

Contours of union integration

Strategic cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation is comprehensive and multidimensional today. In the difficult conditions of the coronavirus pandemic, the parties continue to maintain intensive contacts at the highest and highest levels, various formats of intergovernmental, interparliamentary and interagency interaction, which ensured traditionally high dynamics of bilateral relations. In September 2021 the Council of Ministers of the Union State of Belarus and Russia approved the guidelines for implementation of the provisions of the Treaty on the Union State for 2021-2023 and 28 Union State programs aimed to undertake large-scale tasks to strengthen the Belarusian-Russian integration, to deepen industrial cooperation. At that the parties noted that the direct partnership ties between the regions are becoming an increasingly important factor in strengthening of mutual trust and economic cooperation. This is confirmed by the specific practice of Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation in 2021, which was implemented in a variety of formats. How it happens in practice is discussed in the materials of the proposed study.



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*Evolution of cooperation between the regions of Belarus
and Russia*

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Cover image: www.ingimage.com

This book is a translation from the original published under ISBN 978-620-4-74295-3.

Publisher:

Scienza Scripts

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Dodo Books Indian Ocean Ltd. and OmniScriptum S.R.L publishing group

120 High Road, East Finchley, London, N2 9ED, United Kingdom

Str. Armeneasca 28/1, office 1, Chisinau MD-2012, Republic of Moldova, Europe

Printed at: see last page

ISBN: 978-620-6-04190-0

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CHAPTER 1

Topical issues of Belarus-Russia regional interaction

Back in May 2016, the Council of Ministers of the Union State of Belarus and Russia adopted a resolution "On the Action Plan to Create a Common Information Space of the Union State for 2016-2020", the implementation of which would allow systematising information activities in the Union State and improving the quality of topical publications, including on cooperation between regions of Belarus and Russia, which is a crucial area of bilateral relations within the Union State. After all, as it was noted at the V Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, held in Mogilev in October 2018, "it is in the regions of our countries that many production, technological chains for the production of joint products begin"¹. Suffice it to say that the contractual and legal framework of this interaction already includes more than three hundred agreements on increasing the volume of mutual supplies of goods, expanding the distribution network, strengthening production cooperation, creating assembly facilities. And today it is very important that the implementation of these joint projects be constantly in the spotlight of the central and, most importantly, the regional media of the two countries.

It should be noted that the Central, Ural, Volga and Northwestern Federal Districts have been leading in the Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation for many years now. The North Caucasian Federal District (NCFD) is still far behind them in the development of partnership relations with the Republic of Belarus, but, undoubtedly, it has considerable potential and prerequisites to make positive changes in this regard. After all, it "has favourable conditions for the development of the agro-industrial complex, tourism, sanatorium-resort sphere, mining and processing sectors, as well as developed transit functions"².

¹ Speech at the plenary session of the V Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vystuplenie-na-plenamom-zasedanii-v-foruma-regionov-belarusi-i-rossii-19684/.

² Strategy for socio-economic development of the North Caucasus Federal District until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <http://skfo.gov.ru/district/soc/sed/.gov.ru/district/soc/sed/>

One way to realise these natural advantages is to actively develop foreign trade relations, given that one of the key factors in the NCFD's long-term socioeconomic development, as stated in the Strategy for socio-economic development of the North Caucasus Federal District through 2025, is to integrate into the Euro-Asian economic space, which 'will help secure investment inflow into the NCFD regions by creating a favourable investment and business climate'³. In this case, the Republic of Belarus can be one of the effective partners of the entities of the North Caucasian Federal District. The analysis of publications in the Belarusian media shows that the leaders in establishing partnerships with Belarus in the North Caucasian Federal District are **Stavropol Krai, the Chechen Republic and the Republic of Dagestan**.

Thus, the agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technological and socio-cultural cooperation between the governments of **Stavropol Krai** and the Republic of Belarus was signed in mid-March 2017. This document markedly expanded the existing contractual and legal framework of interaction of this Russian region with the Belarusian side, once again eloquently highlighting the conclusion that "integration with the regions of Belarus is a conceptual direction of development of external relations of the Stavropol Territory"⁴. After all, back in 2000 and 2002 the Stavropol regional government signed agreements on cooperation with Brest and Gomel regional executive committees, providing for cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural fields. The agreement on cooperation between the Stavropol Krai Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry was adopted in 2008. Today the products of a number of leading Belarusian industrial enterprises are widely represented in the region. These include the Minsk Tractor Plant and Minsk Automobile Plant. Belarusian food products are also popular here, which prompted the opening of a chain of shops selling meat

³ Amirova E.A. Analysis of features of socio-economic differentiation of development of the regions of the North Caucasian Federal District / E.A. Amirova // Regional problems of economic transformation. - 2014. - №9. - C. 159.

