

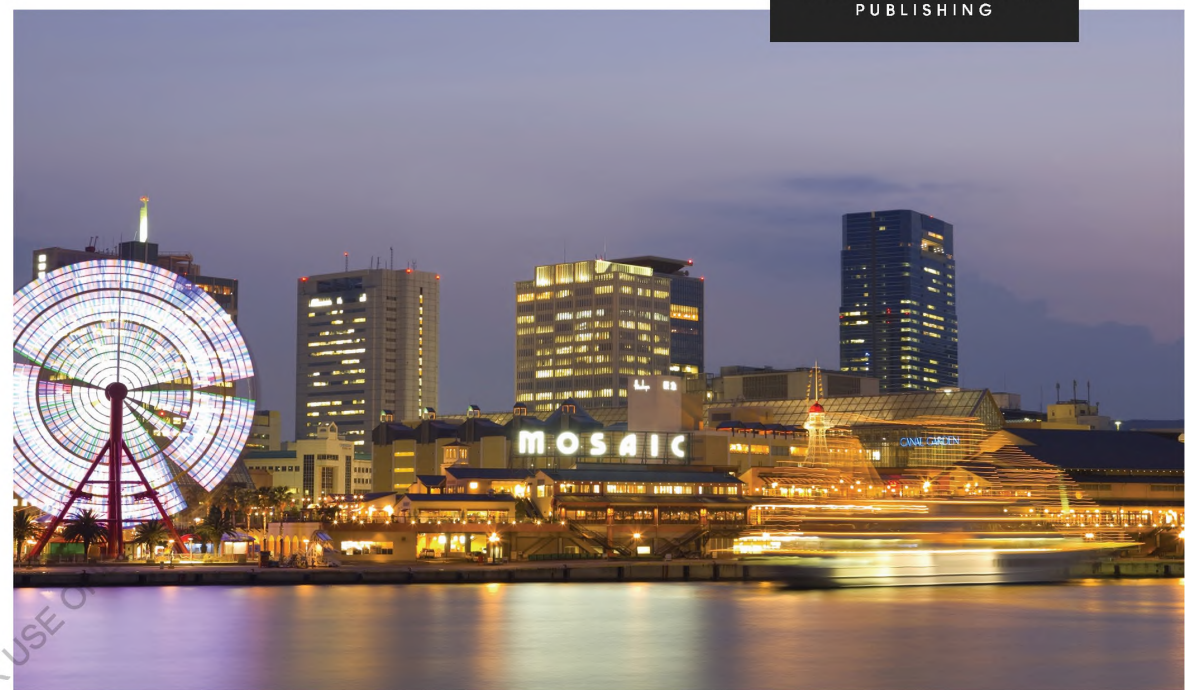
## Route of interaction - Asia

Asia is a continent that is a priority for the Republic of Belarus, primarily as a capacious, promising and expanding market for Belarusian goods and services, as a promising donor of investment in the Belarusian economy. Some countries of the region are among the world leaders in terms of direct investments abroad, which can be used by Belarus to develop promising sectors of its national economy. There are mechanisms of interaction and dialogue in trade and economic, industrial and cooperation, scientific and technical, cultural and educational spheres with such countries of the continent as China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Syria, Iran, Turkey and Mongolia. Belarus has a solid legal framework for cooperation with many Asian countries, which continues to develop, supplemented by new agreements in promising areas of partnership. Moreover, there are objective prerequisites for promoting Belarusian interests in other Asian countries. What steps are being taken in these areas to make Belarus' trade and economic cooperation in Asian markets even stronger and broader? This study is about that.



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*Intensification of Belarus' multifaceted ties with  
of the main economic partners on the continent*

**Boris Zalesskij**

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## Prospects for cooperation identified

In May 2022, the sixth meeting of the **Belarus-China** Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation discussed the status and prospects of bilateral trade and investment cooperation, transport and logistics partnership, as well as the implementation of the joint project - the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone. Recall that at the end of 2021 the volume of mutual trade in goods and services between the two countries came close to six billion dollars, and the share of Belarusian supplies to the Celestial Empire more than doubled. At the same time, "the capacity of Belarusian manufacturers makes it possible to ship nearly \$2 billion worth of Belarusian-made goods to the Chinese market by the end of this year [2022]. This requires a consolidation of the efforts of the parties to maximize the opening of the Chinese market for new Belarusian manufacturers, establish joint trading companies, and develop the largest electronic trading platforms of China"<sup>1</sup>.

The Belarusian side suggested deepening trade cooperation in five promising areas. The first one is to expand direct contacts between the business communities of the two countries. The second is to increase the range of products supplied to China from Belarus. The third one is to promote new mechanisms to expand bilateral trade with a focus on the establishment of joint export-import companies and the positioning of Belarusian goods at Chinese electronic trading platforms. Fourth, development of logistics through prompt delivery of cargoes by rail. Fifth, to step up

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<sup>1</sup> Cherviakov: friendly and partnership relations with China are especially important for Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherviakov-druzhestvennye-i-partnerskie-otnosheniya-s-kitaem-osobo-znachimyye-dlia-belarusi-504062-2022>



investment cooperation within the framework of existing bilateral projects and work together to create new import-substituting enterprises "through the development of the Great Stone Industrial Park and deepening interregional cooperation. .<sup>2</sup>

The results of the first quarter of 2022 attest to the fact that work in the aforementioned areas is going on quite actively. Specifically, the trade turnover between Belarus and China totaled USD 1.2 billion during that period. Belarus has become one of the ten largest suppliers of potash fertilizers, dairy whey, meat products and rapeseed oil to China. Agreements reached during the work of the commission should facilitate the successful implementation of the outlined cooperation avenues. Thus, the Belarusian Ministry of Industry intends to work closely with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce on the import and export of engineering and electronic products. The memorandum signed by the parties "is aimed at strengthening the Belarusian-Chinese partnership in industry."<sup>3</sup> . A memorandum on cooperation in the import and export of woodworking products was also signed by Bellesbumprom Concern and the China Wood and Wood Products Circulation Association. The document is aimed at improving the efficiency of partnership relations, "analysis of mutual trade problems and search for mutually acceptable ways to solve them"<sup>4</sup> by holding joint exhibitions, fairs,

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2 Belarus-China trade turnover in the first quarter amounted to \$1.2 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-belarusi-i-kitaja-v-i-kvartale-sostavil-12-mlrd-504056-2022/>

3 Belarus and China Strengthen Industry Partnership [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-ukrepiliavut-partnerstvo-v-promyshlennosti-504071-2022/>

4 "Bellesbumprom will cooperate with the Chinese wood products export association [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellesbumprom-budet-sotrudnichat-s-kitajskoi-assotsiatsiei-po-eksportu-produktsii-derevoobrabotki-504024-2022>

business meetings, exchange of economic, legal, scientific and technical information in all areas of interaction.

In the set of measures to develop the national innovation system in Belarus for 2021-2025, the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" has been identified as a platform for the organization of innovative productions. One of its main tasks for the nearest five years is "to ensure effective activity of its residents, attraction of new ones, active development of innovation activity, startups, cluster cooperation..."<sup>5</sup>. A record 21 residents in 2021 are a testament to how this task is being handled here. To be more precise, 85 residents were registered here at the end of 2021. By early 2022, "more than \$718 million had already been invested in the park, with 37 companies producing products, conducting research and development, and providing services. Great Stone's enterprises have created more than 1,700 jobs <...>. Exports have also increased - by almost 17% compared to 2020. Deliveries are made to 20 countries around the world."<sup>6</sup>. In the last days of 2021, Belarus-based SinRubEnerg LLC became the 85th resident with a research project in the field of creating digital energy facilities and a smart city. "The company will develop integrated automation and dispatching systems"<sup>7</sup>.

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5 Zalessky, B.L. Industrial Park "Great Stone": new projects bring the future / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XVIII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2022", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 3.

6 Yaroshenko: Great Stone's enterprises supply products to 20 countries worldwide [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/jaroshenko-predpriiatija-velikogo-kamnia-postavljajut-produktsiju-v-20-stran-mira-479114-2022/>

7 A new Great Stone resident will build digital energy facilities [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyy-rezident-velikogo-kamnia-zaimetsia-sozdaniem-tsifrovyyh-energoobjektov-477402-2021/>

With the arrival of 2022, the industrial park has continued to work actively both to increase the number of residents and the volume of their economic activity. Thus, as of mid-April 2022, 89 residents from 15 countries had "already registered here. The volume of announced investments amounts to \$1.24 billion, of which more than \$750 million have already been invested in the park's development. Residents have created over 1.8 thousand new jobs. In addition, almost half of the companies have commenced operations in the park"<sup>8</sup>.

The 86th resident of the industrial park in March 2022 was Bel Samoed Cloud Scientific and Technical Company LLC, which "will develop digital financial technologies and mobile payment systems. There are also plans to create an e-commerce centre in Belarus and provide services in this area to Belarusian and Chinese companies"<sup>9</sup>. An important detail: the initiator of this project is one of the largest cloud solution providers in China - Samoyed Cloud Technology Group Holdings Limited.

April 2022 was a particularly fruitful year for Great Stone in terms of new resident registrations. Earlier this month, for instance, the 87th resident was Hong Kong-based YuZYu Scientific and Technical Company Ltd, whose founder works in product targeting and branding and has branches in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Hangzhou and Wuhan. The new resident "plans to create a digital promotion centre to organise e-commerce using

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

9 Great Stone's new resident will take care of digital technologies and mobile payment systems [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamija-zajmetsja-tsifrovymi-tehnologijami-i-sistemami-mobilnyh-platezhei-490657-2022/>

Internet marketing technologies"<sup>10</sup> , will cooperate with Belarusian manufacturers to promote their goods in China and intends to provide training on e-commerce organisation.

A little later, the 88th resident, the Belarusian company CUBI RND LLC, registered in the industrial park with an investment project to produce equipment and components for modular construction of smart houses. "The production is based on the innovative Cuby technology, which is the company's own development. It makes it possible to produce high-tech constructions with high environmental characteristics."<sup>11</sup> . It is expected that 90 percent of the products produced in Velikiy Kamen by the new resident will be exported.

The 89th resident is another Belarusian company, HomeLand Group LLC, which plans to manufacture in the industrial park multifunctional noise-insulated cabins AeroCapsule with an automated control system based on the Internet of Things - a data transfer concept. Interestingly, this project won second place in the national innovation competition in 2021. The aero-capsules, created using smart technology and equipped with innovative embedded features, "can be widely used in open-air offices, airports, shopping centres, production plants, and allow the creation of optimal conditions for rest and work"<sup>12</sup> .

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10 Great Stone's new resident will take on digital promotion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zajmetsja-tsifrovym-prodvizheniem-tovarov-493650-2022/>

11 A new Great Stone resident will start producing equipment for smart homes [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachnet-vypuskat-oborudovanie-dlja-umnyh-domov-495324-2022/>

12 A new Great Stone resident will produce innovative aero-capsules [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-innovatsionnye-aerokapsuly-495913-2022/>

By mid-May 2022, the number of residents had increased to 90, with a reported investment of \$1.24 billion. In May 2022, a new resident of the industrial park was the Chinese company Transport Complex - AF LLC, which will create a transport monitoring centre using IoT technology. At the same time, a letter of intent was signed on the entry into the park of Hongjiu Corporation JSC, which "plans to engage in biotechnology activities in the Great Stone"<sup>13</sup>. Following the results of the first quarter of 2022 in the industrial park managed to provide "growth of indicators of proceeds from the sale of goods - 1.8 times compared with the first quarter of last year (Br123.4 million), the residents' industrial production - 1.7 times (Br95.4 million), exports - 1.4 times (\$22.6 million), investments in fixed assets - 1.1 times (Br30.4 million)"<sup>14</sup>.

An important focus of Great Stone is the creation of sub-parks, understood as the arrival of not just one investor, but a pool of iconic companies led by a separate management company, which opens up broad prospects for large corporations. Cooperation with the Chinese province of Guangdong is particularly good in this regard. As a reminder, "back in January 2017 in its administrative centre, Guangzhou, there was a signing ceremony to establish the China (Guangdong) LED Sub-Park in the Great Stone Industrial Park, as well as five more documents on the intention of specific companies to join this sub-park"<sup>15</sup>. Today, there are already 15

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13 New Great Stone resident to create cross-border transport monitoring centre [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novvi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-sozdast-tsentr-monitoringa-transgranichnyh-perevozok-501098-2022/>

14 The number of Great Stone residents has risen to 90 with a reported investment of \$1.24 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chislo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-vozroslo-do-90-s-zaravlennym-objemom-investitsij-v-124-mlrd-502265-2022/>

15 Zalesky, B.L. "Great Stone": perspective of development - subparks / B.L. Zalesky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Science and

residents operating in this sub-park, specialising in areas such as LED product manufacturing, integrated logistics, electric transport, unmanned systems and R&D. A joint innovation centre set up by the Guangdong Provincial Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus will soon be added to them, focusing on research and development in industrial and digital technologies, as well as new materials, biotechnologies, and pharmaceuticals. So in this direction, too, we see successful implementation of the plans outlined a few years ago.

Further unlocking the potential of the Great Stone's innovative areas should also be facilitated by the planned cooperation of the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park with similar preferential economic zones in other countries. In particular, in Cuba and Uzbekistan. Thus, back in January 2021, a memorandum of understanding was signed with Cuba's Mariel Special Development Zone (SDZ), which provides for cooperation "in attracting investments, strengthening ties between the Belarusian and Cuban business communities, as well as providing for information exchange"<sup>16</sup>. Priority areas of the Cuban ZOR, established in November 2013, located 45 kilometres from Havana, where there were more than 60 residents from 21 countries at the end of 2021, are electronics, logistics, pharmaceuticals, energy, as well as the financial and banking sectors. In January 2022, the parties had already started discussing specific areas of cooperation, "in particular in the area of attracting residents and developing interaction with Cuban pharmaceutical

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civilization - 2020", 30 January - 07 February, 2020. Economic sciences. : Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 21.

16 "Great Stone and Cuba's Mariel Special Development Zone will cooperate in attracting investment [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-i-kubinskaja-zona-osobogo-razvitiia-mariel-budut-sotrudnichestvovat-v-privlechenii-investitsij-426316-2021/>

companies"<sup>17</sup> . Considering that the pharmaceutical sector is currently on the rise in the Great Stone, it is not difficult to assume that concrete results from this collaboration will not be long in coming.

Another interesting example in this context is the Uzbek free economic zones (FEZ) Jizzakh and Syrdarya. In early April 2022, the administration of the Great Stone discussed with their representatives areas of possible cooperation, including "establishing cooperation between residents of the park, free economic zones and enterprises in the field of import and export of component materials, finished products"<sup>18</sup> . The parties agreed to sign a memorandum on cooperation that would set forth their aspiration to implement joint projects. That there may well be such projects is evidenced by the specialisation of Uzbek FEZs.

In particular, the Jizzakh FEZ was established in March 2013 in Jizzakh region to attract direct investment in the creation of high-tech and innovative industries. And today there are already some interesting examples in this regard. For instance, in March 2020, an agreement was signed here to establish production of Volkswagen light commercial vehicles on the basis of Jizzakh Automobile Plant LLC. The implementation of this project is divided into two phases. In 2020-2021, German cars will be delivered here in completed form for market research and marketing analysis. From 2022, the "full production cycle, which includes welding, painting and assembly

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

18 "Great Stone and Uzbekistan's FEZ intend to develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-i-sez-uzbekistana-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-493658-2022/>

processes <...> will begin. Dealer and service networks in every region of Uzbekistan will also be expanded"<sup>19</sup> .

