of which Minsk has four - Changchun (1992), Shenzhen (2014), Beijing (2016), and Shanghai (2019).

Changchun, the administrative centre of Jilin Province in northeast China, which is home to about eight million people, has 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 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 enterprises that were part of the zone and had longstanding stable ties with Belarusian scientific and innovation companies. At that time, among the joint projects planned in the technopark was "setting up an enterprise to produce medical laser equipment, and an agreement on setting up a joint venture to produce a high-precision electric motor. At the first stage, around 30 hectares of land have been allocated to the project for construction of office and production facilities, and another 30 hectares may be further allocated"<sup>198</sup>. More specifically, the technology park is divided into six functional areas: the research and development centre, a project incubator, a museum, and three complexes - international cooperation, regional cooperation, and service. In addition, an art gallery, a bookstore, an exhibition hall and a concert hall are planned. But the main thing is that here, "the development is based, among other things, on a fund of 80 Belarusian projects"<sup>199</sup>.

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<sup>198</sup> Polezhai, T. Belarusian-Chinese Technopark opened in Changchun / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/president/view/belorusko-kitaj-skij-tehnopark-otkrylsia-v-gorode-changchun-134192-2010>

<sup>199</sup> The China-Belarus Technopark is being built in Changchun [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

Today, "a complex of technopark buildings has already been built there, and one of the pressing issues now is to fill it with joint high-tech projects"<sup>200</sup>. And it has already welcomed its first three residents: The Sino-Belarusian centre for research and development of precision medical equipment at the BITU Politechnik technopark and the Belarusian-Chinese technopark in Changchun; the Belarusian-Chinese centre for joint development and application of carbon-carbon composite materials between Svetlogorsk Khimvolokno OJSC and the Jilin Len'ke company; A Belarus-China centre for the development of functional berry crops between the Central Botanical Gardens of the National Academy of Sciences, Poleski Zhuraviny Ltd. and the Northeast 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, expanding and deepening contacts, including among young people"<sup>201</sup>. And today, the main thematic areas of the technopark already include such areas as "photoelectronics, laser technology, new materials, construction and energy, agricultural and biotechnologies technologies, informatics"<sup>202</sup>.

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 two sides agreed to develop business cooperation, for which they planned to hold business forums. "During such events, businessmen will have an opportunity to agree on

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[https://primgazeta.ru/news/v-chanchune-strovat-https://primgazeta.ru/news/v-chanchune-strovat-kitaj-sko-sko-belorusskij\\_-tehnopark-tehnopark-08\\_-07-2019-05-00-12](https://primgazeta.ru/news/v-chanchune-strovat-https://primgazeta.ru/news/v-chanchune-strovat-kitaj-sko-sko-belorusskij_-tehnopark-tehnopark-08_-07-2019-05-00-12)

<sup>200</sup> Changchun Technopark 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-kitajja-shumilin-405335-2020/>

<sup>201</sup> About 300 applications have been submitted to the Sino-Belarusian Youth Innovation Projects Contest [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/societv/view/okolo-300-zaiavok-podano-na-kitajsko-belorusskij-www.belta.by/societv/view/okolo-300-zaiavok-podano-na-kitajsko-belorusskij-molodezhnyj\\_-konkurs-innovatsionnyh-proektov-442132-2021/](https://www.belta.by/societv/view/okolo-300-zaiavok-podano-na-kitajsko-belorusskij-www.belta.by/societv/view/okolo-300-zaiavok-podano-na-kitajsko-belorusskij-molodezhnyj_-konkurs-innovatsionnyh-proektov-442132-2021/)

<sup>202</sup> Belarus-China Science and Technology Park in Changchun [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://changchun.park.bntu.by/about-technology-park/, park.bntu.by/about-technology-park/>

the implementation of specific projects. In addition, the forums will further strengthen the economic basis of our cooperation"<sup>203</sup> . 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 ties in order to expand twinning relations. And within the framework of the bilateral business forum that took place in the Chinese city at the same time, "memoranda of cooperation with Chinese partners were signed by Kommunarika Joint Stock Company, Minskhhlebprom KUP, KUP Small Wholesale Base on the West, Belryba OJSC, Minotel OJSC"<sup>204</sup> . So, the opportunities for enhancing cooperation between the two twin cities are, undoubtedly, very vast. It is only necessary to use them without wasting time, and with mutual benefit.

As for the Gomel region, it has already signed bilateral cooperation documents with four Chinese regions - the Inner Mongolia (2011) and Xinjiang Uygur (2016) autonomous regions, Sichuan (2015) and Jiangsu (2016) provinces. Naming Sichuan Province in this list, we note that in April 2021, the two sides raised the level of their friendly relations by signing an "agreement on the establishment of twinning relations, which provides for increased cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres"<sup>205</sup> .

Such a variety of partnerships and twinning arrangements could not but have an impact on the overall interaction between the Gomel region and China. Suffice it to say that over the past three years, supplies from the Belarusian region to the Chinese market have grown 20(!) times. And "export of Gomel enterprises to China exceeded \$100 million in January-November [2021]. The main export

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<sup>203</sup> Minsk and China's Changchun plan to develop business cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitaiskii-changchun-changchun-planirui-ut-razvivat-biznes-sotrudnichestvout-razvivat-biznes-sotrudnichestvo-47498-2014/>.

<sup>204</sup> Minsk and China's Changchun signed an agreement on cooperation in tourism and culture [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitaiskii-changchun-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-turizma-i-kulturny-kitaiskii-changchun-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-turizma-i-kulturny-250871-2017/>.

<sup>205</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Gomel Region: Chinese Vector of Partnership / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Efektivni nastroje modernich ved - 2021". Volume 5: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 16.

items to China include wood pulp, timber, wool, meat, dairy and confectionary products"<sup>206</sup> . And this level is not considered a limit for the region, because they see serious potential in increasing the supply of beef, meat and edible by-products of poultry, whole-milk products, milk, condensed and dried cream and dried whey to this East Asian country. For this purpose, 16 companies from the region have already been accredited in the Celestial Empire: 6 meat processors , 7 milk processing plants, two distilleries and one confectionery. And in the Belarusian region itself, three companies with Chinese capital have already been registered, namely those producing hydroelectric power, concrete, and engaged in restaurant activities.