⁴ Vladimirov, V. Market expansion is always a benefit for entrepreneurs / V. Vladimirov // Eurasian Economic Union: regional aspect: inform.-integr. project / comp., interviewer. B. Zaleskii, M. Valkovski, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk : Biznesofset, 2014. - C. 56.

and dairy products from Belarus in Stavropol. In turn, Stavropol enterprises mastered supplies to the Belarusian market of: agricultural raw materials and products of their primary processing - wheat, flour, sunflower and sunflower oil, sheep wool; engineering products - electricity meters and semi-trailers; chemical industry products - polymeric materials, plastics, aerosols.

All these facts show that the Stavropol Territory is one of the most promising economic partners of Belarus in Russia. Back in 2013, the trade turnover between the region and the republic increased by half compared to 2012 and amounted to 6.7 billion Russian rubles. It is true, however, that there was a certain decline thereafter. And it was only in 2016 that the volume of mutual trade reached 140 million dollars. This meant that after two years of decline, its growth dynamics exceeded 9 percent. At the same time, this fact demonstrates that the Stavropol Territory and the Republic of Belarus now have a real potential for a significant increase in trade turnover and expansion of bilateral cooperation. That is why Governor of Stavropol Region V. Vladimirov's visit to Belarus in March 2017 was regarded in Minsk as a serious intention of the Russian side "to significantly increase mutual trade and launch new promising projects in the sectors where we are interesting and useful to each other"⁵. Among such promising areas, the two sides believe: the development of industrial cooperation; effective cooperation in the agro-industrial sector; implementation of promising projects in the construction sector; intensification of cooperation in light industry; and actualization of the innovation component of the partnership.

As for industrial cooperation, back in 2013, it was noted that "more than ten enterprises with participation of Belarusian investments are registered in the territory of Stavropol Territory"⁶. And further, to expand cooperation ties, the

⁵ Talks with Vladimir Vladimirov, Governor of the Stavropol Territory of Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://http://president.gov.by/ru/news.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-gubernatorom-stavropolskogo-kraja-rossii-vladimirom-vladimirovym-15800/

⁶ Vysheslavov, V. In perspective - joint development of innovative technologies / V. Vysheslavov // Single Economic Space: Integration of Regions: Informational-Integration Project / co-comp. and interviewer: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovski, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk : Biznesofset, 2013. - C. 79.

Belarusian side suggests "implementing joint projects of MAZ and Autocomponents Holding with enterprises of Stavropol Territory"⁷. Especially since Stavropol Territory "wants to get back to the issue of organizing assembly production of Belarusian machinery and its service"⁸. They are also talking about expanding deliveries of various machines from Belarus to the Russian region - passenger, municipal, cargo, and road-building machines - for the implementation of major infrastructure projects there. At the same time, "machinery may be supplied on leasing terms"⁹. In the agro-industrial sector two areas are of greatest interest: supplies of modern technological equipment for the reconstruction of dairy farms with the involvement of Belarusian specialists in the implementation of projects to reconstruct and build livestock farms; supplies of specialized equipment of Minsk Tractor Plant in view of Stavropol Krai's plans to develop viticulture. In the field of innovations, Belarusian and Stavropol scientists can really cooperate in robotics and resource conservation, geoinformatics and geophysics, microbiology and biotechnology.

As for **the Chechen Republic**, it signed an agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation with the Republic of Belarus in June 2017 at the Fourth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia. This document has seriously strengthened the contractual and legal foundation for cooperation between Minsk and Grozny in virtually all areas of partnership, which began with the agreement between this Russian region and the Minsk City Executive Committee on trade, economic, scientific, technological and

⁷ Meeting with the Governor of the Stavropol Territory of Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7111>

⁸ Talks with Vladimir Vladimirov, Governor of the Stavropol Territory of Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/http://president.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/peregovory-s-gubernatorom-stavropolskogo-kraja-rossii-vladimirom-vladimirovymru/view/peregovory-s-gubernatorom-stavropolskogo-kraja-rossii-vladimirom-vladimirovym-15800/>

⁹ Belarus counts on increasing supplies of machinery to the Stavropol Territory and creating new joint ventures - Kobyakov [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-na-uvlichenie-postavok-tehniki-v-stavropolskij-kraj-i-sozdanie-novyh-sp-kobyakovrasschityvaet-na-uvlichenie-postavok-tehniki-v-stavropolskij-kraj-i-sozdanie-novyh-sp-kobyakov-237868-2017/>

cultural cooperation signed back in July 2002. That document was then one of the first concluded by the Chechen Republic with a foreign country after the beginning of the reconstruction period. "However, due to objective reasons existing at that time, including the general socio-economic situation in the [Chechen] Republic and concerns of potential investors about possible risks in the field of investment activities, these agreements, unfortunately, were not further developed"¹⁰.