Another interesting example is the Uzbek enterprise ADM Jizzakh, located in the Jizzakh FEZ and producing KIA and Lada models there. In October 2021, it announced that in early 2023 it would start small-scale assembly of these vehicles. A total of "314 parts and components will be produced and a welding and painting shop will be launched"<sup>20</sup> . This will enable production of 100 thousand of those models per year, create three thousand new jobs and bring the localization of production to 30 per cent. It seems that such experience may be of great interest to the Belarusian side as well.

As for the Syrdarya FEZ, it was established on the basis of the Djizak FEZ branch in the Syrdarya region in April 2018. One of its main objectives is to ensure comprehensive and efficient use of the production and resource potential of this Uzbek region "based on deep processing of mineral resources, expansion of production of high value-added import-substituting products demanded in foreign markets"<sup>21</sup> . The following production areas have been identified as priorities for attracting investment and advanced technologies: deep processing, storage and packing of horticultural and other agricultural products, textile, footwear, leather goods, chemical, food, electrical engineering, agricultural machinery, and the building materials industry. With the help of the FEZ the export component

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

20 KIA and Lada plant in Uzbekistan to increase localisation to 30% in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/20211022/zavod-v-uzbekistane-po-vypusku-kia-i-lada-v-2023-godu-povvsi-lokalizatsiyu-do-30-21019614.html>

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



of the region, where "more than 80 exporting enterprises are already working, supplying abroad more than 50 types of production"<sup>22</sup>. So the range of joint interests with Great Stone could be very broad here as well. All this shows that the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park retains its strategic importance as a country-wide growth point for Belarus.

As for interregional cooperation, in the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of All-round and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Relations adopted in September 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China commended the expansion of deep trade and economic cooperation of Belarusian regions with cities and provinces of the Middle Kingdom. Turning to the task of expanding interregional ties, "which is one of the priorities in the development of Belarusian-Chinese relations,"<sup>23</sup>, it is possible to note the successful experience of such Belarusian regions as the Viciebsk, Grodno and Brest regions in 2022.

For example, in October 2022, **the Vitebsk region** and the Chinese **province of Jiangxi** signed an agreement on cooperation in economy, education, health, sports and will establish contacts in trade, science and technology. The parties will interact in a comprehensive manner. For example, there are plans to organize meetings via videoconferencing in which leading enterprises of the Vitebsk Oblast, their developments and technologies that can be useful and interesting to companies from Jiangxi will be presented to their Chinese partners. In particular, we are talking about joint projects for the development of agriculture, mechanical engineering

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22 Mirzaev, G. Syrdarya opens doors to investors / G. Mirzaev // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://rg.ru/amp/2019/08/29/v-syrdarinskoj-oblasti-uzbekistana-gotovv-k-millionnym-investiciyam.html>

23 Zalesky, B. Time for concrete solutions. Chronicle of international cooperation / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 100.

as well as science parks and university developments. Note that the two regions, Belarus and China, have already held events before: a conference on professional education and training of specialists in engineering and technology, as well as on combating COVID-19. In addition, "container trains regularly run to Nanchang, the city district where the Jiangxi authorities are based, and are formed by a logistics company from Orša, among others. Nanchang and Orsha have partnership ties, and another city in the province, Funzhou, has ties with Polotsk<sup>24</sup>". The signed agreement appears to help the northern region of Belarus and the Chinese province, located in southeastern China, to reach a new level of relations. In the context of this topic, it is interesting that in September 2022, in the framework of the Year of Regions of Belarus and China, Days of the Vitebsk Region were held in another Chinese province, **Heilongjiang**, where the "potential for cooperation of the twin regions in trade, economic, manufacturing, tourism and investment spheres" was presented<sup>25</sup>. By the way, more than 30 million people live in this region of China.

And in October 2022, the cities of **Grodno** and **Lanzhou**, the administrative centre of China's Gansu province, also signed an agreement on the establishment of friendly exchanges and cooperation, where the parties envisaged "deepening bilateral interaction, expanding exchanges and cooperation between the regions in trade, economic, scientific, technical, cultural, tourist and

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24 Pushniakova, A. Trade, science, sport: Vitebsk region signed agreement on cooperation with Chinese Jiangxi / A. Pushniakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/torgovlja-nauka-sport-vitebskaja-oblast-podpisala-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-s-kitajskoj-tsziansi-532401-2022>

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

other spheres. The document also aims at strengthening friendly ties between the residents of the two cities."<sup>26</sup> . It will be recalled that a memorandum on twinning arrangements between **Gansu province** and **Grodno region** was signed in 2007. There have been more than 10 different agreements signed between the regions in 15 years. Especially dynamic is the development of trade and economic cooperation. In April 2022, Gansu and Grodno Region signed the Program of Cooperation for 2022-2023 which is filled with concrete joint projects. It "further elaborated the areas where cooperation is not yet so active <...>. It is agriculture, tourism, technology exchange and traditional Chinese medicine"<sup>27</sup> . And Novogrudok District and the Chinese city of Dunhuang from Gansu Province have agreed "to conclude an agreement on the establishment of cooperation"<sup>28</sup> . For reference, it should be noted that Grodno Region has also signed an agreement on twinning relations with **Hainan Province**.

And another interesting example: **the Brest Region and Hubei Province**. In May 2022 the parties signed an action plan to develop trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation in 2022-2024 which provides for development of international interregional cooperation in four main areas: mutual trade, investment, medicine and education. In particular, Brest

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26 Grodno and China's Lanzhou signed an agreement on the establishment of friendly exchanges [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodno-i-kitajskij-lanchzhou-podpisali-soglasenie-ob-ustanovlenii-druzhestvennyh-obmenov-532444-2022/>

27 Grodno Region intends to expand cooperation with China's Gansu Province [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-namerena-rasshirjat-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitajskoj-provintsiej-gansu-498323-2022/>

28 Novogrudok District and the Chinese city of Dunhuang intend to conclude an agreement to establish cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogrudskij-rajon-i-kitajskij-gorod-dunhuan-namereny-zakljuchit-soglasenie-ob-ustanovlenii-495725-2022/>

Region manufacturers have been supplying food and wood products to the Chinese province for several years. But the plan is to expand this interaction, including by establishing direct business ties between business entities. Thus, for instance, it is planned to establish investment cooperation between the Brest free economic zone and enterprises of the automotive industry of Hubei province as well as between the Berezovsk Engine Repair Plant and producers of diesel engines in this region of China. The possibility of participation of Chinese investors in the implementation of projects in Brest region concerning the organization of production of charging units for electric cars, powder and liquid detergents production on the basis of Barkhim OJSC, technical re-equipment of Baranovich Industrial Cotton Association, production of clinker products on the basis of Goryn Construction Materials Plant, development of Gorodnoe glass sand deposit<sup>29</sup> will also be considered. As for the medical sphere, the prospects of cooperation between the Brest Oblast and the Hubei Province are linked to the joint production of ultrasound diagnostic equipment and organization of the production of disposable blood transfusion systems and medical solutions. There are also plans to set up a traditional Chinese medicine centre on the basis of the Brest regional clinical hospital, for which purpose the physiotherapeutic building can be reconstructed there.

All of these facts are a good illustration of how multifaceted Belarus-China interaction is now reaching the level of all-round strategic cooperation and all-round partnership as stated in Directive

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29 Brest Region and Hubei Province signed a road map for cooperation for 2022-2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brestskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-hubei-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-na-2022-2024-godv-503065-2022/>

No 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China", signed in December 2021.

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## Priorities for the new phase of partnership

In September 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted the **Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an All-round and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, which contains Belarusian-Chinese agreements to intensify scientific and technological cooperation, expand practical cooperation between research institutions, higher education institutions and enterprises, encourage establishment of platforms as joint centres of applied research and laboratories. At the same time it is noted that the development of bilateral relations has moved to a new stage, when "the interaction between research institutions and enterprises of the two countries in the field of innovation is continuously strengthened. The areas, mechanisms and methods of scientific and technological cooperation are constantly expanding"<sup>30</sup>. In this regard, three priority components can be distinguished. "The first is in the field of scientific research, where the parties are involved in the implementation of major joint projects. The second is in the field of innovation activities, where a network of joint innovation centres and research laboratories is being formed and developed. The third one is in the field of education, where joint training and mutual internships of specialists, teachers and students take place".<sup>31</sup>

In particular, the National Academy of Sciences [NAS] of Belarus alone has already set up over 20 international research

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

31 Zalesky, B. Frontiers of multi-vectorism. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 471.

centres and laboratories jointly with Chinese partners, which are engaged in the development and adaptation of advanced technologies, as well as their promotion in the markets of Belarus, China and third countries. "Contractual documents have already been signed by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus with leading scientific organizations of China - the Chinese Academy of Sciences, academies of sciences of a number of Chinese provinces, large manufacturing corporations of China - Huawei, AVIC..."<sup>32</sup>. In particular, in April 2022 the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus signed an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation with the Chinese company SAMSE. Environmental Technologies", which specializes in environmental protection issues. The signed agreement, which aims to promote scientific and technical cooperation and the practical implementation of joint scientific and technical developments in the field of environmental protection, primarily concerns soil remediation technologies, which are of particular interest to the Chinese partners. The fact is that the Chinese company, bringing together designers, scientists, equipment manufacturers, investors and operators in the field of environmental protection, today focuses on expanding activities in the field of municipal water supply and sanitation, industrial wastewater treatment, solid waste management, energy conservation and management of cyclic use of waste as a resource. At the same time, the Chinese Engineering Corporation CAMS was established, which also signed a cooperation agreement with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. This document defines the priority areas of

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32 More than 20 joint centres and laboratories with Chinese partners have been set up at the NAS [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-nan-sozdano-bolee-20-sovmestnyh-tsentrov-i-laboratorij-s-partnerami-iz-kitaja-494752-2022/>

cooperation as "energy saving and environmental protection, new energy sources, new materials, optics, precision instruments, semiconductors and biomedicine, as well as expansion of commercial application of the results of joint scientific activities"<sup>33</sup>.

When it comes to cooperation between higher education institutions of the two countries, the parties will develop cooperation "on the basis of development of joint educational programmes with the subsequent establishment of joint educational structures (faculties, institutes) between leading higher education institutions, including with the use of distance learning technologies..."<sup>34</sup>. Suffice it to say that Belarusian and Chinese partners have already signed over 540 direct cooperation agreements. "Today almost 500 citizens of the Republic of Belarus study in the People's Republic of China, the number of Chinese students in Belarusian universities has reached 8,000. The parties have developed over 30 joint educational programmes..."<sup>35</sup>. The Belarusian universities actively developing cooperation with the Chinese side in science and education include the Belarusian State University, the Belarusian National Technical University, the Belarusian State Technological University, the Brest State Technical University, and the Polesky State University.

For example, the first agreement between the Belarusian State University (BSU) and Chinese partners was signed in 1990 with

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33 Biomedicine and new energy sources. The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus signed an agreement with a Chinese corporation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/biomeditsina-i-novye-istochniki-energii-nan-belarusi-podpisala-soglasenie-s-kitaiskoj-korporatsiej-498676-2022/>

34 China and Belarus publish Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an All-weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://rg.ru/2022/09/16/kitaj-i-belarus-opublikovali-sovmestnuiu-deklaraciju-ob-ustanovlenii-otnoshenii-vsepogodnogo-i-vsestoronnego-strategicheskogo-partnerstva.html>

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



Chengdu University of Science and Technology. Today the BSU has more than 80 agreements with more than 50 Chinese institutions. The partners include Harbin University of Science and Technology, Henan University, East China Pedagogical University and Foshan University. "In 2019, bilateral partnership documents were signed with Peking University and Shanghai Transport University"<sup>36</sup>. BSU received the honorary right to host the Confucius Institute within its walls. The Chinese partner in this matter is also Dalian Polytechnic University (DPU), with which cooperation has been developing since 2007. The opening of two joint institutes at the Belarusian State University and the DPU is a significant result of this cooperation. Today there are 244 Chinese students in the Sino-Belarusian institute. Two graduations have already taken place. "In 2021 there will be 78 Chinese graduates and five Belarusians graduating from the BSU and the DPU. In 2022 there will be 74 Chinese and two Belarusian graduates. There are 142 Belarusian students studying at the Belarusian-Chinese joint institute. The first graduation will take place in 2023"<sup>37</sup>.

In May 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between BSU and Tsinghua University, which ranks 17th among the world's top universities. The Memorandum "provides for the exchange of students, invitation of teachers and scientists, implementation of joint research, educational projects, exchange of publications, information, educational materials, organisation of

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

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

scientific, educational and cultural events"<sup>38</sup> . This university was founded in 1911. It is located northwest of Beijing in the Haidian student district. Today Tsinghua has about 53,000 students, more than 3,200 of whom are international students. The educational process is provided by more than 3600 teachers. The university structure includes 21 institutes and 59 faculties.

And in September 2022, another BSU partner appeared in China - Huzhou University in Zhejiang Province. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two universities "provides for the implementation of joint research projects, educational programmes, student exchanges and other areas of cooperation"<sup>39</sup> . Huzhou University has more than 100 years of history. The university now specialises in a wide range of academic disciplines and has achieved internationally recognised excellence in research and teaching in mathematics, clinical medicine and engineering. In 2017, the university established the Intercultural Research Centre, which is involved in international projects, including with the Belarusian side.

As for the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU), in February 2022 the Belarusian university signed an agreement with the Shenyang Technological University (STU) on scientific and technical cooperation to establish the China-Belarus Innovation Research and Production Centre for hardening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts, where new technologies and equipment will be concentrated in one place, prototype parts will be

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

39 BSU and China's Huzhou University signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-kitajskij-universitet-huchzhou-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-524518-2022/>

promptly manufactured e "The centre will concentrate all the new methods of hardening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts. There is no other centre like it in China"<sup>40</sup> . At the STU's request, the centre will include such Belarusian technologies as: flame spraying of thermoplastic polymer powders; hypersonic metallization; deformation cladding with flexible tools; flame spraying of metal, ceramic, polymer and composite powders; laser cleaning of surfaces from organic and inorganic contamination, rust, dross and paint coatings; plasma coating with metal, ceramic and composite powders; restoration of working surfaces from corrosion. And already in October 2022, the centre was inaugurated at the Shenyang University of Technology.

In addition, a conference on scientific exchange between BNTU and the Institute of Applied Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences was held in Changchun in October 2022. As a reminder, in December 2019, the parties signed an agreement to establish a joint Sino-Belarusian laboratory of advanced materials and production "One Belt, One Road", which started its activities in February 2020. This entity "is engaged in the development of high-performance sodium-ion and potassium-ion batteries, catalysts for water electrolysis, hydrogen production, research in solid oxide electrolysis for efficient production of green hydrogen and green ammonia"<sup>41</sup> . Within the framework of the conference the Belarusian

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40 Kravchuk, M.A. Opening of the Sino-Belarusian innovative training, scientific and production centre for hardening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts / M.A. Kravchuk // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11923-otkrvtie-kitajsko-belorusskogo-innovacionnogo-uchebno-nauchno-proizvodstvennogo-centra>

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

specialists drew attention to the experience of BNTU in the field of modification of machine parts surfaces by methods of high-energy impact and study of their structure and properties, which in future will allow to expand the field of scientific research and application of its results in Chinese industry.

Speaking about the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU), it has already signed 17 cooperation agreements with universities and organizations of China, which are located in many regions of the country, including Guangdong province. "In cooperation with Chinese partners, joint educational programs in such areas as "Machines and apparatuses of chemical production and building materials enterprises", "Automation of technological processes and productions", "Mechatronics" have been created and are functioning successfully"<sup>42</sup>. In addition, in March 2022 BSTU signed memoranda: with Guangzhou Knowledge City - Technology Industrial Service Company - on strategic cooperation in the field of energy saving and environmental protection to promote the construction of a "carbon-free community"; with JSC Guangzhou Hengyun Group - in the field of hydrogen technology for the joint construction of hydrogen energy industrial park.