An important detail: Gomel Region continues to actively expand ties with Chinese regions in 2022. In January, they held a roundtable on multifunctional cooperation with Hebei province, whose business entities have been cooperating with Gomel partners in terms of production cooperation for quite some time. In particular, back in September 2015, Chongqing Zongshen-Homel Agricultural Machinery Enterprise LLC was established in Hebei province to assemble bob harvesting combines, forage harvesters, and grain harvesters. The investor on the Belarusian side was Gomselmash OJSC, and the investor on the Chinese side was Zongshen Industrial Corporation LLC. This cooperation project enabled the Belarusian manufacturer to strengthen and expand its presence in the Chinese market. "In 2016, deliveries of machine parts to the PRC amounted to about USD 2.6 million. In 2017. - 10 million USD. In 2018. - 7 million USD.<sup>207</sup>THE AMOUNT OF MACHINERY COMPONENTS SHIPPED TO THE PRC IN 2016 WAS ABOUT USD 6 MILLION.

As a follow-up to this project, in March 2017, the construction of a new plant to

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<sup>206</sup> Gomel region has increased exports to China 20 times in three years [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-za-tri-godahttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-za-tri-goda- uvelichila-eksport-v-kitaj-v-20-razuvelichila-eksport-v-kitaj-v-20-raz-481090-2022/>.

<sup>207</sup> Inter-regional relations between Belarus and China: state, problems and prospects for development / T.S. Vertinskaya [et al.] - Minsk: Belaruskaya nauk, 2020. - C. 221-222.

produce combine harvesters for maize, grain and rapeseed was launched in Weixian county of the same Hebei province by the Chongqing Zongshen-Homel Agricultural Machinery Industry JV. And at the same time, "the first contracts were signed with agricultural companies of Hebei and Heilongjiang provinces to buy combine harvesters made in Belarus-China."<sup>208</sup> . In June 2019, a new contract was signed to supply another batch of forage harvesters to China for more than a million and a half dollars. And by mid-2019, "the company had produced 500 harvesters"<sup>209</sup> .

The logical continuation of these partnerships was the adoption of a memorandum of intent on twinning between the cities of Gomel and Handan in October 2019, in order to foster mutually beneficial cooperation. In particular, for the Gomel side in this context, the topic of increasing exports of food products, the same beef, was very relevant. It was also said that "the sides should develop industrial cooperation, in particular, Gomselmash and Hebei Zongshen-Homel agricultural machinery enterprise on a partnership basis. There are prospects for the implementation of joint ideas in tourism, culture and education"<sup>210</sup> .

In this regard, it should be said that the twinning arrangements between the cities of the Gomel region and Chinese partners quite organically complement the entire complex of interregional cooperation of this Belarusian region with China. At the beginning of 2022, seven bilateral documents were signed between the administrative-territorial units of the Gomel region and China. The eighth was the agreement signed in January 2022 to establish sworn brotherhood

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<sup>208</sup> Grishkevich, A. A new Belarusian-Chinese combine plant began to be built in Hebei Province / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvi-belorussko-kitaj-belorussko-kitajskij-zavod-po-proizvodstvu-zavod-po-proizvodstvu-kombaj-nov-nachali-stroit-v-provintsii-nov-nachali-stroit-v-provintsii-hebei-237889-2017>

<sup>209</sup> Gomselmash to supply to China machine sets of forage harvesters worth over USD 1.5 million [Electronic resource]: <https://export.by/news/gomselmash-postavit-v-kitay-mashinokomplekti-kormouborochnih-kombavnov-na-summu-bolee-15-mln-doll>

<sup>210</sup> Gomel and China's Handan intend to develop twinning ties [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomel-i-kitajskij-handanhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomel-i-kitajskij-handan-namerenv-razvivat-pobratimskie-namerenv-razvivat-pobratimskie-svj-aziazi-366580-2019/>

relations between Svetlogorsk district and the city of Baoding, located in Hebei province, with a population of over ten million. This document "envisages the development of mutually beneficial cooperation in various spheres - economic, trade and humanitarian"<sup>211</sup>. The parties certainly have the necessary potential to develop effective cooperation. Let us hope that the next step in the development of the Chinese vector of foreign economic relations of the Gomel region will be the establishment of twinning arrangements with the entire Hebei province.

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<sup>211</sup> Svetlogorsk District and Baoding of China signed an agreement on twinning relations [Electronic resource ], -2021 .- URL : <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/svetlogorskij-rajon-i-kitajskij-baodin-podpisali-soglashenie-opobratimskih-otnoshenijah-481071-2022/>

## CHAPTER 8

### **And the expansion of exports and the search for new markets**

In May 2022, Cairo will host the third Belarus-Africa Economic Forum, which will focus on the prospects of joint projects in agriculture, mechanical engineering, education and other areas with a number of African countries. This fact once again attests to the fact that "the intensification of engagement with African countries is one of the important components of the modern Belarusian foreign policy"<sup>212</sup>. By early 2022 the Republic of Belarus had established diplomatic relations with 51 countries of the African continent, with Belarusian diplomatic missions successfully operating in four of them - Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria and the Republic of South Africa. "The key area of cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the African states in the trade and economic sphere is the expansion of export of goods and services. Systematic work is underway to develop new markets on the African continent"<sup>213</sup>. And an important component of this work is the organization and holding of Belarusian-African economic and business forums.

For example, a business forum "Africa-Belarus: the current situation and new benchmarks for joint business projects, which was attended by representatives of 17 embassies of African countries, including Burkina Faso, the Gabonese Republic, Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Namibia, South Africa, the Sudan, South Sudan and Zambia, as well as over two hundred Belarusian enterprises, was held in December 2020 as a video conference. The relevance of the event for the Belarusian side was explained by the fact that official Minsk pays great attention to the development of ties with the countries of this continent, as "Africa is a trove of natural resources, an important source of global labor, a huge undeveloped market"<sup>214</sup>. In this regard, it is important not only to increase the

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<sup>212</sup> Zalesky, B. Vectors of the far arc. Opportunities for sectoral cooperation / B. Zaleski. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing: Saarbrücken, Deutschland / Germany, 2018. - C. 17.

<sup>213</sup> Belarus and African and Middle Eastern countries [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.by/https://www.mfa.gov.by/countries\\_regions/regions/africa\\_middle\\_easteast/](https://www.mfa.gov.by/https://www.mfa.gov.by/countries_regions/regions/africa_middle_easteast/)

<sup>214</sup> Africa becomes a promising and long-term partner for Belarus - Ulahovich [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/afrikahttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/afrika->

volume of mutual trade with the countries of the continent, but also to diversify Belarusian exports, deepen economic and industrial cooperation, while actively using a project approach, the essence of which is to implement projects to establish joint ventures and enterprises in Africa, promote industrial and food products, as well as scientific, technological and industrial developments in the industrial, agricultural, energy and transport sectors

Developing this thesis, participants of the December Africa-Belarus Business Forum noted that "for Belarus, from a business perspective, there are three main areas for cooperation with African countries"<sup>215</sup>. First, everything to do with mechanical engineering and the development of the respective infrastructure. Secondly, everything that has to do with food production, agrarian technologies and agricultural machinery. Thirdly, everything that encompasses the services sector, and especially education, medicine and IT technology. Certainly, in each of these areas the Belarusian side has already accumulated a certain experience of cooperation, which can be used to further realize the huge potential for the development of foreign economic relations that exists here.