But years later, when the Chechen government considerably stepped up efforts to implement all the previously signed agreements with foreign countries, the relationship with the Belarusian side began to evolve as well. New impetus to cooperation between Belarus and Chechnya was given by the understanding that this Russian region has considerable economic and resource potential, which makes it possible to form a competitive economy that is beneficial for the development of interaction with Belarusian administrative and territorial entities, business entities, and public and cultural organizations. That is why "in order to discuss issues of mutually beneficial cooperation, a delegation from the Chechen Republic visited Belarus for the first time on 6 July 2015

of the Republic under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic to the Republic of Belarus"¹¹. And supplies of Belarusian household appliances, textiles, cosmetics, tyres, as well as road-building, municipal and agricultural equipment of the Amkodor holding company have started in the Russian region.

However, a new stage in cooperation between the two sides was certainly opened by the visit of the head of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, to Belarus in September 2017, during which attention was focused both on the

¹⁰ Kadyrov, R. It is necessary to give a new impulse to cooperation with Belarus / R. Kadyrov // Belarus - Russia: cooperation of regions: inform.-integration project / co-comp. Zalesskii B.L., Korovkin E.A., Korovin M.E. Kovorovkin M. E., Minsk. - Minsk: BELTA, 2010. - C. 58.

¹¹ Umarov D., Umarov D. The most promising direction is seen in the establishment and development of cooperative ties in the production sphere / D. Umarov // Interaction of Regions: Union State - the locomotive of Eurasian integration: information-integration project / coauthors, interviewer: B. Zalessky, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2016. - C. 60.

development of trade cooperation and the key topic of bilateral cooperation - industrial cooperation, which both Minsk and Grozny consider the most advanced, mutually beneficial form of cooperation, "which helps meet the needs of the regional market and also creates high-tech jobs"¹² . As for trade cooperation, the sides believe that the potential for its multiplication in the coming years lies in the supply to Chechnya of Belarusian passenger, freight, quarry, agricultural, road-building and municipal equipment. A concrete project in this regard could be the participation of Minsk Automobile Plant in the modernisation of the Chechen truck and bus fleet.

The first step in the development of Belarusian-Chechen manufacturing cooperation appears to be the establishment of an assembly facility in this Russian region by the Belarusian enterprise Bobruiskagromash. At least, an agreement to that effect has already been signed with the Chechen Ministry of Agriculture, and there is clarity about both the sites and the stages of the project. And this may become a kind of prologue to large-scale cooperation of the parties in the field of production cooperation, because "Belarus and Chechnya need to develop other joint projects, especially to supply equipment and spare parts to automotive industry enterprises of Chechnya,"¹³ . Among other promising areas for cooperation the parties identified the following: agrarian sector - introduction of advanced technologies in production and processing of agricultural products, establishment of dairy farms, supply of modern milking halls, crop production, breeding livestock and veterinary medicine; construction and housing and utilities sector - road construction, design and construction of housing and infrastructure, supply of road construction and utility equipment, construction materials and lifts.

In other words, Minsk and Grozny have seriously embarked on filling the

¹² Meeting with the Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-glavoj-chechenskoj-respubliki-ramzan-kadyrovvm-17164/

¹³ Meeting with the Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/7518.government.by/ru/content/7518>

agreement signed in June 2017 with specific mutually beneficial projects, taking into account the principle voiced by the Chechen leader - "there is interest on the Chechen side to work directly, without intermediaries"¹⁴ . And there is every reason to believe that the implementation of the action plan for 2018-2020, which outlines all promising areas for Belarusian-Chechen cooperation, will be another eloquent illustration of the fact that the establishment of ties between Belarus and Chechnya is a new stage in the strengthening of Belarusian-Russian relations.

As for another subject of the North Caucasus Federal District - **the Republic of Dagestan** - the Republic of Belarus signed an agreement with this Russian region on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation back in 2002. In April 2014, the agreement between the Standing Committee of the Union State and the Government of the Republic of Dagestan on cooperation in the field of trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation was added to the legal framework of this interregional interaction, based on mutual interest in maintaining and expanding Belarusian-Russian relations, creating appropriate organizational, economic, legal and other conditions for strengthening the partnership of the regions, ensuring effective interaction, exchange of experience and information. Under the document the sides expressed their intention to promote joint programmes and events aimed at developing economic ties between the regions of Belarus and Dagestan, create conditions to expand trade and economic relations between business entities of the sides, and cooperate when making decisions on investments and innovation activities, including the attraction of foreign capital and advanced foreign technologies. The Dagestani side immediately expressed its interest in supplies of Belarusian agricultural machinery, because "Dagestan has a need to organize

¹⁴ Kadyrov, R. On the word of the President, the image of Chechnya and cooperation / R. Kadyrov // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/interview/view/o-slove-prezidenta-imidzhe-chechni-i-http://www.belta.by/interview/view/o-slove-prezidenta-imidzhe-chechni-i-sotrudnichestve-kadyrov-podelilsja-vpechatlenijami-ot-vstrechi-ssotrudnichestve-kadyrov-podelilsja-vpechatlenijami-ot-vstrechi-s-5791/>.

processing of agricultural products"¹⁵ .