Another example in this context is the Brest State Technical University (BrSTU), where a joint Belarus-China IT project funded by the Belarusian Republican Foundation for Fundamental Research and the National Natural Science Foundation of China was launched in 2022. And in April 2022 it became known about the launch of a joint educational program between BrStU and Xinxiang University,

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42 BSTU and Belarusian companies signed memorandums of cooperation with Guangzhou [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bgtu-i-beloruskie-kompanii-podpisali-memorandumy-o-sotrudnichestve-s-guanchzhou-489362-2022>

which concerns the training of students in the field of mechanical engineering technology. "Training will take place in the full-time format on the territory of the People's Republic of China on the materials presented by Brest University. A large block of the programme will be taught to Chinese students directly by BrStU lecturers"<sup>43</sup>. In October 2022 Brest University also established cooperation with Guangdong Construction Vocational and Technical College to create long-term conditions for training qualified personnel in Belarus in the interests of the construction sector in China and to cooperate in organizing a joint educational training program for specialists in architecture and construction. It should be noted that the Chinese partner of BRSTU is "the only state college in Guangdong province that trains highly qualified specialists in the field of construction. The college was founded in 1979 and has graduated more than 200,000 highly qualified personnel in 43 years"<sup>44</sup>.

As for interaction of the Polesie State University with colleagues from China, in September 2022, the Belarusian university held the first international scientific conference, which was called Pinsk Readings. The students of Pinsk together with their Belarusian and foreign partners discussed the topical issues for economy, banking sector, development of biotechnologies, engineering, healthy life style, and preservation of historical and cultural heritage. During the conference, PolessU signed a cooperation agreement

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43 BrStU and Sinyanskiy University have launched a joint programme [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brgtu-i-sinsjanskij-universitet-nachali-realizatsiju-sovmestnoj-programmy-496937-2022/>

44 BrStU and Guangdong Construction Vocational College have agreed to establish cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/brgtu-i-guandunskij-stroitelnyi-proftehkolledzh-dogovorilis-naladit-sotrudnichestvo-530263-2022/>

with the Shanxi Institute of Science and Technology, which "specializes in nature management, engineering and biotechnology. We aim to build serious partnerships."<sup>45</sup> . In addition to joint research projects, the universities see prospects for cooperation in academic mobility.

High scientific, technological and innovation cooperation between Belarus and China is also confirmed by the fact that in November 2022 at the China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, the largest exhibition event in the Celestial Empire, where almost three thousand companies from 127 countries participated, 126 scientific and technological developments of scientists from 32 organizations of the Belarusian National Academy of Sciences and institutions of the Ministry of Education and Science were presented in the Belarusian country pavilion "High-tech equipment and information technologies".<sup>46</sup> In particular, the exposition section of the Ministry of Education and Science included such areas of cooperation as "digital information and communication technologies and interdisciplinary production based on them; biological, medical, pharmaceutical and chemical technologies and industries; energy, construction, ecology and environmental management; mechanical engineering, machine building, instrument engineering and innovative materials; agricultural and food technologies; ensuring human and social security" xml-ph-0000@d

Among the presented novelties were ultra-small orbiting spacecraft created by the Belarusian State University (BSU). The

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45 PolesSU will cooperate with an institute of science and technology from China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/piresgu-budet-sotrudnichat-s-institutom-nauki-i-tehnologii-iz-kitaj-524605-2022/>

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

first nanosatellite was put into orbit four years ago. The second nanosatellite has already been created under the State programme "Science-intensive Technologies and Technology"; its design includes an innovative modular layout of on-board subsystems of a small spacecraft. BSU is also introducing the anti-tumour drugs Temodex, Prospidelong and Cisplacel"<sup>47</sup> . Another interesting novelty is an electric scooter manufactured by the JSC "Instrument-making plant Optron" of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. It has a top speed of 60 kilometres per hour and a payload of 200 kilograms. Besides, such advanced developments were presented in Shanghai as "unmanned aerial vehicle Burevestnik (Scientific and Production Center of Multifunctional Unmanned Complexes of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus), automated system for registration of welding processes (Belarusian-Russian University), heat-resistant impact-resistant coatings (F. Skaryna State University of Gomel), bread of high nutritional value (Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies)..."

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Also. In November 2022 at the IX Belarus-China Youth Innovation Forum "New Horizons - 2022" held in Minsk, it was noted that this year the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus together with the Ministry of Science and Technology of China held a competition of Belarusian-Chinese science and technology projects. "Based on its results, 35 projects will receive

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

48 Food industry innovations and spacecraft: what Belarus will present at the China Import Fair [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novinki-pischeproma-i-kosmicheskie-apparaty-cto-predstavit-belarus-na-vystavke-importa-v-kitae-533240-2022/>

state support from the two countries"<sup>49</sup>. All these facts show that the multifaceted scientific, technical and innovation cooperation between the two countries, when the partners work systematically and purposefully to develop ties, gives fruitful results.

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49 Young scientists from Belarus and China develop cooperation in innovation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/molodve-uchenve-belarusi-i-kitaja-razvivajut-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-innovatsij-534160-2022/>



## **Understanding the approaches allows to plan perspectives**

**The People's Republic of China** (PRC) is the main trading partner of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). An agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and the PRC was signed in May 2018 and entered into force in October 2019. In December 2021, the 2nd meeting of the Joint Commission on the implementation of this agreement noted that "the volume of mutual trade in 2021 will exceed the pre-pandemic level and reach a record \$165 billion, demonstrating high intensity and mutually complementary trade relations"<sup>50</sup>. Then, discussing the progress of preparing a roadmap for the implementation of the agreement between the EAEU and the PRC, the parties highlighted the development of digital transport corridors as the main section of this document, as the digitalisation of railway transportation can have a cumulative effect. The issues of green trade and green investment were not left out, where the Chinese side suggested strengthening cooperation between the PRC and the EAEU on the global climate agenda, as well as prospects for cooperation in three areas, which relate to intellectual customs, intellectual customs borders and intellectual interconnectivity. At the same time, the Chinese side expressed its willingness to share its experience in implementing the "three smart spheres" concept, which is based on modern technology with the application of new methods, systems and equipment, for the purpose of customs control and management.

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<sup>50</sup> Zalessky, B. Priority - concrete projects. Chronicle of integration interaction in the post-Soviet space / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 31.

In 2022, trade between the two sides as a whole grew by almost 30 per cent and exceeded \$200 billion. At the same time, exports from the EAEU countries to China increased by about 40 percent. Among the industrial commodity groups, natural gas, hard coal and processed timber showed strong growth in shipments to the Middle Kingdom. In agricultural exports, rapeseed oil, frozen fish, crustaceans and poultry meat stood out. "As for imports, the most frequent imports from China this [2022] year were gas liquefaction equipment, trucks, cars, crawler excavators, tyres and tyres, air conditioners, **and** from agricultural products sunflower seeds, tomatoes, plant extracts, peaches, onions, vegetable and fruit juices"<sup>51</sup>.

In February 2023, the third meeting of the Joint Commission for the Implementation of the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EAEU and the PRC was held to discuss topical issues of cooperation in trade, competition and sectoral cooperation, and to give new impetus to the alignment of the Chinese initiative "One Belt, One Road" with the EAEU development plans. As part of the event, a roadmap was signed to intensify and saturate the countries' trade and economic cooperation in practical terms. In more detail, this "map" "includes three sections: digitalisation of transport corridors, dialogues on foreign trade policy issues, and a joint academic study on the effects of different scenarios for deepening EAEU-China cooperation"<sup>52</sup>.

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51 EAEU trade with China increased by almost 30% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://trans.ru/news/tovarooborot-eaes-s-kitaem-viros-pochti-na-30-protsetov>

52 Andrey Slepnev: "EAEU and China will simplify cargo transportation by rail by implementing electronic document flow". [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-eaes-i-kitav-uprosvyat-perevozku-gruzov-po-zheleznym-dorogam-za-schet-vnedreniya-elek/>

With regard to the first section, activities in this plan envisage a step-by-step transition to electronic exchange of documents for rail freight transport using electronic digital signatures, which will significantly simplify trade procedures and speed up the transport of goods between the parties. There are also plans to develop cooperation in customs and veterinary and phytosanitary control. With regard to maritime and road transport, an exchange of experience in the area of electronic logistics information is planned. In particular, the parties "agreed to continue promoting the Eurasian AgroExpress project aimed at accelerated transportation of food products from the EAEU to China by rail"<sup>53</sup>.

The second section of the roadmap focuses on the formation of a sustainable dialogue on trade policy, which has a significant impact on international trade. In addition, promising areas "for discussion during 2023-2024 have been agreed: the climate agenda, foreign trade strategies of the EAEU and the PRC, international practices in the application of internal market protection measures, and e-commerce".<sup>54</sup>

The third section intends to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the effects of different scenarios for deepening trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU member states and China. In particular, during the third meeting of the commission a proposal was made to establish and develop cooperation between the stock exchanges of the EAEU states and the Shanghai Stock Exchange. In

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53 Andrey Slepnev: "The EAEU's trade turnover with China exceeds \$200 billion by 2022". [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-tovarooborot-eaes-s-kitaem-po-itogam-2022-goda-prevysil-200-mlrd-dollarov/>

54 On the Third Meeting of the Joint Commission on the Implementation of the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EAEU and the PRC [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: [https://mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/ec528af998b30528.html](https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ec528af998b30528.html)

addition, the Chinese side expressed its "intention to actively promote cooperation in the capital market with the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, indicating a willingness to provide financial structures and investors from the EAEU with greater opportunities.<sup>55</sup> [6]. The parties also stressed the importance of developing cooperation and exchanging experience on improving legislation in the sphere of regulation and supervision of financial markets, on methodology in the field of increasing mutual settlements in national currencies, on analyzing ways of interaction of payment systems and implementation of joint projects. Understanding of approaches in these areas will allow coordinating further joint agenda of the EAEU and the PRC in the near future.

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<sup>55</sup> The EAEU and China have expressed mutual interest in developing cooperation between exchanges [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-kitav-v-vrazili-vzaimnyy-interes-k-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-birzhami/>

## Current challenges dictate a window of opportunity

In the last days of 2022, the number of residents in the **China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone** reached the 100 mark. For reference, we note that "as of the end of 2021, 85 residents were registered here"<sup>56</sup>. In particular, the 99th resident was Unchenbel LLC, whose founder is a large Chinese company, SUMEC International Technology Trading. "The new resident will create an e-commerce platform allowing import and export of mechanical and electrical equipment"<sup>57</sup>. And the Belarusian company Human Kraft will produce medical products - individual bone prostheses based on 3D printing technologies, which will be used in surgery, traumatology, dentistry and in the treatment of oncological diseases. Also, at the end of December 2022, agreements of intent were signed to enter the industrial park as residents of Foryu Information Technology LLC and Tontun Information Technology LLC (People's Republic of China).

In addition, at the end of 2022, the industrial park's resident company, IPD Group LLC, signed a lease agreement for a 5.5 thousand-square-metre universal production building. This deal has become one of the largest in 2022 on the Belarusian industrial real estate market. "This space will be used to implement a project for the development and serial production of high-tech data processing and storage devices. In particular, the company will produce computer hardware, server equipment, monitors, and interactive

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56 Zalessky, B. Partnership of flexible forms. Peculiarities of Eurasian cooperative dialogue in the context of global threats / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 5.

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

smart panels. In the future, the resident plans to expand the range of import-substituting products"<sup>58</sup> . A total of 19 residents were registered in Great Stone at the end of 2022. Also. Last year, the park's residents exported their products worth more than \$100 million to 20 countries.

In 2023, the Great Stone is expected to attract at least 20 residents. Several investors from Belarus have already registered in January alone. In particular, "very interesting projects in the field of veterinary products. And the second project is in the field of science, <...> in the field of nuclear energy"<sup>59</sup> . At the end of January, a new resident, BaikalGroup LLC, was registered at the Great Stone. "A company with Chinese capital will create a transport and logistics centre in the park <...>. The park's resident plans to provide warehousing and logistics services, including storage, packaging, tracking, marking..."<sup>60</sup> . Goods will be shipped to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

In February 2023, three more new residents registered in the industrial park: two with capital from Belarus and one from China. Heprotrade LLC will produce environmentally friendly thermal paper, the products of which will be widely used in sales and services. "The production capacity will be up to 300 tons per month. The implementation of the project will make it possible to provide such products for the domestic market and reduce imports, as well as

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58 Great Stone ended the year with its biggest deal [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-zavershili-god-krupnejshej-sdelkoj-542635-2022/>

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

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

supply them for export"<sup>61</sup> . The second resident, OOO Rivex, will produce innovative dressings and sterilisation materials for both the domestic market and the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. Bel-Nord Logistics s.r.o., whose founder is a Chinese company in the field of international logistics and one of the largest in the Inner Mongolian region, plans to "develop the logistics infrastructure by building warehouses and introducing a wide range of services in the field. In addition, road transport of goods along the China-Europe route will be organised"<sup>62</sup> . This initiative will also help address the most important strategic objective - to expand the presence of Belarusian products in the Chinese market.

In just a month and a half of 2023, seven new residents have already managed to register at Velikiy Kamen. And in total, already during the life of the industrial park, "the total number is 107 residents with a planned investment of \$1.3bn"<sup>63</sup> . In order to create additional conditions for attracting new investors in 2023, work is expected to continue on further improving the park's special legal regime with a focus on the implementation of new high-tech projects, including in the field of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine. Promising projects are also planned in logistics, e-commerce, fine chemistry, biotechnology, instrumentation, research and development. In February 2023, at a meeting of the working group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park, it was noted that the

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61 Two more residents with Belarusian capital registered in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/esche-dva-rezidenta-s-belorusskim-kapitalom-zaregistirovanv-v-velikom-kamne-549664-2023/>

62 Great Stone's new resident will develop international logistics [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-razvivat-mezhdunarodnuiu-logistiku-551642-2023/>

63 Great Stone has registered 7 new residents this year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-etom-godu-velikij-kamen-zaregistiroval-7-novyh-rezidentov-551821-2023/>

Great Stone sites "can quickly increase the level of localization in the production of medical and technological equipment, transport and other areas, promptly replacing the falling out imports with these products. To make the most of the existing potential, it is necessary to continue to actively develop the park, build infrastructure and declare the project on a global scale"<sup>64</sup>. In short, the current challenges dictate a window of opportunity for the industrial park's residents - in particular, and also create additional competitive advantages for the promising development of the Belarusian economy - in general.