A good example in this regard is the Minsk Tractor Works, which increased its export supplies to African countries by almost three and a half times in the first ten months of 2020, while opening two new markets - Zimbabwe and Burundi. But the address of the main deliveries of Belarusian tractors to the "black continent" was Sudan, where 153 machines were sent in 2019 and 510 in January - October 2020. This is the result of cooperation between MTZ and the Sudanese company MIG Agricultural Co. Ltd., which began back in 2003, thanks to which more than two and a half thousand BELARUS tractors are already in operation in the Sudanese fields.

In addition, Minsk Tractor Plant in Africa has created a certain reserve for the

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[perspektivnym-i-dolgosrochnym-partnerom-belarusi-ulahovichstanovitsja-perspektivnym-i-dolgosrochnym-partnerom-belarusi-ulahovich-413176-2020/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarusi-ulahovichstanovitsja-perspektivnym-i-dolgosrochnym-partnerom-belarusi-ulahovich-413176-2020/)

<sup>215</sup> Belarus invites African countries to cooperate in services, agribusiness and machine-building [Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlagaet-afrikanskim-stranam-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-uslug-apk-i-mashinostroenii-419342-2020>



future in the form of a cooperation road map signed back in February 2020 with the Ministry of Defence Industry of Egypt, which provides for the organization of assembly production of tractors and engines at the plant of Helwan Diesel Engines Co. with an access to localization of up to 40 percent in the next three years. It is important that the Egyptian partners have already been given a model project for arranging the assembly plant for 500 units of machinery, as well as a list of the necessary equipment and tooling. In addition, the MTZ will prepare and submit a standard assembly production project for the production of 10,000 machines per year. <sup>216</sup>

In the first eight months of 2020, BMZ, the managing company of BMK Holding, increased its shipments to Africa by almost 20 percent, having shipped more than \$11 million worth of fittings. This made it possible to increase the African countries' share in the company's total exports up to 12 per cent. Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin and Ghana are among the main importers of Belarusian steelmakers' products. Interestingly, "shipments to the latter country [Ghana] this year [2020] have tripled in volume terms"<sup>217</sup>.

Another African country where the Belarusian presence is growing fast is Zimbabwe, which reached an agreement with its government several years ago on supplies of agricultural machinery worth 58 million dollars. And "100 tractors, 20 combine harvesters, 52 seed drills, five tractors and five semi-trailers made in Belarus have already been delivered to Zimbabwe. By the end of this year [2020] another 370 tractors, 20 combine harvesters and 138 seeders will arrive by sea"<sup>218</sup>. The fact is that for this country's economy, apart from the mining industry, the agricultural sector is a key segment. And mechanisation is

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<sup>216</sup> MTZ triples its exports to Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-vtroe-uelichil-eksport-v-afriku-416304-2020/www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-vtroe-uelichil-eksport-v-afriku-416304-2020/>

<sup>217</sup> BMZ increased its sales of rebar to Africa by almost 20% [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uelichil-prodazhi-armaturv-v-afrikuhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uelichil-prodazhi-armaturv-v-afriku-pochti-napochti-na-20-407746-2020/>

<sup>218</sup> Zimbabwe launches a joint programme with Belarus to provide farms with agricultural machinery [Electronic resource ]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-zimbabve-zapuschena-sovmestnaia-s-belarusiu-programme-obespechenija-ferm-selhoztehnikai-408853-2020/>

seen as the backbone of the development of national agriculture here. For this reason, in September 2020, Zimbabwe announced at the state level the launch of a joint government program with Belarus to mechanize the country's agricultural sector. In this regard, a Belarusian trade and service centre was opened in the capital, Harare, where "machinery will be provided to Zimbabwean farmers as part of the government's agricultural mechanisation programme for the country"<sup>219</sup>. Also. There will soon be a significant increase in efforts to establish ties between Belarus and Namibia, which in November 2020 announced their intention to focus on "the development of the contractual and legal framework and the establishment of a joint intergovernmental committee for trade and economic cooperation"<sup>220</sup>.

The Second Belarus-Africa Economic Forum brought together government, business and financial representatives from 14 African states - Angola, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda - and was held in Minsk at the turn of spring and summer 2021. More than 175 companies and industrial enterprises, interested in establishing contacts with African partners and implementing joint mutually beneficial projects, took part in the event on the Belarusian part. Minsk described the forum as an important dialogue platform aimed at further strengthening and development of bilateral and multilateral relations of Belarus with African countries, expanding trade, economic and cooperation relations, increasing mutual trade turnover. Suffice it to say that "in the three years following the first Belarus-Africa Forum, mutual trade between Belarus and African countries totaled more than USD 1.8 billion. Belarus and its African partners went from annual trade of \$158 million in the early 2000s to

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<sup>219</sup> "Gomselmash strengthens its position in the Zimbabwe market [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-ukrepliaet-pozitsii-na-rynye-zimbabwe-408968-2020>

<sup>220</sup> Belarus and Namibia plan to establish a committee on trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-namibija-planirujut-sozdat-komitet-po-torgovo-ekonomicheskomu-sotrudnichestvu-417026-2020/>

\$553 million in 2020."<sup>221</sup> . This dynamic largely explains why the continent is considered one of the important elements of Belarus's multi-vector foreign policy, where Belarus has a lot of opportunities for joint and mutually beneficial movement towards the creation of new footholds and strengthening of cooperation in a wide range of areas.

It is a fact that Belarus has long been exporting to many African countries. Moreover, "virtually half of the countries of the southern continent know Belarusian products: from food to mechanical engineering."<sup>222</sup> . For example, there is an assembly facility for Belarusian tractors and trucks in Egypt, and similar projects are already underway in Sudan and Algeria. Potash fertilizers and tyres are exported to the Republic of South Africa. "Major projects are underway and contracts are being negotiated to supply Belarusian machinery and equipment to Zimbabwe and Angola."<sup>223</sup> .