In 2014, the foreign trade turnover between Belarus and Dagestan came close to USD 14 million, with the share of Belarusian export reaching about USD 13 million, based on "mineral products, metal products, timber, pulp and paper products, machinery, equipment and vehicles, chemical industry products, rubber, textile, textile products and footwear, raw hides, fur products, food products and agricultural raw materials"¹⁶ . At the "Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia" event in Makhachkala in June 2014, the parties agreed, as part of the implementation of joint investment projects in Dagestan, to study "the issue of introducing Belarusian technologies for growing agricultural products, milk processing technologies, cheese production, raising broiler meat and using new technologies in egg production in the republic"¹⁷ . In September 2014, the parties agreed to establish and implement joint projects aimed at building rural tourism infrastructure. In particular, the Treaty of Intent was then signed by the Dagestan Tourism Committee and the Belarusian public association Recreation in the Countryside. This document "implies interaction between the parties in the sphere of rural tourism and cultural cooperation, attracting tourists, and promoting the brand of Dagestan as a tourist territory"¹⁸ .

In March 2015, Minsk Tractor Works opened its machinery dealer centre in Dagestan - at the base of Dagselmash in Buynaksky District, where at the first stage "tractors will be restored and new machinery will be sold in the future"¹⁹ .

¹⁵ Signed Cooperation Agreement with the Standing Committee of the Russia-Belarus Union State [Electronic resource]. - 2014 . - URL: https://www.riadagestan.ru/news/president/podpisano_soglasenie_o_sotrudnichestve_s_postovannyim_komi_tet_sovuznogo_gosudarstva_rossii_i_belorussii/

¹⁶ Abdulatipov, R. Regional cooperation is strategically necessary in the conditions of sanction policy of the West / R. Abdulatipov // Interaction of regions: Union State - the locomotive of Eurasian integration: inform.-integration project / coauthors, interviewing: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2016. - C. 22.

¹⁷ Dagestan and Belarus agree on business cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://http://www.dag.aif.ru/society/details/1186729.dag.aif.ru/society/details/1186729>

¹⁸ Belarusians will teach Dagestanis to develop rural tourism [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://www.interfax.by/news/belarus/1167841www.interfax.by/news/belarus/1167841>

¹⁹ MTZ has opened a dealership in Dagestan [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/mtz-otkrvyl-dilerskij-tsentr-v-dagestane_i_0000020779.html

To this end, they have set about preparing an exhibition area for Belarusian tractors, as well as training specialists, providing them with the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to maintain and repair the machines at the Minsk Tractor Works training centre. Also in 2015, a highlight of interregional cooperation was a fair of Belarusian producers in Dagestan, which featured products from the agricultural sector and light industry: sweets, honey of different varieties, sausage products, clothing, footwear, textiles, and much more. As a result, the Dagestani side estimated that in 2017 it had "the largest trade operations with Azerbaijan - \$47.93 million.,

Iran - \$34.54 million, China - \$17.81 million, Belarus - \$16.67 million"²⁰ .

Let us sum up. All of these facts clearly demonstrate how wide the thematic range of publications in the media of both countries is already becoming on the organization of cooperation between the regions of Belarus and Stavropol, Chechnya and Dagestan. The most important task for the Belarusian, Stavropol, Chechen and Dagestani media today is to ensure an adequate media articulation of this interregional cooperation, where all joint projects should be fully reflected in the media space to ensure the transition of union integration into a qualitatively new state - total interaction at all levels.

²⁰ On the results of foreign trade of the Republic of Dagestan for 2017. [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: https://makhachkala.mid.ru/mezdunarodnoe-sotrudnicestvo/-/asset_publisher/ZPNsLt1FS6On/content/ob- itogah-vnesnej -torgovli-respubliki-dagestan-za-2017-g-?initRedirect=false

CHAPTER 2

Regions expand partnerships

The 7th Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, held in September 2020, set a goal to intensify joint activities of the parties in a wide range of areas in politics, economy, social sphere, education, culture, and also actualized "improvement of work in the media space and strengthening economic cooperation on an equal basis"²¹.

The Pskov Oblast, located in the Northwestern Federal District of the Russian Federation, is among the Russian regions that are now taking concrete steps to achieve the goal in their interaction with Belarusian partners. This is evidenced by the action plan for 2021-2023 signed in early December 2020 by the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Pskov Oblast administration to implement the existing agreement between the parties on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation. The adopted joint document aims to return the partnership between the Belarusian regions and the Pskov Oblast to the trajectory of sustainable growth. After all "the goods turnover between Belarus and the Pskov Oblast in January-September 2020 amounted to \$77 million which was 17.3% less compared to the same period last year. The balance for Belarus is positive - \$16.6 million."²².