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<sup>64</sup> Chervjakov: current economic challenges are a window of opportunity for Great Stone residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-tekuschie-vyzovy-ekonomiki-okno-vozmozhnostej-dlja-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-550498-2023/>



## From declaration and plan to concrete projects

<sup>65</sup>In the **Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an All-round and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, published in September 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China agreed to develop cooperation in high-tech medicine, vaccines and pharmaceuticals and "prioritised the formation of a joint pharmaceutical cluster, the commercialisation of new pharmaceutical products and technologies and the establishment of a high-quality centre for traditional Chinese medicine in Belarus

As a reminder, the two countries have long-standing ties in the field of medicine. The first agreement on cooperation in healthcare and medical science between the Belarusian and Chinese ministries of health was signed back in 1994. In 2021, the Belarusian government issued a decree on state registration of strategically important medicines, allowing for their accelerated registration for pandemic control. At the same time the Ministry of Health for the first time registered a preparation of Chinese traditional medicine (TCM) - soft capsules "CINVI". Today "in Belarus there are 810 registered medical products, 502 medical items and 480 remedies produced in China. Since April 2020 to date the PRC has donated the equivalent of \$30 million worth of personal protective equipment, medical and diagnostic equipment and a vaccine against COVID-19 to Belarus. .<sup>66</sup>

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65 China and Belarus adopt a Joint Declaration [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://zviazda.by/ru/news/20220916/1663330543-kitav-i-belarus-prinyali-sovmestnyu-deklaracivu>

66 The Belarusian Ministry of Health and Weigao signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-belarusi-i-kompanija-weigao-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-552445-2023/>

Our country has already established TKM centres and the necessary business environment for setting up pharmaceutical production facilities. In particular, for the residents of the Great Stone Park, the Ministry of Health of Belarus has developed a booklet "Main aspects of admission to circulation of medical devices and medicinal products" in Russian and Chinese to inform them about the opportunities and preferences. Besides, the works on the architectural project "Construction of a polyclinic on the territory of the Great Stone Park taking into account establishment therein of a regional centre for promotion of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine" have already been completed. The work on inclusion of the specialty "doctor of traditional Chinese medicine" into the nomenclature of positions is being completed, which will give additional impulse for promotion of this topic in Belarus.

In late February 2023, the Ministry of Health of Belarus and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of China announced that they were preparing a memorandum on TCM, which should reflect the establishment of a TCM centre in Belarus, a pharmaceutical cluster and development of traditional Chinese medicine in the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone. It should be noted that "in Belarus reflexology methods, diagnostic methods, therapeutic gymnastics, classical acupuncture, Chinese massage, as well as treatment methods based on modern technologies - electroacupuncture, laser acupuncture, ultrasound acupuncture are used <...>. The centres of traditional Chinese medicine have been established in regional centres of Belarus. There is cooperation with a number of universities - Tianjin University, Changchun University, Zhejiang University of Traditional Chinese

Medicine..."<sup>67</sup>. Besides, the educational process in this specialty is carried out at the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education at the Department of Reflexotherapy. On average, more than 200 doctors are trained each year. Employees of the department have repeatedly trained in Beijing, Taiyuan and Tianjin. These methods have proven to be effective, including in the treatment of postvoid syndrome. Every year in Belarus, reflexologists carry out around 900,000 reflexology procedures.

In 2023, the parties continue to actively cooperate in this context. In February, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus signed a number of cooperation agreements with Chinese partners. First, in the city of Weihai in Shandong province, with Weigao International Medical Trading Company, which supplies medical products and spare parts made in China. Second, in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, with the North China Pharmaceutical Company Limited (NCPC). "This company has been chosen as a strategic partner who will represent the interests of Belpharmprom Holding in procurement of pharmaceutical substances in the People's Republic of China, as well as perform market research functions, submit proposals to the management company of the holding for supply of substances and raw materials in accordance with requests"

<sup>68</sup>

Also. In early March 2023, Belarus and China signed a plan to develop cooperation in health care for the period 2023-2025, which

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67 Belarus and China prepare a memorandum on traditional Chinese medicine [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-knr-gotovjat-memorandum-po-voprosam-traditsionnoj-kitajskoj-meditiny-552902-2023/>

68 A cooperation agreement was signed by the Ministry of Health of Belarus and a Chinese pharmaceutical company [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisali-minzdrav-belarusi-i-kitajskaja-farmkompanija-552543-2023>

notes that "the parties will develop cooperation in health care, science and education based on the principles of national legislation of the countries, as well as on the principles of mutual benefit and mutual assistance"<sup>69</sup> . The two countries will give priority to cooperation in such areas as: organisation of joint medical research, exchange of experience in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases; organisation of seminars and workshops for experts; cooperation in epidemiology and microbiology and exchange of data on the spread of epidemic diseases; cooperation in surgery, transplantation and haematology; participation in international medical exhibitions held in the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Belarus

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<sup>69</sup> Plan on development of cooperation in health care for 2023-2025 signed between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/sobvtiya/podpisan-plan-po-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-zdravookhraneniya-na-2023-2025-godv-mezhdu-bela/>

## The action plan aims to maximise results

In April 2022, the seventh meeting of **the Belarus-Indonesia** Joint Commission for Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation was held. The parties discussed topical issues of the bilateral partnership "with a focus on the development of cooperation in the areas of industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, education, tourism, digital economy, and creative industries"<sup>70</sup> . Recall that the sixth meeting of this commission was held in Jakarta in October 2017. At that time it was agreed "to intensify trade, economic and investment cooperation between the countries, including the prospects for increasing supplies of MAZ, BelAZ and MTZ products to Indonesia"<sup>71</sup> .

Many facts show that the Indonesian market is very promising for the Belarusian side. First, more than 270 million people now live here. Secondly, "Indonesia is an industrial and agricultural country, where more than half of the gross domestic product comes from industry, agriculture and fishing, where the main industries are oil and gas processing, metallurgy, machine building, chemical, food and textile industries"<sup>72</sup> . And which is very interested in a significant increase in economic cooperation with Belarus, in increasing the supply of potassium chloride, automotive and tractor machinery, and dairy products from our country. In November 2019, at the Belarusian-Indonesian forum held in Minsk, which was

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70 On the Seventh Session of the Belarus-Indonesia Joint Commission on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/ee2bb4e24073dbac.html](https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ee2bb4e24073dbac.html).

71 Belarus and Indonesia agree to intensify trade and investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-indoneziija-dogovorilis-aktivizirovat-torgovoe-i-investitsionnoe-vzaimodejstvie-271768-2017/>

72 Zaleski, B. Partnership Journalism. Theory and practice / B. Zaleskiy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2013. - C. 69.

attended by more than 30 enterprises and organizations from the two countries, it was noted that "the government's goal to reach \$1 billion in mutual trade turnover between Belarus and Indonesia is quite realistic for the near future"<sup>73</sup>.

It is true that in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between the countries was only 181 million dollars, which, according to the parties, was not in line with the partnership's existing potential. But already then 25 new items were supplied to the Indonesian market. In 2021 the trade turnover already reached 232.3 million dollars with the share of Belarusian exports exceeding two hundred million dollars. At the same time there was "a more than twofold increase in non-resource exports to Indonesia, including more than fourfold increase in dairy products"<sup>74</sup>. So a further increase in Belarusian-Indonesian trade continues to be a priority area for bilateral cooperation that needs to be filled with new content. This was the main topic of the seventh session of the Joint committee, which reached the following specific results: adoption of the Action plan on development of key areas of cooperation for 2022-2023; decision to create a working group in the field of agriculture, the first meeting of which will be held during the Belagro-2022 international agricultural exhibition; agreement on holding a joint meeting on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Belarusian-Indonesian diplomatic relations in 2023.

It should be noted that the signed memorandums have complemented the contractual legal base of bilateral relations, which

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73 BelCCI: Increasing trade turnover with Indonesia to \$1 billion is a realistic task for the near future [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beltpu-uvlichenie-tovarooborota-s-indoneziej-do-1-mlrd-realnaja-zadacha-na-blizhajshuju-perspektivu-368953-2019/>

74 Trade and economic relations with the Republic of Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/be/bilateral\\_relations/trade\\_economic/](http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/be/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/)

already consists of over 30 documents, in the area that is extremely relevant for the Belarusian side today. The first memorandum signed by the State Committee for Standardization of the Republic of Belarus (Gosstandart) and Indonesian National Agency for Standardization stipulates not only exchange of information and experience, but also implementation of joint activities and projects. In particular, the Belarusian side is interested in official dissemination of national Indonesian standards in Belarus. The second document signed by Belarus State Standard and Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs concerns cooperation in the field of quality assurance of halal products and readiness of the Belarusian partners "to demonstrate to their colleagues from Indonesia the infrastructure of quality halal products created in the country, to confirm the possibility of implementing Indonesian requirements for halal products and conduct necessary conformity assessment procedures in Belarus"<sup>75</sup>. An important detail: the only halal certification body in our country - BelHalal Ltd. - has already submitted the necessary documents for registration in the Indonesian national halal certification system. And the signed memorandum should officially start the process of its accreditation in this country of Southeast Asia.

Speaking about other areas of the food sector, a number of Belarusian companies have already been accredited as suppliers of dairy products to Indonesia. In particular, "the products of Savushkin Product OJSC, Babushkina krynka OJSC, Verkhnedvinskiy butter and cheese factory OJSC have received the

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<sup>75</sup> Belarus and Indonesia sign memorandums on standardisation and quality assurance [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-indoneziya-podpisali-memorandumy-v-oblasti-standartizatsii-i-obespecheniya-kachestva-497060-2022>

necessary certificates and have already entered the high-capacity Indonesian food market"<sup>76</sup> . And this is immediately reflected in the results of Belarusian-Indonesian bilateral trade in 2021. The company Bellakt OJSC is ready to "work on the issues of product supplies to Indonesia, as well as expand the product range and work on the supply of baby food"<sup>77</sup> , as well as Milkavita OJSC, Glubokoe Dairy Factory OJSC and some other enterprises that participated in the third Belarusian-Indonesian video conference on business and trade, held in December 2020 and dedicated to promoting export of dairy products from Belarus to Indonesia. Halal product exporters from Belarus should now become growth points in this regard, complementing such traditional positions as potash chloride and dump trucks.

Speaking about other areas of Belarusian-Indonesian cooperation, we would like to remind that in February 2021, the National Marketing Center of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry and the Indonesia Trade, Tourism and Investment Club signed a memorandum on cooperation and mutual support in the development of trade and economic relations. The Belarusian side sees its goals in the context of this document as "to activate contracts on a legal basis, exchange information on bilateral export and import supplies, and deepen cooperation between our countries."<sup>78</sup> . The

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76 Kolesnik, V. Indonesia and Belarus: from potassium chloride and BELAZes to tourism market revival / V. Kolesnik // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/indonezija-i-belarus-ot-hloristogo-kalija-i-belazov-do-ozhivlenija-turisticheskogo-rynka-473916-2021>

77 The third Belarusian-Indonesian video conference on business and trade is devoted to the dairy sector [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://ncmps.by/news/tretva-belorussko-indonezijskava-videokonferentsiya-po-voprosam-biznesa-i-torgovli-posvashchena-mol/>

78 Belarus and Indonesia sign memorandum on trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-indonezija-podpisali-memorandum-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskom-sotrudnichestve-426979-2021/>



development of partnership relations between the regions of the two countries has great potential in this regard. The more so since "interaction has already been established between the Brest region and West Sumatra province, Mogilev region and South Sumatra province, Minsk region and East Kalimantan and East Java provinces as well as the cities of Minsk and Jakarta"<sup>79</sup> . With the help of regional branches of chambers of commerce and industry, interaction with such provinces as Central Java, North Sumatra, West Nusa Tenggara, the special district of Yogyakarta, where they see considerable potential for development of trade and economic cooperation, educational and tourist exchanges with Belarusian partners, is also established.

For example, the Brest Region and the province of West Sumatra announced their intention to establish close contacts back in November 2015. Such areas as "fish farming, processing industry, tourism, healthcare, pharmacy" were named as promising for mutually beneficial cooperation then<sup>80</sup> . Some other Indonesian provinces have been familiar with Belarusian automobile manufacturer's products for a long time. Thus, since 2012, the Indonesian province of East Kalimantan has been successfully operating a batch of nine Belarusian dump trucks with a payload capacity of 45 tonnes. In 2016-2017, the province of South Sumatra received 40 dump trucks with a payload capacity of 110 tonnes for the needs of PT Bukit Asam, the largest state-owned coal mining

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79 Kolesnik, V. Indonesia and Belarus: from potassium chloride and BELAZes to tourism market revival / V. Kolesnik // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/indonezija-i-belarus-ot-hloristogo-kalija-i-belazov-do-ozhivlenija-turisticheskogo-rynka-473916-2021>

80 Vechorko, S. Brest region establishes cooperation with the Indonesian province of West Sumatra / S. Vechorko // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brestskaja-oblast-nalazhivaet-sotrudnichestvo-s-indonezijskoj-provintsiej-zapadnaja-sumatra-59706-2014/>

company. In 2018-2019, seven more 130-tonne dump trucks were shipped to private coal mining company PT Tambang Raya Usaha Tama. And in 2020, "eight more 130-tonne BELAZ-75131 dump trucks started working in a coal mine on Kalimantan"<sup>81</sup>, where vehicles from Belarus with payload capacity from 45 to 130 tons were already in operation. The parties plan to actively continue this collaboration.

A logical continuation of cooperation between the Belarusian and Indonesian regions is developing partnerships in the educational sphere, where cooperation is based on signed agreements: on cooperation - between the Brest State Technical University and the Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology; on mutual understanding - between the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy and the Bogor Agricultural Institute; on exchange of students - between the Minsk State Linguistic University and the Minsk State Linguistic University. Over the past few years, the Belarusian State University, the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and the Grodno State Medical University have also found partners in this South-East Asian country.

In particular, in November 2020, a memorandum of understanding was signed by BSU and Airlangga University. The parties agreed to organise academic exchanges, implement joint educational and research projects, and exchange research materials. The first step towards implementing these agreements was "participation of BSU lecturers in DECOTA educational programme. It focuses on attracting renowned scientists to give

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81 Eight BELAZ dump trucks have started work in Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vosem-kariernyh-samosvalov-belaz-pristupili-k-rabote-v-indonezii-387074-2020/>

online lectures to Airlangga University students"<sup>82</sup> . And BSU students were offered free tuition for the Sura-Bali Community Immersion Program 2020, which involved studying Indonesian culture and tourism activities in the provinces of East Java and Bali. Note that this university is one of the oldest in Indonesia. It was founded in 1954 in Surabaya. There are 14 faculties: from medical and law, to sea, fishery, nursing and veterinary medicine. Nearly forty thousand students have got higher education. On a side note, the BSU has already had experience of cooperation with Indonesian partners. In particular, since 2016, Unitechprom BSU has been fulfilling a contract to supply medical equipment - spirometers - to Global systech medika from Jakarta.

In 2022, a number of other Belarusian universities signed documents on cooperation with Indonesian partners, which indicates further expansion of these relations. Thus, a cooperation agreement was signed in January 2022 by Minsk State Linguistic University (MSLU) and Veteran National Development University in Yogyakarta, outlining in this document the main directions of cooperation development: "opening of Center of Indonesian language and culture on the basis of MSLU; opening of Center of Belarusian culture and Russian language on the basis of UNR "Veteran"; teaching Indonesian language on an elective basis in MSLU; teaching Russian language and lecturing about Belarusian culture in UNR "Veteran"; conducting cultural events on the basis of

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82 Memorandum of Understanding signed between BGU and the University of Airlangga [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-podpisan-mezhdu-bgu-i-universitetom-airlangga-414083-2020/>

Center of Indonesian language and culture in MSLU"<sup>83</sup> . Here it is appropriate to add that UNR "Veteran" is one of the state universities in Indonesia. It is a patriotically oriented university actively building up its educational base. It has established the Faculties of Mineral Technology, Industrial Engineering, Agriculture, Economics and Business, and Social and Political Sciences. The educational institution is active in research and broadcasts its civic position.

Also in January 2022, the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy (BSAA) and Indonesia's Tidar University signed a memorandum of cooperation. And already in March, the first lectures on sustainable agriculture were delivered to Indonesian and Belarusian students, a topic of particular relevance in modern conditions, as "progress in the development of agricultural production inevitably leads to such global problems as climate change, development of soil degradation processes, soil salinization <...> and therefore requires close attention from the entire academic and scientific community".<sup>84</sup> [14]. In this regard, both sides expressed their desire to make cooperation between the BGSAA and Tidar University as useful as possible in solving both local and global problems related to finding ways to mitigate climate change and providing sufficient food to the residents of Belarus and Indonesia.