But the very fact of the second Belarusian-African Economic Forum showed that the achieved indicators of cooperation with African partners can and should be much higher. The current level of cooperation is just a starting point for the introduction of new forms and methods of trade and economic collaboration and diversification of mutual trade. In fact, this is why at this economic forum Belarus suggested that African countries, as far as food security assistance is concerned, should use a comprehensive systemic approach in developing partnerships, from evaluating local farming conditions to supplying a full range of machinery and equipment. The implementation of this approach can significantly increase supplies of "Belarusian machinery, equipment and components to Africa under various forms of industrial cooperation, possibly

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<sup>221</sup> About the Second Belarus-Africa Economic Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news/mfaZdd94997d14d9eb8mfaZdd94997d14d9eb8a.html>.

<sup>222</sup> Experts link the development of the global economy with Africa. How can Belarus take advantage of this? [Electronic resource]. -2021 . - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksperty-sviazvvaiut-razvitie-mirovoi-ekonomiki-s-afrikoi-kak-etim-mozhet-vospolzovatsja-belarus-443722-2021/>

<sup>223</sup> Grishkevich, A. Belarusian dump trucks and agricultural machinery took a strong position in the markets of many African countries / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-samosvaly-i-selhoztehnika-zaniali-prochnye-pozitsii-na-rynkah-mnogih-afrikanskih-stran-443820-2021/>

using various instruments to finance Belarusian exports"<sup>224</sup>, and speed up the establishment of joint ventures using Belarusian technologies and the construction of turnkey industrial and agricultural facilities.

It should be noted that Belarusian proposals at the economic forum were met with considerable interest by the African participants. For example, the Egyptian side, which was represented by some 35 companies in Minsk and expressed its interest in industrial cooperation with partners from Belarus, suggested promoting trilateral cooperation, which would allow Belarusian tractors assembled in Egypt to be delivered to other countries of the continent, making use of the free trade zones there, which would remove a number of tariff barriers. Among other vectors of cooperation, according to Egyptian business, there are several more that look promising today. "The first one is a coronavirus vaccine produced in Belarus, and the second one is an electric bus produced in Belarus."<sup>225</sup>

As for other African countries, for example, Uganda, which is rich in minerals and is engaged in oil and gas extraction, "intends to seriously engage in residential infrastructure and hotel construction to develop tourism. Belarusian partners could help the country in this matter"<sup>226</sup>. Other promising areas of mutual interest between Belarus and Uganda include oil refining, information and communication technologies and education. Congo would like to develop relations with Belarusian partners in order to modernize its agricultural policy. Namibia sees prospects for such cooperation in mining, energy, industry, agriculture, and even fisheries.

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<sup>224</sup> On the meeting of Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej with the participants of the Second Belarus-Africa Economic Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news/mfa/cc66b6a8ee1mfa/cc66b6a8ee1bbd02.html>.

<sup>225</sup> Egypt is interested in industrial cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/egipet-zajinteresovan-vhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/egipet-zajinteresovan-v-promyshlennoi-kooperatsii-s-belarusijupromyshlennoi-kooperatsii-s-belarusiju-443740-2021/>.

<sup>226</sup> "We can start working right now" - African countries have voiced promising areas for cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mozhem-nachinat-rabotat-priamo-seichas-strany-afrikihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/mozhem-nachinat-rabotat-priamo-seichas-strany-afriki-.perspektivnye-sfery-sotrudnichestva-sozvuchili-perspektivnye-sfery-sotrudnichestva-s-443755-2021/>

Interaction between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of South Africa (RSA) deserves a special mention in this context. March 2023 will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In 2020, trade between the two countries exceeded \$25 million, with Belarusian exports accounting for \$18 million. This happened due to deliveries from Belarus of quarry machinery and spare parts, oversized tyres, potash fertilizers, linen fabric, x-ray equipment, certain kinds of foodstuffs. An important point in this case is that "the distribution network of Belarusian enterprises in South Africa includes the Belshina trade house, a dealer (certified service centre) of BelAZ"<sup>227</sup> .

A characteristic feature of the recent engagement between Belarus and South Africa has been the revival of trade and economic ties. In particular, "in 2020, deliveries of BELAZ mining equipment to South Africa resumed after a six-year break"<sup>228</sup> . And at the end of September 2021, the fleet of these machines in this African country already included 49 dump trucks. This fact is a clear indication that Minsk and Pretoria are now starting to gradually return to realising the full potential inherent in the cooperation between the two countries' regions. It should be recalled that in 2013, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the sides talked about good prospects of "cooperation in the fields of industry, agriculture, interregional development..."<sup>229</sup> . And in 2021, this aspiration became particularly prominent. For example, in late September 2021, Minsk Region Executive Committee met with the head of the South African diplomatic mission to Russia and Belarus, M.D. Maketuka, to discuss ways to step up cooperation with partners from Free State. The meeting resulted in a decision to cooperate in two areas: agriculture

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<sup>227</sup> Cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the Republic of South Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relationsrelations/](https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relationsrelations/).

<sup>228</sup> Turchin discusses cooperation in agriculture and machinery with the South African ambassador [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turchin-obsudil-s-poslom-iuar-sotrudnichestvo-v-oblastihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/turchin-obsudil-s-poslom-iuar-sotrudnichestvo-v-oblasti-.hoziaistva-i-proizvodstva-tehnikiselskogo-hoziaistva-i-proizvodstva-tehniki-462069-2021/>

<sup>229</sup> Zalessky, B. International relations and media. A View from Belarus / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2014. - C. 539.

and machinery manufacturing. It should be noted that the two regions signed a cooperation agreement back in December 2015. In September 2016, a representative delegation from Free State visited the Belarusian metropolitan area, where it was particularly interested in the technologies and experience of Minsk Region in processing agricultural products. The reason was that agriculture is central to the province's economy. In addition, the South African side expressed a great interest "in the assistance of Belarusian partners in personnel training, and they also intend to develop cooperation in construction and healthcare"<sup>230</sup>. And in November 2020, the South African partners confirmed their readiness to cooperate in various areas, including "in the areas of trade in milk and meat, exchange of students for training"<sup>231</sup>, as well as in the development of tourism. It appears that the time has come for all these interaction plans to be implemented.

Another South African province, KwaZulu-Natal, noticeably stepped up its interest in cooperation with Belarusian partners in 2021, is the second most populous (11.5 million people) in South Africa and the second largest economy in the country. In April, a videoconference titled Opportunities for Trade and Investment was held. The meeting was attended by representatives of the South African side, including "companies working in the field of linen products supply, tailoring and footwear, designers"<sup>232</sup>. As a result of the discussion, such Belarusian companies as Orsha Flax Enterprise, Kamvol, Mogotex and Luch will soon find reliable business partners in the south of the African continent.