As a reminder, the basic agreement between the parties was signed back in October 2000. Later, it was backed up by more than 20 other agreements between the municipal entities of the Pskov Region and the Belarusian regions. This contributed to the fact that in 2017 the trade turnover between the parties amounted to almost 200 million dollars, and "more than 100 companies with Belarusian capital are registered in the region"²³. True, already "in 2019 the

²¹ Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Russia need to intensify cooperation in politics and economy [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9593.government.by/ru/content/9593>

²² Belarus is ready to participate more actively in agricultural development programmes in the Pskov Oblast [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-aktivnee-uchastvovat-v-programmah-razvitiya-selskogo-aktivnee-uchastvovat-v-programmah-razvitiya-selskogo-hozj-aj-stva-v-stva-v-pskovskoj-oblasti-418071-2020>

²³ Priority directions of regional cooperation development as a key factor of union building:

trade turnover between Belarus and the Pskov region amounted to \$121 million and increased by 12% compared to 2018²⁴. Nevertheless, all these facts allow the leadership of the Russian region to state with good reason that "Belarus is our key foreign economic, foreign trade partner. This partnership accounts for 35% of trade turnover"²⁵.

The three-year action plan to develop cooperation, which was adopted in early December 2020, envisages the implementation of a large potential for cooperation in a wide range of areas. In particular, the document "includes measures for the participation of Belarusian companies in the construction of social facilities and housing construction projects."²⁶ We are talking here about the construction of both housing estates and schools, kindergartens and hospitals, with the use of credit resources of the Belarus Development Bank. The point is that the sides already have good experience in cooperation in this field, as "it was the Belarusian construction companies that built the biggest school in Pskov. And we are satisfied with this experience, because the quality is very high."²⁷

Another promising area for cooperation is to provide this Russian region with Belarusian passenger, freight, road-building and municipal vehicles. In this regard, the Belarusian side proceeds from the understanding that "the Pskov

informational-integration project / coauthored and interviewed by K. Gusev, B. Zalesky. Gusev, B. Zaleski. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 287.

²⁴ Roman Golovchenko suggested that the governor of the Pskov region should intensify cooperation in various sectors [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<http://www.government.by/ru/contenthttp://www.government.by/ru/content/95.8.8>

²⁵ Meeting with Mikhail Vedemikov, Governor of Russia's Pskov Oblast [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-gubematorom-pskovskoi-ru/view/vstrecha-s-gubematorom-pskovskoi- oblasti-rossii-mixailom-vedemikovvmoblasti-rossii-mixailom-vedemikovvm-24596/

²⁶ The Pskov region plans to build social facilities with the participation of Belarusian companies [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-pskovskoi-oblastihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-pskovskoi-oblasti- planiruiut-stroit-sotsobiektyv-s- uchastiem-belorusskih-kompaniiplaniruiut-stroit-sotsobiektyv-s-uch-astiem-belorusskih-kompanii-418082-2020>

²⁷ The Pskov region is interested in Belarusian agro-towns, machinery and construction services [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/societv/view/pskovskaia-oblasthttps://www.belta.by/societv/view/pskovskaia-oblast- zainteresovalas-belorusskimi-agrogorodkami-tehnikoi-i-stroitelnyimi-uslugamizainteresovalas-belorusskimi-agrogorodkami-tehnikoi-i-stroitelnyimi-uslugami-408508-2020/>

Region is facing the issue of cardinal renewal of its fleet of city buses, primarily in the regional capital"²⁸ . And already in September 2020 the dealer of Minsk Automobile Plant won the tender for the delivery of 11 extra large buses and 6 large buses to Pskov. A pilot operation of a gas-powered bus from Belarus was also successfully carried out there.

Investment cooperation between the parties should also get additional impetus for development in the next three years. This will be facilitated by the agreement on cooperation signed in September 2020 between the Belarusian National Agency for Investment and Privatization and the Pskov Oblast Investment Development Agency. In this document, the parties agreed, among other things, to "create favourable conditions for mutual investment attraction, development and implementation of joint projects, exchange information about business conditions, investment opportunities and proposed projects, as well as joint participation in thematic seminars, conferences, forums and other investment-related events"²⁹ .

Finally, another new vector of cooperation that will be developed in the near future is in the field of education. The point is that Belarus is starting to train medical personnel for the Pskov Oblast. In this regard, "an agreement on cooperation and strategic partnership was signed between the Pskov State University and three Belarusian universities"³⁰ . Relevance of this topic for the Russian region can be expressed by one figure: the shortage of medical personnel in the Pskov region today - almost 50 percent. So assistance of the Belarusian partners is more than necessary here and now.

Another interesting example of the development of relations with Belarusian

²⁸ Igor Petrishenko: Belarus is ready to participate more actively in agricultural development programmes in the Pskov Oblast [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9668.government.by/ru/content/9668>

²⁹ The Investment Agencies of Belarus and the Pskov Region signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/agentstva-po-mvestitsiiamhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/agentstva-po-mvestitsiiam-belarusi-i-pskovskoi-oblasti-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestvebelarusi-i-i-pskovskoi-oblasti-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-408584-2020/>.