The contest of joint Belarusian-Indonesian projects for the years 2021-2022 that was launched by the State Committee on

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83 Collaboration with Veteran University in Yogyakarta, Republic of Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.mslu.by/news/sotrudnichestvo-s-universitetom-veteran-v-dzhok-yakarte-respublika-indoneziya>

84 Noskova, S.A. Indonesia - Belarus: mutual interest / S.A. Noskova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [http://baa.by/news/?ELEMENT\\_ID=5208](http://baa.by/news/?ELEMENT_ID=5208)

Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia together with the Indonesian National Agency of Research and Innovation should play an important role in enhancing scientific and technological ties between the two countries. Priority areas of the competition include: "health and medicine (raw materials, including natural ones, for pharmaceuticals; medical equipment, stem cells); emergency management and nature management; machine technologies for industry (energy optimization, food industry, computer modeling in engineering)"<sup>85</sup>.

Additional opportunities for the expansion of cooperation between Belarus and Indonesia are offered by the fact that the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and this Southeast Asian country are actively working towards the conclusion of a free trade agreement. The parties signed a memorandum of cooperation in October 2019, thereby confirming the agreement that "this document will contribute to building an effective infrastructure for the development of trade and economic cooperation."<sup>86</sup> It formed the basis of a working group that focused on issues such as trade facilitation, customs and technical regulations, and the development of financial markets. In mid-April 2022, the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission approved a draft decision on concluding a free trade agreement with Indonesia. The agreement itself is expected to be signed in May 2022 at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council. In this regard, Belarus has considerable

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85 Contest of joint Belarusian-Indonesian scientific and technical projects for 2021-2022. [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://science.bsuir.by/ru/konkursy-i-grantv/konkurs-belorussko-indonezijskikh-proektov>

86 Zalesky, B. Integration as a factor of development. Features of regional cooperation in the post-Soviet space / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 62.

prospects of supplying cargo, agricultural and special machinery, X-ray equipment, bleached pulp, laminated plywood to Indonesia at reduced customs duties. For reference, traditional commodity items imported into this country are oil and oil products, telephone sets, wheat, computers and computer units, sugar and chemically pure sucrose. New ones are being added to these today, in keeping with the spirit of the times. For this reason, "certain successes can be achieved by producers of urban electric transport, as a programme to renew the public transport fleet is being implemented in major cities in Indonesia, and Belarusian companies have the opportunity to offer competitive and environmentally friendly goods"<sup>87</sup>.

All of these facts suggest that in the near future Indonesia may become Belarus' most important partner not only in Southeast Asia, but also in the entire Asia-Pacific region. At least, all necessary prerequisites for this are already in place.

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<sup>87</sup> National Centre for Marketing on the prospects of promotion of Belarusian goods to Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/natsionalnyj-tsentr-marketinga-o-perspektivah-prodvizhenija-belorusskikh-tovarov-v-indoneziju-8163/>

## **Aim to enhance scientific and technical cooperation**

In March 2022, the 15th meeting of **the Belarus-Vietnam** intergovernmental commission on trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation set specific directions of further interaction for 2022-2023 in virtually all spheres of the bilateral partnership, including science and technology, where many interesting results have been achieved over the past 30 years.

Scientific and technological cooperation between Belarus and Vietnam is based on the intergovernmental agreement on scientific and technological cooperation of June 5, 1995. The legal framework in this area already includes a number of agreements in various spheres of scientific and technological cooperation. And it continues to expand. In 2020, the National Economic University of Hanoi conducted a study, which showed that "scientific and technical organizations and enterprises of Vietnam are most interested in the following forms of cooperation with Belarus: exchange of scientific and technical information; exchange of specialists; implementation of joint scientific and technical projects; technology transfer"<sup>88</sup>.

<sup>89</sup>The fact that the Belarusian exposition at the 31st international exhibition Vietnam Expo in Hanoi in April 2022 included more than a hundred innovations in hi-tech equipment, about 30 of which were developed by the Belarusian State University - food supplements, pharmaceutical products,

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88 Potential BSUIR partners in Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2022. – URL: <https://iti.bsuir.by/files/science/%D0%9F%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%8B%20%D0%B2%D0%BE%20%D0%92%D1%8C%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B5.pdf>

89 Zalessky, B.L. From trust and respect to joint economic projects / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVIII International scientific and practical conference "Cutting-edge science - 2022", April 30 - May 7, 2022: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 42.

technological equipment, etc., shows the seriousness of the cooperation with this South-East Asian country in the scientific and technical field. The Belarusian State University was one of the co-founders of the Belarusian-Vietnamese Innovation and Education Centre established in 2012 together with Binh Duong University and Vietnamese company Venture Capital & Equity Investment Holding Inc.; since that time many joint projects in priority directions of scientific and technological activities aimed at "expanding and deepening scientific knowledge, being innovative in the design and methods of research, having scientific and practical importance" have been implemented<sup>90</sup>. Among them are "Creating a composition of cellulolytic strains effective for degradation of plant residues", "Investigation of possibilities to obtain new fermented products from vegetable raw materials of Vietnam", "Cross-cultural differences in perception of visual-image information between Belarusian and Vietnamese businessmen". The Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, whose partners are the Ho Chi Minh Polytechnic University, Le Quy Don State Technical University, Hanoi University of Technology, Hanoi Power University, the Research Institute of Electronics, Information Technology and Automation of Vietnam, the Institute of Tropical Technologies of the Vietnam Academy of Sciences, Binh Duong University, are very actively cooperating with the Vietnamese side.

Active work on the establishment of joint research centres and laboratories with Vietnamese partners in the most promising fields is also underway at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB), which by spring 2022 had "jointly implemented over 100

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90 Belarusian-Vietnamese Innovation, Education and Science and Technology Centre [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [http://research.bsu.by/innovative-activity/int\\_sci\\_tech\\_cooperation/inter-innov-centre/belvietnam-centre/](http://research.bsu.by/innovative-activity/int_sci_tech_cooperation/inter-innov-centre/belvietnam-centre/)



projects and published about 150 scientific papers"<sup>91</sup> . In April 2022 the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology agreed to develop a roadmap of scientific and technical cooperation, which will include promising research areas of mutual interest. The first stage of this cooperation will be to activate the work of already existing joint structures. These include a joint centre for the development and production of technologies in the field of instrumentation and machine building, energy and chemical products, as well as a joint technology transfer centre and a joint laboratory on laser physics, engineering and technology. The parties are also discussing the possibility of creating new entities, one of which could become a Belarusian-Vietnamese tropical research and technology centre, where the Belarusian side could partner with the Central Botanical Gardens of the National Academy of Sciences. In the future, they are planning to start working on a dozen of new projects, from nanoindustry, composite materials and additive technologies, mechanical engineering, mechatronics and robotics to functional food and medicinal products, and a wide range of bio-products. A special role here should be played by new materials, which are the future in various spheres of the economy"<sup>92</sup> . Annual grant competitions for scientific projects also play an important role in enhancing cooperation between Belarus and Vietnam in the field of science and technology. There were three of them at once in 2020: the Joint Contest of Basic

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91 On a meeting at the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://vietnam.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/ceca12ba12b7979e.html>

92 Scientists of Belarus and Vietnam to develop a roadmap for scientific and technical cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/uchenye-belarusi-i-vietnama-razrabotajut-dorozhnyuju-kartu-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-497257-2022/>

Research Projects of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology "NASB (BRFFI)-VAST-2021"; the Joint Belarusian-Vietnamese Scientific Projects Contest "BRFFI-VAST-2021"; the Belarusian-Vietnamese Scientific and Technical Projects Contest for 2021-2022 under the aegis of the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus and the Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam. The experience has shown that this partnership format should only be developed to open up new opportunities of scientific search.

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## To achieve a strategic relationship

In November 2022, New Delhi hosted the 11th meeting of **the Belarusian-Indian** Intergovernmental Commission for Cooperation in Trade, Economy, Industry, Science, Technology and Culture, where the parties analyzed the results achieved and identified promising projects in strategic areas of cooperation. While discussing the agenda of the Commission it was noted that over the last 30 years the Belarusian-Indian cooperation has become stronger in virtually all spheres of mutual interest and has reached a high quality and efficient level of bilateral contacts. And this despite considerable geographical distance between the two countries. Nevertheless, "Belarus views the development of full-fledged cooperation with India as one of the priorities of its foreign policy"<sup>93</sup>. And in this connection the Belarusian government has approved a roadmap to develop key areas of cooperation with this South Asian state, which is reflected in the minutes of the 11th meeting of the commission, and which considers "a full range of issues of bilateral cooperation, primarily in developing cooperation in logistics, industrial cooperation, agriculture, finance, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, science, education, tourism and other fields"<sup>94</sup>. It is about significant Belarusian-Indian projects in the trade, economic and investment sectors that can be implemented through joint efforts of the partners in various areas.

First, speaking of trade cooperation, let us recall that in 2021, the bilateral trade turnover between Belarus and India amounted to

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93 Makiej: Despite the difficult global situation, cooperation with India is positive. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/makej-nesmotrija-na-slozhnuiu-obschemirovuiu-situatsiiu-sotrudnichestvo-s-indiej-idet-v-pozitivnom-534208-2022/>

94 Agreements at ministerial and big business level. Makeya's visit to India [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/dogovorennosti-na-urovne-ministerstv-i-krupnogo-biznesa-sostojsja-vizit-makeja-v-indiju-534194-2022/>

USD 567 million. At the same time, "potash fertilizers traditionally account for the largest share of Belarus's export to India, followed by nitrogen fertilizers, tyre raw materials and some types of steel. India mostly supplies Belarus with medicines, raw materials for tobacco products, processed tobacco products, cotton yarn, electric transformers, tea, coffee, rice and some nylon products"<sup>95</sup>. At its 11th session, the Belarusian side has focused on increasing the supply of potash fertilizers to India, as well as exports of dump trucks, agricultural products, linen fabric, medicines, petrochemicals and wood processing products. In particular, the Belarusian Automobile Plant (BELAZ) is actively developing exports of its products to the Indian market, having sent a new shipment of vehicles to India in August 2022. "This time the Indian consumer has chosen the 220-tonne dump trucks BELAZ-7530 series. The technical solutions used in heavy trucks are maximally adapted to the conditions of their operation. The trucks are equipped with high-performance air conditioning system, the system of control of loading and fuel, the system of active video - 360 degrees, the system of smart light"<sup>96</sup>. It remains to add that during two and a half years mine dump trucks BELAZ with payload capacity of 136 tons work in conditions of extremely high temperatures - up to 50 degrees - in a coal mine in Chhattisgarh state of India. And the Belarusian equipment has proved its worth.

Second, the Belarusian partners are ready "to support the growing Indian industrial cluster, including participation in

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95 Ambassador: India and Belarus seek ways to overcome difficulties in mutual trade. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-indija-i-belarus-ischut-puti-preodolenija-slozhnostej-vo-vzaimnoj-torgovle-518941-2022/>.

96 BELAZ develops product deliveries to India [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-razvivaet-postavki-produktsii-v-indiju-517579-2022/>

government programmes such as 'Made in India' and modernisation of the Indian agricultural sector. Both sides are moving towards the establishment of assembly facilities in India for Belarusian tractors, combines and other agricultural machinery.<sup>97</sup> . Thirdly, Belarusian specialists can help develop India's urban infrastructure under the state programme Smart Cities and export eco-friendly electric buses, which are produced by Belarus' leading companies - Minsk Automobile Works and Belkommunmash. Fourth, there are interesting plans of the two sides to further develop economic cooperation in the agricultural sector, including exchange of technologies and know-how in crop cultivation and expansion of supplies of a range of Belarusian meat and dairy products to the Indian market.

Fifth, Belarus and India have been very effective in developing science, technology and innovation ties. In particular, "high-tech exports to India in 2021 totaled \$343.1 million"<sup>98</sup> . And now the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus and the Ministry of Science and Technology of India are holding a tender for joint Belarusian-Indian science and technology projects for 2022-2023 in such areas as information and communication technologies with a focus on artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, machine learning, cloud services, new materials, biotechnology, including medicine and pharmaceuticals. Sixth, as for the Indian side, it has three ideas that have great potential for

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97 Belarus and India conclude work on launching a direct flight between the capitals [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-india-zavershajut-rabotu-po-zapusku-priamogo-reisa-mezhdu-stolitsami-534209-2022/>  
98 Belarus and India intend to develop science, technology and innovation cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-india-namereny-razvivat-nauchno-tehnicheskoe-i-innovatsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-501726-2022/>

cooperation with Belarus. "The first one is tourism. The second is IT, IT opportunities, and the third is current developments and production."<sup>99</sup> .

Overall, the 11th meeting of the intergovernmental commission showed that "India is among those partner countries of Belarus in Asia, large-scale interaction with which is developing in all areas of cooperation"<sup>100</sup> to eventually achieve strategic relations between Minsk and New Delhi.

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99 Tourism, IT, advanced developments. In which areas India is interested in cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turizm-it-peredovye-razrabotki-v-kakih-sferah-indija-zainteresovana-v-sotrudnichestve-s-belarusiju-503301-2022/>

100 Zalessky, B.L. Indian direction of Belarusian regions / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Naukowa przestrzeń Europy - 2022", Volume 2. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 10.

## Partnerships to a new level

**Pakistan is one of** the most important partners of Belarus in Asia, which fits into Belarus's strategy of export diversification and development of long-distance arc cooperation. Pakistan is a friendly country with good industrial potential and a market. Its population is over 200 million people. Pakistan has a well-developed agriculture, which makes it possible to organize cooperation in the supply of engineering and processing products. As for Belarusian-Pakistani trade and economic relations, "in recent years the trade volume between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has been fluctuating in the range of \$50 to \$65 million.<sup>101</sup> . But in 2021 the trade turnover between them increased by over 77 per cent at once and exceeded \$92 million with a surplus of \$63.6 million for the Belarusian side. The Belarusian exports are based on "tractors and spare parts, potash fertilizers, specific goods, synthetic threads, cellulose, dairy products, medicines, and diesel engines"<sup>102</sup> .

In the next few years, Minsk and Islamabad intend to make the necessary efforts to bring their partnership to a qualitatively new level. As for Belarus, it intends to promote its goods and services in the Pakistani market in two ways. The first way is to increase trade in traditional goods - automobiles, mining and construction equipment, products of instrument making, woodworking, meat, dairy, chemical, pharmaceutical and pulp and paper industries. The second route is the supply of new commodity items - metal products,

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<sup>101</sup> Trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade-and-economic-bilateral-relations/>

<sup>102</sup> Ambassador of Pakistan: agriculture and industry are our key points of interest in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-pakistana-selskoe-hozjajstvo-i-promyshlennost-nashi-kluchevye-tochki-interesa-v-belarusi-494952-2022/>

flax fiber and yarn, as well as "including consumer goods such as soft cheeses, perfumes and cosmetics, household appliances, baby products and watches"<sup>103</sup>.