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<sup>230</sup> Martynyuk, E. Free State Province of South Africa intends to adopt the Belarusian experience in processing agricultural products / E. Martynyuk // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/provintsija-fri-stejt-juar-namerena-pereniat-belorusskij-opythttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/provintsija-fri-stejt-juar-namerena-pereniat-belorusskij-opyt-pererabotke-selhozproduksii-po-pererabotke-selhozproduksii-211004-2016/>.

<sup>231</sup> South Africa is interested in cooperation with the Minsk region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/juar-zainteresovana-v-sotrudnichestve-s-oblastijuminskoj-oblastiju-417308-2020/>.

<sup>232</sup> On the video conference "Opportunities for trade and investment cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Province of KwaZulu-Natal in the field of textiles and clothing". [Электронный ресурс]. -2021. - URL: <https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/b561f2d89c659bd7.html>

This province of South Africa is of interest to Belarus because it is where a project to set up an assembly plant for Belarusian tractors is expected to take place in a special economic zone. "The parties to the project on the South African side are Nqawana Holdings and the administration of the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ), on the Belarusian side - OJSC MTZ and Round By LLC"<sup>233</sup>. In August 2021, the technical details of this project have already been discussed here and concrete steps for the implementation of the agreements reached have been outlined.

An interesting example of partner regions from Belarus and South Africa is the Mogilev Region and Mpumalanga Province, one of the most powerful in the country industrially, where mining, telecommunications services and energy are well developed, and where about 40 percent of South Africa's forest land is concentrated. The parties signed a memorandum of cooperation in December 2016. In it, they expressed interest in developing partnerships in trade and industry, agriculture, education, sports, tourism and culture. The province was also interested in developing not only agricultural projects, but also in training specialists in agriculture, forestry, medicine, and information technology at Belarusian universities. In addition, they talked about possibilities of "cooperation in wood processing, establishment of joint agricultural and food processing enterprises"<sup>234</sup>. Let's hope that the time has come for these regions, too, to revisit the partnership plans once adopted in order to successfully implement them today.

Kenya is another country on the African continent, with which Belarus has great

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<sup>233</sup> On Ambassador A. Sidoruk's visit to Richards Bay [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://rsa.mfa.gov.bv/ru/embassv/news/ad33cd30a4281477.html>  
[rsa.mfa.gov.bv/ru/embassv/news/ad33cd30a4281477.html](https://rsa.mfa.gov.bv/ru/embassv/news/ad33cd30a4281477.html)

<sup>234</sup> Kuliagin, S. Mogilev region and Mpumalanga province of South Africa signed a memorandum of cooperation / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaia-oblast-i-provintsiia-mpumalanga-iuar>  
<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaia-oblast-i-provintsiia-mpumalanga-iuar-podpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestvepodpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-222724-2016/>

potential for mutually beneficial cooperation. Here we can recall that in August 2019, a Belarusian-Kenyan business forum was held in Nairobi, where participants outlined promising growth points for bilateral trade and economic cooperation. At the same time, the parties focused on the prospects of joint projects that would contribute to the implementation of the strategic "Big Four Programme" of the Government of Kenya, which includes "food security and nutrition, universal health coverage, affordable housing and manufacturing"<sup>235</sup>. As a result, agreements were signed at the forum to build a reinforced concrete construction factory on Kenyan land and to establish a fish farm at a total cost of over one hundred million dollars. Agreements were also reached on deliveries of automotive tractors and equipment from Belarus to Kenya for nearly twenty million dollars with the subsequent establishment of an assembly facility for Belarusian tractors in that African country with a capacity of up to five thousand units per year.

These facts prove that the business forum that took place was an important concrete step towards the establishment of bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Kenya, diplomatic relations between the two countries were established almost 30 years ago. True, the contractual and legal framework for Belarusian-Kenyan cooperation is still in the formation stage. However, it is encouraging that the two countries are now preparing to sign a number of joint documents regulating bilateral relations in a variety of areas, including agriculture, higher education, science and technology.

A positive trend in recent years in the development of partnership ties between the two countries is the rapid growth - by more than forty percent - of mutual trade turnover in 2018, which came close to \$50 million. "The traditional items of Belarusian exports to Kenya are potash and mixed mineral fertilisers, newsprint and printing products. The basis of Kenya's imports to Belarus is formed by supplies of flowers and buds, nuts, fruits and vegetables, coffee and

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<sup>235</sup> About the Belarus-Kenya Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/e02ca9530a8dcc63.html.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/e02ca9530a8dcc63.html>



tea<sup>236</sup>. And this gives grounds for the Belarusian side to predict at the highest level that "Kenya will soon become one of the key partners of Belarus in Africa"<sup>237</sup>.

The seriousness of the intention of the Belarusian side to thoroughly familiarize itself with the Kenyan market is confirmed by the organization of Belarus's first national exposition at the FoodAgro International Food, Hospitality and Agriculture Exhibition in Nairobi in early August 2019. Minsk is confident that participation in this exhibition, which is part of the largest exhibition event in East Africa - Kenya International Trade Exhibition - "will help promote Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment, fertilizers, food, agricultural products in the Kenyan market and become a launching pad for Belarusian enterprises to enter the countries of

KOMECA (Integration Union of Eastern and Southern Africa)"<sup>238</sup>.

Enterprises of the concern Belgospisheprom, JSC Lidselmash holding management company, open joint stock companies Gomselmash, MTZ,

MAZ, Bobruiskagromash presented their products in the Kenyan capital, "The Belarusian exporting company Lidahleprodukt and the unitary enterprise Smorgon Kombinat Hleboproduktov. The participation of these Belarusian exporters in the exhibition can be explained by the fact that Kenya is an agricultural country where "over 35% of GDP is accounted for by the agricultural sector"<sup>239</sup>, where in December 2017 a new programme of planned economic development until 2022 was launched with a focus on the development of national production, food security and construction of

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<sup>236</sup> Belarus - Kenya [Electronic resource ]. - 2019. - URL: [http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/](http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/)

<sup>237</sup> Lukashenka expects Kenya to become one of Belarus' key partners in Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-rasschitvvaet-chto-kenija-stanet-odnim-iz-kliuchevyh-partnerov-belarusi-v-afrike-328984-2018/>.

<sup>238</sup> A national exposition of Belarus has opened at the FoodAgro exhibition in Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaia-ekspozitsiia-belarusi-otkrvlas-na-vvstavke-foodagro-v-kenii-356957-2019/>.