³⁰ Belarus will train medical personnel for the Pskov Region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-budet-gotovit-meditsinskie-kadry-dlia-pskovskoi-oblasti-408501-2020/?utm_source=belta&utm_medium=news&utm_campaign=accent

partners in the same Northwestern Federal District is shown by **the Leningrad Region**. In March 2021, the ninth meeting of the joint commission to develop cooperation between the Leningrad Oblast and the Republic of Belarus was held, where the parties signed a new agreement on cooperation in trade and economic, scientific and technical and socio-cultural spheres. As a reminder, cooperation between this Russian region and the Belarusian side began in 1997, when framework agreements on cooperation with four Belarusian regions - Minsk, Gomel, Vitebsk, and Mogilev - were signed. "A year later, the agreements were signed by the governments of Leningrad Oblast and the Republic of Belarus. These documents became the basis for the establishment and development of mutually beneficial relations in the following years."³¹ .

For a long time, the key area of cooperation between the region and the republic in terms of intensity of interaction has remained the sphere of agro-industrial complex, where close ties of agricultural enterprises are traditionally maintained and cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus is established. An interesting fact: "About 20 per cent of spring cereal seeds in the Leningrad Region are sown with varieties developed by Belarusian plant breeders <...> Moreover, cultivated varieties year after year show high performance on all parameters, proving the high level of development of plant breeding in Belarus"³² . In this regard, the demand for Belarusian seed material from farmers in the Russian region continues to grow.

In 2019, the Leningrad Region was 11th among Russian regions in terms of trade turnover with Belarus, which then amounted to about 600 million dollars. It is true that in 2020, for well-known epidemiological reasons, it decreased slightly: in the first half of the year it was about 280 million dollars. That is why in September 2020, at a high level, the parties decided to "update the cooperation program between Belarus and the Leningrad Region and set clear

³¹ Regions of Russia to the Republic of Belarus: Information and Integration Project. B. Zaleskii, A. Kiselev, E. Korovkin. - Minsk: Theseus, 2009. - C. 65.

³² Priority directions of development of regional cooperation as a key factor of union building: informational-integration project / coauthored and interviewed by K. Gusev, B. Zalesky. Gusev, B. Zaleski. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 204.

and specific targets"³³ . Also in 2020, the Russian side increased its purchases of Belarusian forestry equipment and started buying heavy road machinery. Moreover, more than a hundred units of such equipment are planned to be purchased in the region's budget for 2021. "Urban transport is also of interest to the Leningrad Oblast. Piteravto is planning to make a large purchase - up to 1,500 combined buses. The first hundred buses will be purchased already in the first quarter of 2021"³⁴ .

As for the new agreement on cooperation signed in March 2021, it focuses on such an important area as ecology, which includes Belarusian technologies and equipment for water treatment and waste recycling, taking into account the prospects for cooperation. The fact is that the Russian region is considering partnerships with the Belarusian side in terms of choosing technologies for the construction of recycling facilities for household waste, based on the experience of Brest Region in this matter. Suffice it to say that "under the federal project "Clean Water" in Leningrad region 13 Belarusian-made water treatment plants have already been installed, while another 9 water treatment plants and 4 modular sewage treatment plants (wastewater treatment plants) are being installed. During the period from 2021 to 2022, it is planned to purchase 108 water treatment plants and 31 sewage treatment plants made in Belarus worth 1.65 and 2.40 billion rubles, respectively."³⁵ . Besides, the action plan for cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural areas for 2021-2023 signed at the ninth meeting of the joint commission provides for "increasing the supplies of public transport that uses various types of fuel, road construction, municipal and agricultural equipment to the Leningrad Oblast

³³ Roman Golovchenko: The Leningrad Region may become one of the top five trading partners of Belarus among Russia's regions [Electronic resource] :
http://www.government.by/ru/content/95_86

³⁴ Meeting with Alexander Drozdenko, Governor of the Leningrad Region of Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/vstrecha-s-gubernatorom-leningskoy-oblasti><https://president.gov.by/ru/events/vstrecha-s-gubernatorom-leningskoy-oblasti-rossii-aleksandrom-rossii-aleksandrom-drozdenko>

³⁵ Ecology - in focus of cooperation [Electronic resource]. -
URL:
<http://www.government.by/ru/content/9787>

2021. -

from Belarus, as well as supplies of pedigree livestock, fertilizers, engineering and wood processing products to Belarus"³⁶.

A good addition to the planned expansion of cooperation between the region and the republic in the next three years could be increased cooperation between the parties at the municipal level. According to the data of the Committee for External Relations of the Leningrad Region, to date, partnership or twinning relations have already been established between such districts as: 1. Volosovsky and Logoisky (2010); 2. Volkhovsky and Mozyr (2006); 3. Vyborg and Rechitsa (2011); 4. Gatchinsky and Nesvizh (2010); 5. Kingisepp and Svetlogorsk (2010); 6. Kirovsky and Myadelsky (2013); 7. Lomonosovsky and Baranovichsky (2008); 8. Luzhsky and Bobruisk city (2017); 9. Luzhsky and Gorodoksky (2014); 10. Podporozhsky and Miorsky (2017); 11. Priozersky and Mogilevsky (2006); 12. Slantsevsky and Shklovsky (2018); 13. Tikhvinsky and Dzerzhinsky (2009); 14. Tosnensky and Rogachevsky (2010); 15. Tosno and Polotsk (2010); 16. Shcheglovo Rural Settlement and Vileika District (2012); 17. The towns of Kommunar and Svetlogorsk (2007); 18. Sosnovoborski Urban District and Ostrovets District (2012, 2016).