In January 2023, Minsk hosted the sixth meeting of the joint **Belarusian-Pakistani** commission for trade and economic cooperation, at which the parties proposed to intensify bilateral cooperation both in terms of increasing trade turnover and investment cooperation, as "the two countries have good prospects for transition from simple trade to industrial cooperation and establishment of joint productions in the areas of mutual interest"<sup>104</sup>. Specifically, the two countries have agreed to expand cooperation in a number of areas - mechanical engineering, agriculture, science, education and healthcare. For example, Belarus is interested in increasing supplies of industrial products to this South Asian country - Belarusian passenger vehicles, municipal vehicles, agricultural and quarry machinery, textile industry products. "Partnership in agriculture is among the priorities. And this is not only willingness to expand the supplies of Belarusian foodstuffs, but also livestock products: mixed fodders, protein supplements, veterinary preparations. The establishment of a permanent exhibition centre of Belarus in Pakistan will contribute to a more active promotion of Belarusian agribusiness products..."<sup>105</sup>. Another mutually beneficial

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103 National Centre for Marketing on the peculiarities of promotion of Belarusian goods on the market of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/natsionalnyi-tsentr-marketinga-ob-osobennostyah-prodvizheniya-belorusskikh-tovarov-na-rynok-pakistana-8188/>

104 Belarus is interested in supplying agribusiness products and agricultural machinery to Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-v-pakistan-produktsii-apk-i-selhoztehniki-544338-2023>

105 Belarus and Pakistan agree to expand cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-dogovorilis-o-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-544373-2023>



area is pharmaceuticals, because Belarus is interested in exporting medicines to Pakistan and is ready to consider setting up joint pharmaceutical production facilities.

At the 6th meeting of the joint commission, the sides also specifically discussed opportunities for cooperation in science and high technology. These are nano- and biotechnologies, laser optoelectronics, information and communication technologies, aerospace and geo-information systems. In this regard, in March 2023 in the Pakistani city of Karachi a national exposition of Belarus will be organized at the International Trade and Industry Fair. Recall that at a similar exhibition in November 2021 in Karachi on the collective stand of the State Committee on Science and Technology "was presented about 60 scientific, technical and innovative developments. Institutions of the Ministry of Education as well as organizations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus showed their exhibits in the field of surface treatment and modification, chemical technologies and materials, physical materials science and new materials"<sup>106</sup>. So, apparently, the dialogue between the parties will continue in the near future.

Finally, regional cooperation is gradually becoming another promising area of Belarusian-Pakistani partnership. The fact is that a number of agreements and memoranda between cities, provinces and regions of the two countries have already been signed. For example, the Grodno Region has great potential for cooperation with Pakistan. "The province of Sindh and the city of Karachi, which is the industrial centre of Pakistan, are very important strategic partners. A cooperation agreement was signed between the city of Karachi and

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<sup>106</sup> Zalesky, B.L. To promote domestic technologies / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XX Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2023", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 24.

the Grodno region in 2015"<sup>107</sup> . And the parties are now ready to renew the agreement and resume relations in all sectors: economy, business, culture and education. For instance, baby food produced by Bellakt is already well established in Pakistan, and these supplies can be increased. And since the Grodno Medical University has provided education for 122 Pakistani students. So the sides will actively continue their work to develop contacts. After all, this is only the beginning.

Another interesting idea that concerns Belarusian-Pakistani regional interaction is that Pakistan has nine special economic zones scheduled for construction in the near future, four of which are in a high degree of readiness. All of them are located in the Pakistan-China economic corridor and may be used to implement joint Pakistani-Belarusian projects. In particular, the parties are already discussing the establishment of an assembly facility of Minsk Tractor Plant in Pakistan, as well as joint ventures for the processing of dairy products. Therefore, one can predict that the partnership ties between Belarusian and Pakistani regions may soon result in new promising projects.

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107 Ambassador: Grodno Region has huge potential for cooperation with Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/posol-grodnenskaja-oblast-imeet-ogromnyi-potentsial-dlja-sotrudnichestva-s-pakistanom-515738-2022>

## The main thing is new points of growth

In November 2022, a Belarusian government delegation visited **Syria**, holding meetings and talks that will help expand and strengthen Belarusian-Syrian multifaceted cooperation. While discussing solutions that will allow the bilateral cooperation to reach a new, more productive level, the sides believe they have done "the most important thing - they have found new points for growth"<sup>108</sup> . After all, trade and economic cooperation between the two countries is developing today amid a difficult environment of economic sanctions against Syria, the destruction of transport and social infrastructure, an acute shortage of funds from the Syrian government and a decline in the purchasing power of the country's population. Nevertheless, "in 2021, the trade turnover between Belarus and Syria amounted to \$8.2 million (41.3% growth by 2020), exports - \$7.6 million (47.9% growth), imports - \$0.6 million (6.1% growth). The balance is positive - \$7.0 million. Belarus mainly exports to Syria specific goods, milk powder, milk whey, medicines, tractors and truck tractors, and imports olive oil, fruits and vegetables, nuts, coffee"<sup>109</sup> . But both countries are confident that there is still great potential for increasing the supply of machinery and expanding industrial co-operation. Let us remind that "the highest level of Belarus-Syria interaction was registered in

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108 Golovchenko: Belarus and Syria have found points of growth in bilateral relations [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-i-sirija-nashli-novye-tochki-rosta-v-dvustoronnih-otnoshenijah-536719-2022/>

109 Belarus and Syria intend to increase mutual trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-sirija-namereny-narastit-vzaimnyi-tovarooborot-536491-2022/>.

2008, when the volume of bilateral trade reached \$85.5 million"<sup>110</sup> . So it is time to talk about more serious joint projects with Syria.

Minsk and Damascus see the most urgent task in the current situation as developing trade and economic ties as quickly and extensively as possible. "From the Belarusian side, it is primarily technical assistance in the restoration of the Syrian economy and infrastructure after a decade of devastating war."<sup>111</sup> . And Belarus has a lot to offer Syrian friends. In this regard, it was interesting to see how Belarusian companies participated in the seventh international exhibition Rebuild SYRIA, which was held in the Syrian capital last fall.

Belarusian export-oriented enterprises from various sectors took part in the Belarusian exposition. They presented products required for the reconstruction of the Syrian economy, including novelties of production. After all, the country badly needs to restore its industry, agriculture, services, transport infrastructure, water and electricity supply systems, petrochemical industry, and telecommunications. "In this regard, Syria needs engineering solutions, agricultural and construction equipment, software, medical equipment, medicines, food (milk powder, milk whey, potatoes) and much more"<sup>112</sup> . In particular, there is demand in this Middle Eastern country for Belarusian products - glazed cheese and milkshakes, as well as butter. In general, "the Rebuild SYRIA

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110 Zalesky, B. Orientation - to result. Realizing the possibilities of international economic relations / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 42.

111 Ambassador: Syrian partners are interested in Belarusian technologies, knowledge and skills [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-sirijskie-partnery-zainteresovan-v-belorusskih-tehnologijah-znanijah-i-umenijah-536593-2022/>

112 Belarus to exhibit at Syria exhibition [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavit-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-v-sirii-516103-2022>

exhibition includes such thematic sections as energy, construction, mechanical engineering, petrochemicals, agriculture, food industry, environmental protection, information technology, insurance and banking, education, health care"<sup>113</sup> .

The Belarusian exposition was presented by such well-known exporters as Minsk Dairy Plant No.1, Rechitsa Metizny Plant, AMKODOR, Ivatsevichdrev, and Minsk Automobile Plant. In particular, Minsk dairy enterprise offered "Syrian consumers a wide range of products: milk, butter, cream, skimmed milk powder, whey, glazed curds, curd desserts, soft and hard cheeses. A special attention is paid to the novelty of the production - glazed curd cheeses without added sugar, the only such product in Belarus"<sup>114</sup> . Rechitsa Metizny Plant displayed metallurgical fastening products: nails, staples, bolts, screws, nuts, self-tapping screws, screws, rivets, axles and many others.

Machinery from the Minsk Automobile Plant was on display in the outdoor exhibition area: tippers, tractors, and concrete mixers. These machines are designed to perform a wide range of works and are suitable for the Siberian conditions of operation. For the record, Belarus has already provided humanitarian aid to Syria in June 2022. "A batch of MAZ trucks and construction machinery was handed over to the Syrian side. The Belarusian-made vehicles were used to

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113 Belarus to take part in international exhibition in Syria [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-v-sirii-519355-2022/>

114 Machine building, metallurgy, food: what Belarus presented at the exhibition in Syria [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mashinostroenie-metallurgii-produkty-pitanija-cto-predstavila-belarus-na-vystavke-v-sirii-526268-2022/>

restore the industrial and civil infrastructure in the hardest-hit areas of Syria."<sup>115</sup> .

Another growth point is innovative cooperation between Belarus and Syria. In August 2022, a meeting of the Belarusian-Syrian commission for cooperation in science and technology was held, where the participants "considered the issues of cooperation in nano- and biotechnologies, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, technology transfer in agriculture, food, medicine and pharmaceuticals"<sup>116</sup> . An agreement was reached to hold a competition for joint scientific and technical projects for 2023-2024 in promising areas of cooperation. This shows that the two countries are already establishing fruitful cooperation and transforming it into effective joint scientific and commercial projects.

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115 Syria discusses supplies of Belarusian-made equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/siriya-obsuzhdaet-postavki-telniki-belorusskogo-proizvodstva-534010-2022/>

116 SCST: The share of innovative companies in Belarus is about 30% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gknt-dolja-innovatsionnyh-kompanij-v-belarusi-sostavljaet-okolo-30-518618-2022/>

## New energy into positive collaborative dynamics

**Iran is one of Belarus'** most important partners in West Asia and the Islamic world. The countries established diplomatic relations in 1993. And by today, Belarusian-Iranian contacts are developing quite intensively. "In 2021, the bilateral trade between the two countries amounted to \$33.3 million, exceeding the previous year's figure by 34.7%, including Belarusian exports - \$14 million, growth rate - 10.2%. <...> Last year, exports of services from Belarus to Iran reached \$3.35 million. The balance of trade in services for Belarus is positive at \$2.8 million"<sup>117</sup>. The key Belarusian exports to Iran were equipment for the production of articles of paper pulp, specific goods, longitudinally sawn timber, newsprint in rolls or sheets, equipment for the thermal treatment of materials, reciprocating internal combustion engines, bearings.

In July 2022, the **15th meeting of the mixed Belarusian-Iranian commission for economic cooperation** was held, where the sides discussed successful bilateral projects and reached certain agreements on the implementation of joint promising activities. Minsk and Tehran are interested in increasing trade turnover between the two countries. In the best years, the sides reached \$250-300 million. "Therefore, we intend to reach a trade turnover of around \$500 million in a short period of time. And there are all the prerequisites for that"<sup>118</sup>. Iranian Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade S. Amin even predicted even higher figures in the medium

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117 NCM on peculiarities of doing business in the Iranian market and promotion of export of Belarusian goods and services [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/ntsm-ob-osobennostyah-vedeniya-biznesa-na-rynke-irana-i-prodvizhenii-eksporta-belorusskih-tovarov-i-uslug-8226/>

118 Parkhomchik: Belarus and Iran are interested in enhancing industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/parhomchik-belarus-i-iran-zainteresovany-v-naraschivanii-sotrudnichestva-v-promyshlennosti-516021-2022/>

term and expressed confidence that "we plan to increase cooperation in various fields. All this will enable us to reach a \$1 billion trade turnover in the near future".<sup>119</sup> .

Iran is showing keen interest in Belarusian industrial products, agricultural machinery, machine tools, passenger vehicles, electric vehicles, and household appliances. There are great opportunities to expand supplies of Belarusian machinery to the Iranian **mining industry**. The more so because this sector is rapidly developing in Iran. In particular, Iran is interested in large supplies of Belarusian Automobile Plant (BELAZ) quarry machinery. After all, the country has huge reserves of copper, which is now a strategic raw material for the production of electric transport. "For the last ten years, BELAZ machinery has been very much in demand in the Iranian market. It is reliable and has shown itself only from a good side"<sup>120</sup> . Since Iran is planning to ramp up production in the mining sector, the country would like to receive another 800 or so dump trucks. First of all, the Iranian partners are interested in dump trucks with a payload capacity of 90-130 tonnes.

And Iranian **investment projects** are attracting interest in Belarus. In particular, in the free economic zone (FEZ) Vitebsk, the first resident in 2022 "became BRR Arshie Eco Health LLC, an enterprise with Iranian capital for the production of biodegradable tableware and packaging"<sup>121</sup> . In July 2022 another resident of FEZ

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119 Iran's Industry Minister: trade turnover with Belarus may reach \$1 billion in the near future [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ministr-promyshlennosti-irana-tovarooborot-s-belarusiju-v-blizhajshee-vremja-mozhet-dostich-1-mlrd-516242-2022/>

120 Iran is interested in major deliveries of BELAZ mining equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/iran-zainteresovan-v-krupnyh-postavkah-karjernoj-tehniki-belaz-516134-2022/>

121 Zalesky, B.L. FEZ "Vitebsk": optimization with a view to result / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Vedecky pokrok na



Vitebsk became Belarusian-Iranian Oriye Galvamedal LLC. The company was set up to build a hot-dip galvanizing plant near the village of Farinovo, Polotsk District. The site has good infrastructure facilities; now the founders are getting down to pre-project preparation and design of the facility. It is planned to purchase Iranian equipment for the production. It will take about 2-3 years to erect and put into operation the plant. The enterprise will be built near the Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Metalware, whose products are also to be processed. "We are talking about cable bearing structures, road barriers and other products used in road construction and operated in corrosive environments"<sup>122</sup>. There are also plans to process welded lattice decking, which the Process Steelwork plant will start producing in the first quarter of 2021.

Cooperation between Belarus and Iran in **agriculture and food** will also be an important area for the development of trade and economic cooperation in the coming years. The Belarusian side believes that Iran can be regarded as a promising area for increasing domestic export of dairy and meat products - beef, butter, chicken meat, chicken and quail eggs, as well as vegetable oil, compound feed and premixes for animals, complex technical products, innovative developments in the food industry and agriculture. "In 2021, mutual trade turnover of agricultural and food products was \$10.9 million, an increase of 22 per cent from 2020"<sup>123</sup>. The parties

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prelomu tysyachalety - 2022". Volume 5: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 22.

122 A Belarusian-Iranian tandem of investors will build a hot dip galvanising plant in FEZ Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/belorusko-iranskij-tandem-investorov-postroit-zavod-gorjachego-tsinkovanija-v-sez-vitebsk-513958-2022/>

123 Belarus plans to supply crop, meat and dairy products to Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-postavljat-v-iran-rastenievodcheskuju-mjasnuiu-i-molochnuiu-produksiju-492495-2022/>

plan to further increase trade and economic cooperation in agriculture and food, including the organization of supplies of Belarusian crop, meat and dairy products, as well as animal feed and premixes to Iran, and counter deliveries - of vegetables, fruit, fish and seafood - from Iran to Belarus.

In November 2022, the Belarusian government delegation visited Iran, where various meetings and negotiations at the interstate level took place, which noted that the engagement between the two countries is currently characterized by high development dynamics in virtually all areas. Specifically, this year Minsk and Tehran "have significantly increased the scope of cooperation in many areas, from commodity turnover to cargo flows and freight turnover"<sup>124</sup>. But it appears that the two sides still need to take a number of steps, conclude important documents, and conduct many new activities in order to realize the full potential that Belarus and Iran have in industry, science, and technology, and agree on the approaches laid out in the draft roadmap for comprehensive cooperation for 2023-2026. We must say that during the first three quarters of 2022, trade between the two countries "grew to \$63.6 million (2.9 times more than in the same period of 2021), exports - to \$48.6 million (4.4 times more), imports - to \$15 million (a 41.8% increase). The balance is positive - \$33.6 million".<sup>125</sup>

An important event in the relations between the two countries was the **Iran-Belarus Business Forum** held in the Iranian capital in

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124 Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Iran can achieve more in trade, economic and investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10474>

125 Golovchenko: the positions of Belarus and Iran coincide across the full range of issues on the economic agenda [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-pozitsii-belarusi-i-irana-sovpadajut-po-vsemu-krugu-voprosov-ekonomicheskoi-povestki-dnia-536376-2022/>

November 2022, organized by the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, "which has been the main partner of BCCI in Iran for 20 years"<sup>126</sup>. More than 120 executives and representatives of Belarusian and Iranian companies took part in this forum. Exporters from the fields of industrial production and mechanical engineering, woodworking, light and food industry were represented from Belarus. The Iranian side suggested a number of measures to stimulate mutual trade. These include: empowering small and medium-sized enterprises of the two countries, strengthening banking and insurance cooperation, identifying new joint projects, developing and simplifying visas for businessmen and tourists, creating the necessary infrastructure for the development of economic relations, especially in the commercial, industrial and technical sectors. In addition, it was announced "the opening of a \$100 million credit line for Belarusian traders interested in buying Iranian products"<sup>127</sup>. Following the business forum, the parties signed a number of joint documents. In particular, an agreement on cooperation was adopted by the BelCCI and the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, which "will give a new impetus to the development of relations between the two countries"<sup>128</sup>.