<sup>239</sup> FoodAgro exhibition will allow Belarus to expand its presence on the Kenyan market - Sadoho [electronic resource ]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vystavka-foodagro-pozvolit-belarusi-rasshirit-svoe-prisutstvie-na-rvnke-kenii-sadoho-349941-2019/>

affordable housing. In this regard, Belarusian manufacturers, with a competent approach, can realistically claim to increase supplies of their agricultural equipment, fertilizers and crop protection chemicals here. The development of meat and dairy production is also promising in this African country, because "the range of such products in Kenya is not wide, so they are interested in proposals to establish meat and dairy complexes, poultry complexes, meat processing lines and cheese production".<sup>240</sup> . Another interesting fact is this. There are quite a few manufacturers working in Kenya today who assemble tractors and tractors here,

cars. There is a company that assembles three models of Volkswagen vehicles at its premises. It is the company that would like to expand the range of machinery assembled there with Belarusian tractors.

It should be noted that the Nairobi exhibition continued Belarus's commitment to active participation in various business events on the African continent in the pre-pandemic period in 2019. In March that year, the national exposition of Belarus was organized for the first time at the Agrofood International Agriculture and Livestock, Food, Beverages, and Packaging Technology Exhibition in Lagos, Nigeria. And in April, Made in Belarus was presented at the 60th Zimbabwe International Trade Fair 2019 in the Zimbabwean city of Bulawayo, one of the largest in the southern African region. Apparently, 2022 is set to be a new "point of reference" for this issue already in the post-pandemic era. This is evidenced by the Plan of National Exhibitions of Belarus in Foreign Countries for this year, which talks of national expositions of our country in Africa at least at two international exhibition forums: in the first half of the year - Kenia International Trade Exhibition in Nairobi (Kenya); in the second - Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in Bulawayo (Zimbabwe). These events, along with the third Belarusian-African Economic Forum to be held in Cairo in

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<sup>240</sup> Demand for Belarusian agricultural machinery in Kenya is constantly growing [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/economics/view/spros-na-belorusskui-selhoztehniku-v-kenii-selhoztehniku-v-kenii-postoi\\_anno-rastetanno-rastet-349964-2019/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/spros-na-belorusskuihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/spros-na-belorusskui-selhoztehniku-v-kenii-selhoztehniku-v-kenii-postoi_anno-rastetanno-rastet-349964-2019/).

May 2022, should give a new powerful impetus to the systemic work to expand Belarusian exports and develop new markets in Africa.

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## CHAPTER 9

### Every vector requires attention

One of the priority objectives for the development of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) in 2021 was to increase the share in the exchange turnover of companies from the "far arc" countries - Asia, Africa, Latin America. "This can be explained by the considerable potential that exists in cooperation with these partners, the successful implementation of which promises considerable benefits to both Belarusian exporters and foreign importers"<sup>241</sup>. By the end of 2021 more than 27.5 thousand economic entities from 69 countries had already registered at the BUTB. Most of the companies from Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Ukraine are currently operating on the exchange. As for the growth dynamics of the number of new traders, in 2021 China held a leading position. At the same time, the geography of new participants in trading sessions continued to expand steadily on BUTB.

Back in mid-September 2021, one of the largest suppliers of timber products to the **Japanese** market, Shimizu Lumber, founded in 1950 and headquartered in Kobe on the island of Honshu, completed the paperwork, becoming the first accredited resident of Japan at the BUTB. "The company regards the entry into the Belarusian market as an opportunity to diversify its sources of supply of woodworking products, first of all sawn softwood lumber, which is in great demand in Japan"<sup>242</sup>. Let us note that the firm already buys a considerable amount of raw wood and sawn timber from Southeast Asia, North America and Europe. Nevertheless, in Belarus, the company also hopes to establish long-term fruitful cooperation with local suppliers.

At the end of December 2021, the first company from **Pakistan**, Sakafat Forever, was accredited at the BUTB, which intends to work here "in both directions - import of goods from Belarus and export of Pakistani products to the

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<sup>241</sup> Zalessky, B. The goal is a trajectory of growth. Chronicle of international cooperation / B.

Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 272.

<sup>242</sup> Belarusian lumber will be supplied to Japan through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-pilomaterialyhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-pilomaterialy-budut-postavliatsia-v-japoniiu-cherez-butbbudut-postavliatsia-v-japoniiu-cherez-butb-460335-2021/>

Belarusian market<sup>243</sup>, not excluding trade with companies from other countries through transit transactions through the BUTB. In the Belarusian market, the Pakistani company will start with the purchase of lumber, as wood products are in high demand in this South Asian country. On the other hand, it has already started looking into opportunities to sell rice and other agricultural products in Belarus, which are key export destinations from Pakistan.

At the beginning of December 2021, the first lumber deal was made at BUTB by an Israeli company accredited here as a non-resident broker. "The volume of the pilot batch was 150 cbm with delivery to the port of Ashdod. The pilot deal is expected to become a starting point for regular exports of domestic [Belarusian] lumber products to the Israeli market<sup>244</sup>. An important detail: in parallel with the export of sawn timber, the Belarusian Steel Works is currently working on deliveries of metal products to Israel. As early as the first decade of December 2021, a circle of potential Israeli buyers was formed.

It is expected that once they are accredited, the first purchase orders will also be placed on the BUTB. "The Israeli market in this commodity category is estimated at around \$4 billion, which means that virtually any volume can be sold through the exchange. In addition, there is currently a construction boom [in Israel], and the demand for rebar and steel structures is very high."<sup>245</sup>

At the end of November 2021, Indian manufacturers of facing materials, spare parts for agricultural machinery and industrial equipment expressed serious interest in trading their products on the BUTB. In particular, Indian manufacturers of ceramic tiles, porcelain stoneware and epoxy mortars, which

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<sup>243</sup> BUTB has accredited the first company from Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-akkreditovala-pervuiu-kompaniiu-iz-pakistana-477387-2021/>

<sup>244</sup> A BUTB broker in Israel made its first transaction [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/broker-butb-v-izraile-sovershil-pervuiu-sdelkuhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/broker-butb-v-izraile-sovershil-pervuiu-sdelku-473363-2021/>

<sup>245</sup> BUTB is studying the possibility of supplying Belarusian lumber and metal products to Israel [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-prorabatvvaet-vozmozhnost-postavok-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-i-metalloproduktov-v-izrail-466415-2021/>

are in high demand among Belarusian construction companies, were traded on the exchange. If we take into account that in 2021 construction industry products have repeatedly become the subject of transit transactions - most often between Russian and Baltic residents - it is very likely that buyers will be found quite quickly in the event that Indian companies place bids for them. "In addition to construction materials, Indian companies have announced their readiness to put up bearings, thrust rings, spigots and other spare parts for tractors, cars and construction machinery at the stock exchange auctions. LED lamps and equipment for the confectionery industry are also among the promising commodity items"<sup>246</sup> .