As we can see, the potential for cooperation between the Leningrad region and the Republic of Belarus is already considerable. It is only necessary to update it as much as possible in all areas of mutual interest in accordance with the plans adopted by the joint commission. And then the results, which the parties are counting on, will not take long to come to fruition.

In the Siberian Federal District, **the Tomsk Region** has seriously stepped up cooperation with its Belarusian partners. In December 2020, the first meeting of the working group on cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with this Russian region was held, at which the parties agreed to focus on expanding the trade turnover, consider opportunities for manufacturing new products, including

³⁶ Belarus and the Leningrad region signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-leningradskaja-oblast-podpisali-soglasheniehttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-leningradskaja-oblast-podpisali-soglashenie- o-sotrudnichestveo-sotrudnichestve-434519-2021/>.

innovative ones, as well as opening joint ventures of various forms of ownership. The more so since "there are plenty of growth points for the development of cooperation in terms of satisfaction of needs in raw materials, components, finished products and natural resources"³⁷. In addition, contacts and cooperation in science, education and culture are set to be stepped up. This is the subject of the updated plan of joint activities for 2021-2023, which the Tomsk side submitted to the Belarusian partners for approval.

It should be recalled that the Agreement on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Tomsk Region was signed in 2016 as part of the plenary session of the Third Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia. In this document, which gave new impetus to the bilateral cooperation between the republic and the region, the parties identified the main priorities for joint work in a very wide range of areas, drawing on the already existing experience of interaction. And very soon concrete results of the implementation of this agreement appeared.

Thus, "the Agrarian Center of Tomsk Region signed a number of agreements on cooperation with the Scientific and Practical Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on Mechanization of Agriculture, the Grodno State Agrarian University, and the Belarusian State Agrarian Technical University"³⁸. National Research Tomsk State University, National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, Tomsk University of Control Systems and Radioelectronics, and Tomsk Scientific Centre of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences became participants in joint projects with Belarusian partners related to fundamental and applied research and the development of academic mobility

³⁷ Belarus is ready to cooperate with Tomsk Region in economic, humanitarian and scientific spheres - Hudyk [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-k-sotrudnichestvu-s-tomskoj-oblastiju-v-ekonomicheskoi-gotova-k-sotrudnichestvu-s-tomskoj-oblastiju-v-ekonomicheskoi-gumanitarnoi-i-nauchnoj-sferah-i-nauchnoj-sferah-421752-2020/>.

³⁸ Tomsk region has good opportunities for expanding economic ties with the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL:

<https://tomsk.er.ru/activity/news/uhttps://tomsk.er.ru/activity/news/u-tomskoj-oblasti-est-horoshie-vozmozhnosti-dlya-rasshireniya-ekonomicheskikh-svyezey-s-respublikoy-tomskoj-oblasti-est-horoshie-vozmozhnosti-dlya-rasshireniya-ekonomicheskikh-svyezey-s-respublikoy-belarus>

among graduate students and faculty members.

In particular, as part of the Union State Pramen program, scientists from the Tomsk Institute of Atmospheric Optics SB RAS and specialists from the Institute of Physics of the Belarusian Academy of Sciences jointly developed special complexes for monitoring the atmosphere, which allow not only to determine the distance to an object, but also to scan the composition of the atmosphere along the way. Thus, there is no need for sampling and analysis, as the data appear immediately on the operator's monitor. Another interesting project is the joint work of scientists from National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University and Belarusian State University "to develop nanocomposite coatings that are resistant to radiation for use in nuclear reactors. The research results may also be in demand in other areas where operation in extreme situations is expected: for example, in space, in steam turbines of thermal power plants"³⁹.

In line with the signed agreement, the partnership between the Russian region and the Belarusian manufacturer Amkodor is developing very effectively. In June 2016, the Tomsk Region approved a medium-term cooperation plan to expand the supply of its machinery. And today, this equipment is used in this Russian region in the utilities and forestry sectors. In particular, in December 2017, the Verkhneketsky leskhoz purchased a logging complex, which began to be used for selective and clear-cut sanitary felling as part of the execution of state assignments. "This is already the third logging complex that Amkodor has supplied to forestry enterprises of the region. By the way, it will now be easier to maintain this equipment, as the company opened its own service centre in the region in the summer of 2017"⁴⁰.