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126 Iran-Belarus Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.cci.by/o-palate/novosti/iransko-belorusskiv-biznes-forum/#>

127 The Iran-Belarus Business Forum takes place in Tehran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://iran.ru/news/analitics/121826/V\\_Tegerane\\_prohodit\\_irano\\_belorusskiv\\_biznes\\_forum](https://iran.ru/news/analitics/121826/V_Tegerane_prohodit_irano_belorusskiv_biznes_forum)

128 Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Belarus and Iran sign cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/torgovo-promyshlennye-palaty-belarusi-i-irana-podpisali-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-536244-2022/>

With regard to cooperation between Minsk and Tehran in **the scientific sphere**, a number of contracts, agreements and memoranda have already been signed between institutes of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Belarus and scientific organizations and universities in Iran. For instance, "according to the agreement on scientific and technical cooperation between the NAS and the Islamic Azad University, 16 Iranian scientists have graduated and defended PhD theses at the postgraduate courses of the scientific organizations of the Academy of Sciences"<sup>129</sup>. But the sides intend to expand joint efforts to work on specific scientific areas and projects. To this end, in May 2022 the Belarusian side offered its Iranian partners a package of proposals on which they could work together to achieve effective results. Among them are new materials and technologies, production of pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical products, technologies and equipment for comprehensive treatment of drinking water, mineral processing technologies, unmanned aerial vehicles, training and exchange of students, internships for scientists and teachers. It is planned that a draft roadmap for cooperation with scientific organisations in Iran will be developed at the initiative of the National Academy of Sciences, which will include promising areas of mutual interest.

In March 2023, the two countries marked a milestone date - the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. That same month in Tehran, the presidents of Belarus and Iran signed **a roadmap for comprehensive cooperation** between the two countries for 2023-2026, which envisages cooperation between

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129 The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus will develop a draft roadmap for cooperation with scientific organisations in Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/nan-belarusi-razrabotaet-proekt-dorozhnoj-karty-sotrudnichestva-s-nauchnymi-organizatsijami-irana-500275-2022/>

Minsk and Tehran in a wide range of areas - political, economic, consular, scientific and technical areas, as well as in education, culture, arts, media and tourism. This document has become one of the most important elements of the legal framework for cooperation between Belarus and Iran. For reference, we note that "the Belarusian-Iranian legal register includes more than 30 international treaties and over 70 other documents"<sup>130</sup>. In March, eight more were added to their number, including: an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in plant quarantine and plant protection and an agreement on the transfer of people sentenced to imprisonment for further serving of a sentence; memoranda of understanding between the Belarusian Ministry of Culture and the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, and between the Belarusian State Committee for Standardization and the Iranian National Organization for Standardization.

Speaking about the Memorandum on **Standardization**, we emphasize that this document provides for interaction of the parties in the field of conformity assessment procedures, standards and technical regulations for issuing Halal certificates and their mutual recognition on the products manufactured and mutually supplied by the countries. "At the same time, the mutual recognition of the results of halal certification applies only to certificates issued by the relevant bodies of the parties: the Iranian National Organization for Standardization (INSO) and BelHalal Ltd. The parties also plan to exchange experience and knowledge in the field of technology, competencies, infrastructure facilities, as well as research and

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130 Koltsov: the Belarusian-Iranian legal register includes more than 30 international treaties and 70 other documents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/koltsov-belorussko-iranskij-pravovoj-reestr-vkliuchaet-bolee-30-mezhdunarodnyh-dogovorov-i-70-drugih-554851-2023/>

development related to halal products"<sup>131</sup> . In addition, the parties reached promising agreements in industry, trade, transport and agriculture. This shows that for Belarus, Iran is the most important partner in the Middle East. And the two sides are interested in mutually beneficial long-term cooperation in a number of areas.

Let us emphasize once again that over the last two years the relations between Belarus and Iran have demonstrated a major breakthrough. "In 2021, trade turnover between the countries exceeded \$33 million, an increase of more than a third compared to 2020. But over the past year, the level of trade added even more significantly: in 2022, Belarus and Iran traded over \$100 million, a threefold increase"<sup>132</sup> . **Economic cooperation** remains the key area of Belarus-Iran interaction. And there is confidence that the potential of the bilateral cooperation will allow increasing the trade turnover in the next few years. In particular, "new supplies of quarry machinery, cargo and passenger vehicles to Iran are being actively discussed. Work is continuing on the details of a licensing agreement to organise the joint assembly of tractors in Iran"<sup>133</sup> . Another interesting fact: enterprises of the Bellesbumprom Concern increased exports to this Middle Eastern country by 2.3 times in 2022. "Positive dynamics was also observed in January of this year.

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131 Belarus and Iran will mutually recognise the results of certification of halal products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-iran-budut-vzaimno-priznavat-rezultatv-sertifikatsii-haljalnoj-produktsii-555113-2023/>

132 Raisi: Iran-Belarus relations show breakthrough [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/raisi-otnoshenija-mezhdu-iranom-i-belarusiju-prodemonstirovali-prorvv-555018-2023/>

133 Rogozhnik: the potential of Belarus and Iran allows for a significant increase in mutual trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rogozhnik-potentsialy-belarusi-i-irana-pozvoliajut-znachitelno-udelichit-vzaimnyi-tovarooborot-554952-2023/>

The growth rate amounted to 134% compared to January 2022. Pulp, paper and cardboard and lumber are actively supplied to Iran" .<sup>134</sup>

Belarus and Iran are also developing cooperation in **the transport sector**. In March 2023, the two countries agreed on a permit-free system for road transport of goods. Apparently, "already in 2023, road carriers will be able to transport cargo without permits <...>. From 26 March this year Iranian airline Mahan Air will start regular flights twice a week on the Tehran-Minsk-Tehran route"<sup>135</sup> . The transport theme is continued by the fact that Belarus, together with Iran, will take part in the development of the international North-South transport corridor. After all, "the Iranian side needs to build about 180 kilometres of railway today. And the Iranian side has actively embarked on this work to complete the North-South railway corridor in the direction of the port of Bandar Abbas."<sup>136</sup> . This project is quite important for Belarus, as it actualizes Belarusian transit via Iran to distant countries.

Another important topic in the context of Belarusian-Iranian engagement is the development of active **interregional dialogue**. In this regard, we should remind that "relations between the Gomel Region and Mazandaran Province, the Mogilev Region and Eastern Azerbaijan, and the Minsk Region and the Iranian capital region are developing. Ties have been established between Minsk and Tehran,

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134 Enterprises of Bellesbumprom increased exports to Iran 2.3 times last year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriatiia-bellesbumproma-v-proshlom-godu-uvlechili-eksport-v-iran-v-23-raza-555029-2023/>

135 Belarus and Iran agree on a permit-free system for road transport of goods [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-iran-dogovorilis-o-bezrazreshitelnoj-sisteme-avtoperevozok-gruzov-555173-2023/>

136 Belarus will participate in the development of the North-South transport corridor via Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-razviti-i-transportnogo-koridora-sever-jug-cherez-iran-555159-2023/>

as well as between Mogilev and Tabriz"<sup>137</sup> . More specifically, for example, the Gomel region already intends to resume and develop cooperation with the Iranian province of Mazandaran, "a document on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation with which was signed back in 2009"<sup>138</sup> . The Mogilev region intends to expand trade and economic cooperation and intensify relations in the field of tourism, education and culture with the Province of East Azerbaijan, where the free economic zone Aras is located. Constructive talks were held in May 2022 on prospects of cooperation and development of ties between the Grodno region and the province of Homozgan. "The parties have confirmed mutual interest in implementing joint projects in various areas. Priority activities aimed at the formation of long-term sustainable relations have been identified"<sup>139</sup> .

Among the Belarusian regions that actively cooperated with Iranian partners in 2022, we should also mention the **Minsk Region**, whose trade turnover with Iran increased 10.5 times compared with 2021. Statistics states that "in January-December 2022, trade turnover between the Minsk Oblast and the Islamic Republic of Iran amounted to \$51190.5 thousand (growth rate 114.1%). Including exports - \$44309.8 thousand (120%), imports - \$6880.7 thousand (113.5%). A foreign trade surplus amounted to \$37429.1

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137 Koltsov, D. Trade, cooperation and removal of barriers. How Belarus and Iran will celebrate the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations during Lukashenka's visit to Teheran / D. Koltsov // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/torgovlja-kooperatsija-i-sniatie-barierov-chem-belarus-i-iran-otmetiat-30-letie-dipotnoshenij-vo-vremia-8621/>.

138 Zalesky, B.L. Priority - restoration of partnership / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Europejska nauka XXI wieku - 2021", Volume 4. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 23.

139 On the visit of the Belarusian Ambassador to Iran to Hormozgan Province [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://iran.mfa.gov.bv/ru/embassy/news/bdd91d54c2ef1c14.html>.



thousand"<sup>140</sup>. Last year lumber, plywood, wooden veneered panels, other engines and power plants, engines and generators prevailed in the exports of Minsk region. The Minsk region, in turn, imports dates, figs, pineapples, avocados, guavas, mangoes, mangosteen, lettuce, chicory fresh and chilled, other vegetables, fruits and nuts from Iran. In addition, several successful Iranian projects are "underway in the Capital Region. Projects such as AFTAB, the Bel Peka Paint project and the Eastern Shipp sheep breeding project may be noted."<sup>141</sup>. In the future, the parties seem to have great prospects for development in a number of areas.

The Belarusian side is also attentive to other proposals for cooperation between the regions. In 2022 alone, direct interaction has been established with the governors of the Iranian provinces of Hormozgan, Mazandaran, Isfahan and Gilan, as well as with the mayors of Bandar Abbas, Isfahan, Rasht and Astara. This suggests that new ties between the regions and cities of the two countries are, as they say, on the way.

Overall, in recent years, Belarus and Iran have found the most effective and efficient ways to ensure a positive dynamic in the long run in order to jointly breathe new energy into bilateral cooperation, preserving and multiplying everything positive for the implementation of a multifaceted mutually beneficial partnership.

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140 Narkievich, G. "We welcome Iranian investments in our economy". Turchin met with the country's ambassador / G. Narkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://mlvn.by/15022023/mv-privetstvuem-iranskie-investiczii-v-nashu-ekonomiku-turchin-vstretilsya-s-poslom-strany/>

141 The trade turnover between the Minsk region and Iran increased more than tenfold in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-minskoj-oblasti-i-irana-v-2022-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-v-desjat-raz-550380-2023/>

## The Asian vector expands cooperation

Increasing supplies of Belarusian goods to Asian and Middle Eastern countries is one of the top priorities of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE). Figures show that by the end of 10 months of 2022, exports of domestic products through the BUCE to a number of Asian countries increased significantly: to Singapore by 6.6 times, to Turkey by 21 times, and to Uzbekistan by 30 times.

In this context, in 2022 the **Chinese** segment of electronic exchange trading on the BUBS became much more active. However, even "in 2021, the Belarusian-Chinese exchange turnover grew three and a half times at once"<sup>142</sup>. And in October 2022, 100 companies from China were already working on the BUCE, three of which had the status of stock brokers. In the nine months of 2022 their transactions amounted to 27 million dollars. At the same time, more than 24 million dollars were provided by lumber - mainly softwood edged boards. China Township Enterprise Co., Ltd. (CTEC) is the 100th Chinese company accredited to bid on the BUTB, which initially intends to use the exchange to purchase wood products. In fact, from the end of October 2022, the BUTB has resumed the practice of holding special trading sessions to sell lumber to China with delivery in containers to the destination. "In addition to lumber, unrefined rapeseed oil and skimmed milk powder have been supplied to China through the exchange this year. The total value of

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142 Zalesky, B. Systemic partnerships. Specificity of economic interaction of the Belarusian side with the post-Soviet republics / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 45.

the transactions amounted to more than \$3 million"<sup>143</sup> . Given that one of CTEC's activities in China is the trading of agro-industrial products, it is possible that in the future the Chinese company will develop this segment of the commodity exchange market as well.

Coming back to the topic of lumber exports to China, we note that according to the results of the special trade session, which took place in the first decade of November 2022 at the BUTB, more than 20 thousand cubic meters of lumber produced in Belarus were sold to the Chinese market. The session was attended by 11 Chinese residents. "Several delivery bases were provided for the convenience of buyers, namely Taicang, Tianjin, Shanghai and Changsha cities. A key feature of the special trading sessions is that they focus on a specific sales market - in this case China"<sup>144</sup> . In December 2022, the results of the special export trading session were record-breaking both in terms of the sum of transactions made and the volume of resources sold to the Chinese market. It is more than 60 thousand cubic meters of lumber "worth a total of 85.5 million yuan, or the equivalent of \$12.3 million <...>. As a result, residents of China and Singapore bought 10 lots of lumber with a volume of 62.2 thousand cubic meters, which is half of all the lumber put up for auction"<sup>145</sup> . It should be noted that special trading sessions on sales of sawn timber to China have been held at BUTB since December 2020 with the support of the Ministry of Forestry of Belarus to diversify export

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143 The 100th company from China has been accredited at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovalas-100-ia-kompanija-iz-kitaja-530408-2022/>

144 Companies from China and Singapore bought more than \$4 million worth of lumber products from the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/piloproduktsiiu-na-bolee-chem-4-mln-priobreli-na-butb-kompanii-iz-kitaja-i-singapura-533965-2022/>

145 \$12.3 million worth of lumber sold to China through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pilomaterialy-na-123-mln-prodanv-v-kitaj-cherez-butb-541419-2022/>

supplies of products of domestic woodworking enterprises and increase export revenues through the use of the competitive mechanism of exchange trading.

For reference: as of 1 November 2022, 103 Chinese companies had already been accredited on the BUTB. Among the new participants of the Belarusian electronic marketplace was a company from China, which bought tanned semi-finished products "vet-blue" for the first time on the BUTB. Thus, the geography of sales of this product through this marketplace has expanded to eight countries. "Vet-blue semi-finished products are in steady demand from leather goods manufacturers around the world. Companies from Russia, Kazakhstan, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, Lithuania and Poland regularly buy this product on the exchange. In January-October this year, the total sum of the deals amounted to \$6.5 million."<sup>146</sup> . So far no such products have been shipped from Belarus to China. Apparently, after the pilot deal, new supplies of tanned leather are not far off.

Another interesting fact. In November 2022, a large Chinese trading company headquartered in Chongqing, which specialises in supplying cattle, chicken and seafood to the southern provinces of China, expressed interest in bidding for agricultural products at the BUTB. The firm "has an extensive network of suppliers around the world, including Belarus, but all relationships have been put on hold during the pandemic. Using the BUTB trading platform, which features leading domestic suppliers of meat and meat products, the Chinese importer intends to establish new business contacts and

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146 Now China: the geography of exports of Belarusian leather products through BUTB has expanded [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/teper-i-kitaj-geografija-eksporta-belorusskoj-kozhevennoj-produktsii-cherez-butb-rasshirilas-533733-2022/>

resume the purchase of frozen beef in Belarus"<sup>147</sup> . The more so since Belarusian-made products have gained popularity at the Chinese market in recent years and are in high demand among Chinese consumers. Therefore, the company does not expect any problems with sales. In addition to the office and wholesale outlets in Chongqing, the company has representative offices in other provinces of China, which will ensure the widest possible geography of sales of the meat purchased on the exchange.