Another interesting example of the geographical expansion of BUTB's business cooperation is in Europe. In December 2021, an agreement was reached to develop cooperation in the field of exchange trade in agricultural products with the **Serbian** NSCOMEX commodity exchange in Novi Sad. The parties agreed to work out the matter of mutual access to the trade between Serbian and Belarusian companies. To this end, agro-industrial companies of the two countries will be given an additional tool to perform export-import operations. The BUTB sees great prospects in reaching such agreements, as "the most effective way to promote exchange services abroad is to accredit non-resident brokers, who take care of issues of attracting new companies and usually provide assistance with settlements and logistics."<sup>247</sup> . The results of this interaction between the two exchanges are not expected to be long in 2022.

In January 2022, the geography of e-transactions at BUTB expanded to 70 countries. This follows the accreditation of the first **Indian** company, Ark Packaging Solutions. In 2021, five new countries - Brazil, Gibraltar, Japan,

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<sup>246</sup> Indian manufacturers of building materials and promotional equipment are interested in the B2B platform BUTB [Electronic resource] . - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/indiiskie-proizvoditeli-stroimaterialov-i-promoborudovanija-zainteresovali-b2b-ploschadkoi-butb-471997-2021/>

<sup>247</sup> The BUTB and the Serbian Commodity Exchange agreed to cooperate [Electronic resource]. -2021 - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tovarnaia-birzha-serbii-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnicestve-475901-2021/>

Pakistan and South Korea - were added to the BUTB. Also "by the end of 2021, the top ten markets for Belarusian goods include Lithuania, Germany, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Poland, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Slovakia, and China"<sup>248</sup>

It is clear that various products from Belarus were supplied to different markets through the BUOTB: lumber, fuel pellets, rapeseed oil, and sugar beet products to European countries; lumber products, wooden poles, stakes, and semi-finished vet-blue leather products to British buyers; dried milk, butter, cheeses, and oilseed products to Russian consumers. As for the People's Republic of China, "whose market is considered one of the most promising"<sup>249</sup>, so far lumber, rapeseed oil and sugar are in the lead. But it appears that this could change significantly in 2022.

The fact is that **China** is among those countries whose presence on the BUTB platform is growing rapidly. Suffice it to say that in 2021, the trade turnover between Belarus and China increased three and a half times. There were several reasons for that. "First, the number of Chinese companies accredited on the Belarusian exchange platform almost doubled. Two of them became brokers and are engaged in promotion of Belarusian products on the PRC market"<sup>250</sup>. For reference, it should be noted that as of December 1, 2021 64 companies from the Celestial Empire were accredited on BUCE. In January 2022 Zhejiang Pinke Textile Co., Ltd. became a new BUTB broker in China. It plans to attract buyers of agro-industrial products and considers rapeseed oil and meat and dairy products the most promising products for this purpose.

Also promising in this context is the intention of the China Engineering

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<sup>248</sup> BUTB expanded its exchange trading geography to 70 countries [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirila-geografiiu-birzhevoihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirila-geografiiu-birzhevoi-torgovli-do-70-strantorgovli-do-70-stran-479981-2022>

<sup>249</sup> Zalessky, B.L. The Far Abroad as a Reference Point for Cooperation / B.L. Zalessky // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Aplikovane vedecke novinky - 2021". Volume 7: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 16.

<sup>250</sup> A new BUTB broker in China will focus on imports of Belarusian agricultural products [Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvi-broker-butb-v-kitae-sosredotochtsia-na-importe-beloruskoj-selhozproduksii-479109-2022/>

Corporation CAMS (CAMSE), announced in January 2022, to purchase meat and other agro-industrial products using the exchange mechanism. Recall that SAMSE is the largest shareholder of the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone". This, of course, opens up great opportunities for BUTB to cooperate in the field of logistics. "Given the existing infrastructure and location, Great Stone could become an ideal logistics hub for consolidating containerized cargo with goods that are sold to China via the exchange. These are primarily lumber, rapeseed oil, milk powder, meat and flax fibre"<sup>251</sup> . An important detail: a subsidiary of SAMSE purchased four million dollars worth of beef in Belarus in 2021. In 2022 it plans to further increase its purchases not only of meat, but also other agricultural products made in Belarus. It expects to expand the range of suppliers and make deals on more favorable terms with the help of the BUTB. The next important trend is the expansion of the list of products involved in mutual trade. Previously, Chinese representatives were more interested in Belarusian lumber; now, sales of sugar and oilseed products through the BUTB are on the rise. Another important point is special trading sessions targeting the Chinese market, with delivery to the end buyer. In addition, at the end of 2021, thanks to the implementation of a set of measures to develop exchange trade with China, it became possible to specify the value of goods and pay for exchange transactions in Chinese yuan. As early as January 2022, the first such export transaction took place on the BUTB. The seller was a woodworking company from China and the buyer was a European trader, supplying lumber products to the European Union, Asia and Africa. "The transaction resulted in the sale of edged softwood lumber worth a total of CNY1.8 million, or the equivalent of \$287,000"<sup>252</sup> . It is believed that this first successful experience of settlements in the national currency will be a good example for all Chinese

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<sup>251</sup> BUTB is ready to ensure uninterrupted supplies of Belarusian agricultural products to China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-gotova-obespechit-besperebojnye-postavki-belorusskoj-selhozprodukcij-v-kitaj-481488-2022/>.

<sup>252</sup> The first RMB transaction took place at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervuju-sdelku-v-kitajskih-juanjah-sovershili-nahttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervuju-sdelku-v-kitajskih-juanjah-sovershili-na-butb-butb-481365-2022/>.



companies accredited at BUTB, as in this case the currency risks of the transaction participants are reduced, as well as the time of receipt of funds to the seller's account is reduced.

An interesting addition to the picture of interaction between the Belarusian exchange platform and Chinese partners is the following fact. In January 2022, the first transit transaction between Chinese residents, who decided to use this trading platform to minimize the risk of a counterparty default, was executed on the BUTB. As a result, "a Hong Kong company sold 80 tonnes of beef to a mainland Chinese company. The transaction amounted to \$354,000. Previously, such transactions had been made mainly to companies from Russia and the Baltic states in order to insure foreign trade risks.<sup>253</sup> Of course, this fact is an eloquent testimony to the growing trust of Chinese business representatives in the Belarusian exchange market. And there is every reason to believe that the volume of transit trade involving Chinese residents on the BUCE will only increase. As well as in other areas of cooperation.