In order to promote Belarusian-Chinese electronic trade, the BUTB continues to expand the list of partners from the Celestial Empire to further strengthen trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China. In particular, in September 2022 the BUTB signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Chinese branch of the BRICS Institute for the Study of Future Networks (BIFNC) to promote greater involvement of Belarusian and Chinese companies, including small and medium businesses, in cross-border exchange trading. "One promising area of interaction could be the accreditation of BIFNC as a broker. This will allow not only to fully utilise BIFNC's wide network of business contacts to attract Chinese sellers and buyers to exchange trading, but also to conclude transactions on their behalf, thus ensuring growth of exchange trade turnover between Belarus and China."<sup>148</sup> . It is expected that at the initial stage, the main focus will

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147 A major Chinese importer of meat and seafood is interested in cooperating with BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnyj-kitajskij-importer-mjasa-i-moreproduktov-zainteresovalsja-sotrudnichestvom-s-butb-536236-2022/>

148 The BUTB and the BRICS Institute's China branch will promote electronic exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kitajskij-filial-instituta-briks-budut-sodejstvovat-razvitiu-elektronnoj-birzhevoj-torgovli-525751-2022/>

be on supplies of Belarusian lumber and fuel pellets to China as the most sought-after commodity items in the Chinese market.

Another new partner for BUTB in November 2022 is the Alliance of Economic and Commercial Advisers of China. The Chinese side is interested in such highly liquid commodity items as lumber, rapeseed oil, and vet-blue leather, because "in the near term, the level of demand will increase, including for Belarusian-made goods that have proven themselves in the Chinese market."<sup>149</sup> . So the Belarusian-Chinese exchange trade appears to be reaching a new qualitative level.

BUTB also has big plans with other countries on the Asian continent, including **India, Pakistan, Turkey and Mongolia**.

For example, in September 2022, the BUTB and the Inventivepreneur Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCI) headquartered in New Delhi, **India**, decided to join efforts to attract Indian companies interested in entering the Belarusian market to the exchange platform. After all, the use of the exchange mechanism will not only help strengthen trade relations between Belarus and India, but also create favorable conditions for closer cooperation in related areas. As a reminder, ICCI has over 10 thousand members all over India. These are mainly small and medium-sized enterprises operating in various sectors of industry and agriculture that use the services of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry to effectively conduct their business, including market analysis, assistance in attracting investments, staff development courses and finding business partners in India and abroad. The main objective of the

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149 The BUTB and the Alliance of Economic and Commercial Advisers of China have identified areas for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-alijans-ekonomicheskikh-i-kommercheskikh-sovetnikov-kitaja-opredelili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-535514-2022/>

ICCI is to assist in the scaling up of a business, which usually involves entering markets in other countries, including Belarus. Given the low risks, wide product range and direct access to leading Belarusian companies, BUTB is the optimal solution for starting an ICCI in Belarus. In particular, "there is a high demand for Belarusian acrylic fibre and other petrochemical products in India, as transactions in this group of goods are regularly made <...>. Equally promising items are lumber, dairy products and light industry products"<sup>150</sup>.

Another curious fact: in November 2022, a pharmaceutical company from India, Tosco Pharmachem, which produces and sells special chemicals and reagents for the Indian pharmaceutical industry, was accredited for the first time on the Belarusian exchange to purchase petrochemical products. "Tosco Pharmachem plans to buy acetone cyanohydrin on the Belarusian exchange platform and, in the future, other chemicals and preparations it needs"<sup>151</sup>. There are several reasons for the company's interest in the BUTB platform. First, India is one of the world's top three producers of pharmaceuticals. Secondly, the Indian company will open up new export opportunities for Belarusian companies in the petrochemical sector through exchange trading. Thirdly, apart from increasing the Belarusian-Indian exchange trade turnover, the BUTB will provide experience in the Indian market that can be useful in selling other sought-after commodity items, including synthetic fibers, to this

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<sup>150</sup> The BUTB and the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry plan to collaborate on exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-indijskaja-torgovo-promvshlennaja-palata-planiruiut-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-birzhevoj-torgovli-524659-2022/>

<sup>151</sup> BUTB plans to start exporting petrochemicals to the Indian pharma industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-nachat-eksport-neftehimicheskoi-produktsii-dlia-indijskoj-farmotrasli-535977-2022/>

South Asian country. In December 2022, the first deal was registered on the BUOTB: Tosco Pharmachem bought 23 tonnes of Belarusian acetone cyanohydrin following a trading session. The small volume of the purchase was due to the Indian company's desire to work out the entire scheme for importing goods from Belarus. "The Indian side is interested in long-term cooperation with the exchange, which implies regular participation in exchange trading and an increase in the volume of purchases. At the same time, due to the lack of practical experience in operating in the Belarusian market through the exchange platform, the company preferred to make a trial deal for a small amount to minimize possible risks"<sup>152</sup>. In this regard, the BUTB expects an increase in supplies of Belarusian petrochemical products to India. For reference: export trading in chemical and petrochemical products has been conducted at BUTB since October 2021. The entire nomenclature of goods produced by the petrochemical industry of Belarus is exported abroad. In 2022, synthetic fibers, gasoline, oils, and solvents were in particular demand among foreign buyers. The main markets are a number of countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as the "far arc" countries - China, Syria, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey.

In 2022, certain steps have also been taken to intensify exchange trading between Belarus and **Pakistan**. Specifically, the first broker company from that country has already been accredited to the BUTB, and thanks to the efforts of the Embassy of Pakistan in Belarus, the central office of the exchange was visited by 70 representatives of the Pakistani business community, who are

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152 An Indian company has struck its first deal at the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/indijskaja-kompanija-vperve-sovershila-sdelku-na-butb-537935-2022/>



interested in purchasing products from Belarus. And it's not just lumber, but also chemical and petrochemical products. For example, "Belarusian acrylic fiber is in high demand in Pakistan, which has recently been regularly supplied to this market through our trading platform. Transaction volumes are not very large yet, so expanding the circle of Pakistani buyers is a task of paramount importance."<sup>153</sup>, in order to really increase trade turnover between Belarus and Pakistan.

Another country in Asia that is very promising in terms of marketing Belarusian goods through the BUTB is **Turkey**. During the three quarters of 2022, 27 Turkish companies were accredited to the exchange. "This year they have bought domestic lumber, as well as scrap and waste of non-ferrous metals on the exchange trading. If compared to January-September last year, the amount of transactions made by Turkish participants has increased by almost 1.5 times"<sup>154</sup>. Not only traditional export-import transactions involving Belarusian companies, but also transit transactions between non-residents are seen as possible areas for cooperation.

In November 2022, the BUTB agreed to develop an exchange trade in agro-industrial and wood products with the Istanbul Commodity Exchange (ISTIB) to "join efforts to increase mutual trade between Belarus and Turkey, with the main focus on agricultural and wood products, the demand for which is consistently high in both countries"<sup>155</sup>. In this regard, Belarusian

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153 BUTB arranges supplies of Belarusian lumber to Pakistan's industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-organizuiet-postavki-belorusskili-pilomaterialov-dlja-promyshlennosti-pakistana-535371-2022/>

154 BUTB to showcase the benefits of exchange trading at an exhibition in Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-predstavit-preimuschestva-birzhevoj-torgovli-na-vystavke-v-turtsii-529829-2022/>

155 BUTB and the Istanbul Mercantile Exchange will develop trade in agro-industrial products and wood products [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

partners hope for support and assistance on the part of ISTIB, whose members comprise over ten thousand Turkish enterprises, and for many of them ISTIB could become a "window" to the market of Belarus and the Eurasian Economic Union. After all, the exchange platform is an effective tool for establishing direct contacts between producers and consumers of the two countries, which would allow regular trade in highly liquid commodity items such as lumber and dairy products.

Starting in December 2022, in order to make the exchange mechanism more attractive for foreign companies, including potential buyers of fuel pellets or pellets and other wood products, the BUTB has introduced a simplified accreditation procedure for residents of Turkey. Note that "the simplified accreditation procedure is already in place for residents of 21 countries, which makes the exchange mechanism more accessible to foreign companies and contributes to an increase in supplies of Belarusian goods to these markets"<sup>156</sup>. More than 18 thousand cubic meters of light and gray pellets were offered at the first export auction, which was aimed at the Turkish market and took place in the first decade of December 2022. More than 20 Turkish companies expressed interest in buying Belarusian biofuel. And, apparently, the clear logistics and significant capacity of the Turkish market make it one of the most promising export destinations for Belarusian fuel products.

Also. In January 2023, the first company from **Mongolia** was accredited to participate in trading at the BUTB. This means that the geography of Belarusian exchange trading has expanded in the new

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<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-stambulskaja-tovarnaia-birzha-budut-razvivat-torgovliu-produktsiej-apk-i-derevoobrabotki-533002-2022/>

156 BUTB simplifies accreditation for Turkish companies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-uproschaet-akkreditatsiju-dlja-turetskih-kompanij-537787-2022/>

year and now covers 71 countries on four continents. Through the BUTB, "a Mongolian company plans to supply Belarus with mining products, including fluorspar and slags used in the metallurgical industry, as well as purchase Belarusian metal products and goods of the agricultural group."<sup>157</sup> . The interest of Mongolian businesses in the Belarusian exchange platform is not accidental. All Belarusian metallurgical companies are accredited and participate in trading on BUCE, and the amount of transactions in the steel products section exceeded two billion Belarusian rubles in 2022. The largest consumers and producers of the goods the Mongolian company intends to trade in are concentrated on the exchange. The situation is similar in the agribusiness segment: the BUTB has a wide range of products from Belarusian agricultural enterprises, including exporters of milk, cream, and butter, which are especially in demand in Mongolia. It is expected that the next step in the cooperation between the Belarusian exchange platform and the Mongolian company will be to grant it the status of an exchange broker, which will enable it to act as the official representative of the BUTB in Mongolia and attract new importers and exporters to the Belarusian market.

Overall, with regard to the cooperation of the BUTB with Asian countries, this area of cooperation has enormous export potential. And "in the near future this cooperation will already show high results"<sup>158</sup> . And the first steps in this respect have been taken.

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157 The first company from Mongolia is accredited to the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovana-pervaia-kompanija-iz-mongolii-545414-2023/>

158 Zalesky, B. The potential of the exchange mechanism. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 52.

## Partnership addresses Singapore and Uzbekistan

In the near future, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) will become an even more urgent task to increase supplies of Belarusian goods to Asian countries. Statistics show that "according to the results of 10 months of 2022, the export of domestic products through the BUCE to a number of Asian countries increased significantly: to Singapore - 6.6 times, <...> to Uzbekistan - 30 times.<sup>159</sup> [1, c. 11]. Apparently, in the near future, cooperation with these two Asian states will only strengthen.

In the case of **Singapore**, nine companies from Southeast Asia are now accredited to the BOOTB. Previously, Singaporean firms participated in exchange trading solely as buyers. Companies from Singapore mainly buy skimmed milk powder from Belarus. Recently, there has also been an increased demand for wood products. In particular, "in 2022, exchange exports of lumber to Singapore amounted to \$9.3 million, which is an order of magnitude higher than in 2021.<sup>160</sup> [2]. By the way, a number of Singaporean firms regularly participate in special trading sessions to sell Belarusian lumber products for export with delivery to the destination country.

In 2023, the development of the Singapore destination will receive special attention. At the end of January, goods from Singaporean manufacturers will be offered for the first time at the

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159 Zalessky, B.L. Cooperation with an emphasis on effectiveness / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVIII International scientific and practical conference "Conduct of modern science - 2022", November 30 - December 7, 2022: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 11.

160 Goods from Singapore's producers will be showcased for the first time at the BUTB auction [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarv-singapurskih-proizvoditelej-budut-vpervye-predstavleny-na-torgah-butb-547522-2023/>

BUTB auction. At issue is the sale of high-tech industrial equipment at the BUTB import substitution platform. A bid for the purchase placed by one of the Belarusian industrial flagships has attracted manufacturers of laser equipment from Singapore who are interested in operating in the domestic market. To this end, two new Singaporean companies have already been accredited at the exchange. And the first bids for sale will be put up shortly. It is expected that the placement of bids for the sale of import-substituting products manufactured in Singapore in the trading system of the BUOTB will contribute to a favorable competitive environment and reduce the costs of the Belarusian companies engaged in procurement on the exchange trading. And in the future, there are plans to further develop exchange trade with this state that is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which is so far a net importer of Belarusian goods.

Speaking about development of prospective cooperation with **Uzbekistan**, we note that in February 2023 the first joint training seminar organised by BUCE and the Uzbek Republican Commodity Exchange (UzRTSB) was held, following which seven Uzbek companies were accredited as brokers of BUCE. As reported earlier, during the year 2022 the volume of stock exchange transactions concluded by Uzbek companies on BUCE grew 29 times. This shows that the exchange trade between Belarus and Uzbekistan is developing at an accelerated pace, moving up to a qualitatively new level. And it should be understood that the joint efforts of the BUOTB "with the brokers of the Uzbek Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange will expand the range of Uzbekistan residents using the Belarusian exchange platform, establish trade in new

commodity positions, and thereby give an additional impetus to bilateral cooperation in the trade and economic spheres.<sup>161</sup> [3].

During the workshop, it was noted that the accreditation of brokers of a foreign exchange is a completely new form of inter-exchange cooperation, the application of which will provide a powerful synergy effect and bring real practical benefits to Belarusian and Uzbek business entities. At the same time, interaction should not be limited to the markets of Belarus and Uzbekistan. The BUTB considers the URTSB as a strategic partner, through cooperation with which one can not only increase trade turnover between the countries but also gain access to other promising markets. In particular, Uzbekistan could become a springboard or an intermediate platform for Belarus to enter Central Asia, where timber, petrochemicals and agricultural products are in high demand. All of this is produced in Belarus and could be supplied to the region through the exchange platform. Twenty professional participants of the commodity exchange market in Uzbekistan attended the seminar on the prospects of Belarusian-Uzbek exchange trade. During the training the Uzbek specialists got familiarized in detail with all aspects of broking activities in the Republic of Belarus, including the order of accreditation at the exchange, possible work schemes and legal framework. The participants of the event exchanged experience in brokering and discussed possible areas of cooperation, including with the involvement of Belarusian logistics operators.

Another interesting partner for BUTB in Uzbekistan in the near future will be the Fergana region. The point is that companies

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161 Seven Uzbek companies have been accredited as brokers at the BOOTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-v-kachestve-brokerov-akkreditovany-sem-uzbekskih-kompanij-550602-2023/>

in this Uzbek region are interested in using the Belarusian import-substituting platform, as "the exchange platform can become a valuable information resource for companies from the Fergana region that would like to supply import-substituting goods to Belarus, and it will also facilitate the purchase of Belarusian products that are in demand in Uzbekistan".<sup>162</sup> [4]. After all, the exchange trading platform is interesting primarily as a marketing tool that can be used to assess the volume of supply and demand, obtain up-to-date information on prices and, most importantly, find new business partners. Uzbekistan, like Belarus, pays close attention to production localization and import substitution; therefore, if the parties manage to establish cooperation in this area, it will certainly contribute to the growth of trade turnover between the two countries.

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162 The Fergana region of Uzbekistan is interested in using the BUTB import substitution site [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ferganskaja-oblast-uzbekistana-zainteresovana-v-ispolzovanii-ploschadki-importozameschenija-butb-549224-2023/>

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