Another outcome of 2021 is that the Russian vector of cooperation continues to be a priority for the BSE, as **Russia** retained first place in terms of the amount of exchange turnover with Belarus. In addition, as of January 1, 2022, Russian companies accounted for almost half of the 5,539 foreign companies accredited on this exchange platform - 2,745. This also shows that "exchange trade is gradually becoming one of the drivers of Belarusian-Russian integration and a very promising project implemented within the framework of the Union State.<sup>254</sup> . And, from all appearances, this positive trend will only steadily gain momentum in 2022.

In January 2022, Alor Asset Management, a company with many years of

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<sup>253</sup> The first transit transaction between Chinese residents takes place on BOOTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervajahttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervaja-tranzitnaja-sdelka-mezhdu-rezidentami-kitajja-sovershena-na-butbtranzitnaja-sdelka-mezhdu-rezidentami-kitajja-sovershena-na-butb-474701-2021/>

<sup>254</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Exchange trade as a promising integration project of interaction between regions / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-j konferencji "Wykształcenie i nauka bez granic - 2021", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 10.

experience in brokerage services, was accredited with the third broker in the Russian market to increase exchange turnover and the number of trading participants from Russia on the BSE. Its partners include major trading floors such as the Moscow Exchange and the St Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange. With the help of the new broker BUTB is planning to considerably increase the inflow of clients from the neighboring country as well as to expand the list of Belarusian products sold in Russia. And this despite the fact that in 2021 the Russian market already had a fairly wide range of products through the BUTB. These included butter, dried milk, oilseeds processing products and cement, which accounted for about 80 percent of export sales. On top of this, "Russian participants regularly bought semi-finished leather "vet-blue", scrap metal, building materials and foodstuffs through the exchange"<sup>255</sup> . The emergence of the new broker should give a new impetus to the partnership of the Belarusian exchange in Russia.

In 2022, BUTB will also prioritise a new and promising area such as the sale of Belarusian-made feed additives - L-lysine sulphate, wheat gluten and premixes - in the Union State. This will be facilitated by the BUTB's partnership with the Belarusian National Biotechnology Company (BNBK), which is now rapidly increasing the export of feed additives. In December 2021, the BNBK's cooperation with the exchange moved to a new stage. At that time, the first export transaction for L-lysine sulphate to Russia was concluded"<sup>256</sup> . And in January 2022, the amount of BNBK's export transactions had already doubled. So the prospects here are very promising.

A clear priority for the BUTB in 2022 will be to attract potential buyers of

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<sup>255</sup> BUTB expands its network of brokers in Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirjaet-set-brokerov-v-rossii-480545-2022/www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirjaet-set-brokerov-v-rossii-480545-2022/>

<sup>256</sup> BNBK increases exports of feed additives through an exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bnbk-naraschivaet-eksport-kormovyhhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/bnbk-naraschivaet-eksport-kormovyh-dobavok-cherez-birzhudobavok-cherez-birzhu-482306-2022/>.

Belarusian goods from Russian regions, although in 2021 the volume of exchange trade with Russian regions grew very significantly, for some of them many times over. For example, trade with Moscow Region, where Belarusian companies supplied butter, flour, crushed stone, and leather semi-finished products, doubled. Leningrad Oblast saw a similar growth rate. One of the reasons for this success appears to be the fact that, as of the beginning of December 2021, 296 economic entities in the Leningrad Region were "accredited to the BUTB, about a third of which regularly participate in trading. Portland cement and meat and dairy products are mainly supplied to the region through the exchange platform, while ferrous metal products and coal are purchased mainly"<sup>257</sup>. In 2022, this exchange trading range will be significantly expanded to include confectionery, packaging materials and office furniture. The Chelyabinsk Region also has a good record in this respect, with 64 representatives accredited at the BUTB, and "the amount of transactions made by them has reached \$76 million"<sup>258</sup>.

There is every reason to believe that entrepreneurs from Bashkortostan will start taking an active part in bidding at the BUTB in 2022. After all, about 70 Bashkir companies engaged in ferrous metallurgy, petrochemicals, agriculture and light industry took part in a business seminar held in December 2021, where they were able to see for themselves how the active use of the exchange mechanism in cross-border trade has a positive effect on export volumes, helps diversify its structure and creates a favourable environment for strengthening business contacts.

Udmurtia is another Russian region that intends to considerably intensify cooperation with the BUTB in 2022. At the end of 2021, several Udmurt producers of agricultural products, metalware, machinery and equipment

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<sup>257</sup> Enterprises in the Leningrad Region intend to sell confectionery and furniture at the BUTB

[Electronic resource ]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriiatija-leningskoi-oblasti-namereny-prodavat-na-butb-konditerskie-izdelija-i-mebel-472442-2021/>

<sup>258</sup> Development of exchange trade between Belarus and Bashkortostan will boost commodity turnover [Electronic resource]:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/razvitie-birzhevoj-torgovli-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-bashkortostanom-posobstvuet-rostu-vzaimnogo-473580-2021/>

expressed their willingness to be accredited on the Belarusian exchange platform. In particular, a specific agreement on the use of BUTB as an additional sales channel for lumber and wood boards in Belarus, the European Union and Asian countries has been reached with two leading Udmurt producers of timber products - Orion LLC and Vostok-resource TPK LLC. In addition, sales of sawn timber and board products to third countries through transit deals are considered to be another area of BUTB's interaction with enterprises of Udmurtia's timber industry. "In this respect the most promising markets are the Baltic States and China, where BUTB has already formed a circle of regular customers"<sup>259</sup>. There are about 120 such companies in the Baltic States alone, and the total value of transactions in 2021 exceeded 300 million dollars.

The development of exchange trade as a factor contributing to the growth of commodity turnover was also discussed in February 2022 at the meeting of the working group on cooperation between Belarus and Karachay-Cherkessia. The discussion pointed out that the most promising area for exchange cooperation is the segment of the agro-industrial complex, as "Belarusian companies processing grain would certainly be interested in buying those products from Karachay-Cherkessia. First of all, it is wheat, oats, buckwheat, corn. In addition, Belarus has well-developed vegetable oil production, so rapeseed, sunflower and other oilseeds are also in great demand in exchange trading"<sup>260</sup>. It seems that these proposals have found their way into the 2022-2024 Road Map for cooperation between the parties. And exchange trade will become another tool for Belarus and Karachay-Cherkessia to increase commodity turnover and expand the range of mutual supplies in the near future.

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<sup>259</sup> BUTB plans to trade lumber products from Udmurtia [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-torgovat-piloproduksiej-iz-udmurtii-476203-2021/>.

<sup>260</sup> The Belarus- Karachay-Cherkessia exchange trade in agricultural products is proposed by the Belarus-BTB [Electronic resource ] : <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-predlagaet-razvivat-birzhevuiu-torgovlju-selhozproduksiej-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-karachaevu-483814-2022/>

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