All these facts show that the basis for cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Tomsk Oblast is not bad, but it should be developed, because so far

³⁹ Technologies and Innovations in Cooperation of the Regions of the Union State as an Impetus for the Development of Eurasian Integration: Informational-Integration Project / coauthors, interviewer: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovski, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2017. - C. 202.

⁴⁰ Priority directions of development of regional cooperation as a key factor of union building: informational-integration project / coauthored and interviewed by K. Gusev, B. Zaleski. Gusev, B. Zaleski. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 345.

the mutual trade accounts for a small share in the total volume of their foreign economic activities - just over \$10 million in 10 months of 2020. The Tomsk side expects to focus its partnership development on such areas as "crop and livestock farming, hunting and fishing, industry and consumer market, ecological and rural tourism, additional professional education and advanced training, use of IT systems for state and municipal needs, support of innovative entrepreneurship"⁴¹. The Belarusian side sees prospects in supplying a wide range of export goods - buses, trucks, municipal vehicles, road-building machinery,

In short, the potential for partnership is considerable. In short, the potential for partnership between the sides is very solid. And it inspires optimism that the plans to expand cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Tomsk Oblast adopted at the first meeting of the working commission will be successfully implemented.

Speaking of the Belarusian partners in the Siberian Federal District, one should remember **Irkutsk Region**, where an agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technological, cultural and humanitarian cooperation was signed in December 2016. At that time, the first meeting of a working group formed by representatives of the parties was held to prepare a roadmap - the Action Plan for 2017-2019 - for the implementation of the signed agreement in a short time frame in order to rapidly increase trade and economic cooperation. The fact is that 2016 marked a serious problem in the development of partnership ties between Belarus and the Irkutsk Region - the trade turnover between the two sides dropped by almost half. This is despite the fact that in 2015 the mutual trade figure was the highest in five years - \$115 million. This gave the two sides a reason to make the main task for the near future very simple: "Belarus and the Irkutsk Region of Russia should find reserves to build up mutual trade"⁴².

⁴¹ Tomsk Region and Belarus agree to expand cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://tomsk.sm.news/tomskaya-oblast-i-belarus-dogovorilis-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-42561-tomsk.sm.news/tomskaya-oblast-i-belarus-dogovorilis-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-42561-u3t5/>.

⁴² Negotiations with the Governor of the Irkutsk Region Sergey Levchenko [Electronic resource]. -

⁴³It is worth recalling that in the pre-crisis period the trade and economic interaction between the sides was carried out in quite a wide range of areas, which included the creation of a system of business cooperation using modern information technologies and electronic systems, expanding the commodity range of mutual supplies, organization of service and repair centres for Belarusian-made equipment in Irkutsk region, organization and holding of joint fairs and exhibitions, as well as

In their search for new reserves of trade and economic cooperation, the two sides decided to build on the existing experience. First, the Belarusian side suggested using its export potential in Priangarye, where there are significant prospects in terms of supplies of quarry, cargo and other special equipment, as well as loaders for coal and other minerals deposits in the Russian region. After all, Belarus is well aware that Irkutsk Oblast is one of Russia's leaders in mining, so the mining equipment of the Belarusian Automobile Plant for the region's mining companies would come in handy. Besides, at that time Minsk Automobile Plant was "ready to meet the demand of the region for gas-powered passenger vehicles"⁴⁴. The Belarusian side offered such attractive financing schemes as leasing, budget subsidies and preferential lending for its export supplies, which may also affect the latest Belarusian innovations in the form of innovative urban electric vehicles - electric buses and trolleybuses with autonomous travel.

Second, an important section of the roadmap for cooperation between Belarus and the Irkutsk Region was to include industrial cooperation not only with the defense industry. In this regard, the attention of Belarusian manufacturers was drawn to the territory of advanced socioeconomic development of Usolye-Sibirskoye, which has a special tax regime and could be used for the assembly

2016. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news/ru/view/peregovory-s-gubematorom-irkutskoj-oblasti-sergeem-levchenko-15007/>

⁴³ Common Economic Space: Integration of Regions: Informational-Integration Project / co-comp. and interviewer: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovski, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2013. - C. 118.

⁴⁴ Andrey Kobayakov met with the Governor of the Irkutsk Region [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/6866>

of Belarusian tractors. The more so since "large areas of unused arable land in Irkutsk Oblast are planned to be put into agricultural turnover. The Russian region is resuming its leasing and investment programs for this project. This should facilitate the growth in sales of tractor equipment.⁴⁵ . The parties also named agriculture, construction, logging and water resources as other reserves for stepping up cooperation. All in all this list includes more than a dozen promising areas of joint activity, which, judging by all appearances, will continue to be supplemented. In particular, we are also talking about interaction between scientific institutions, especially those related to agriculture, as well as in the tourism sphere. All these facts testify to the seriousness of the intentions of the sides to raise the partnership relations to a qualitatively new level. And, it must be said, today these plans are gradually taking shape.

In March 2021, the Irkutsk Region and Minsk Tractor Plant agreed to supply more than 160 Belarusian tractors to this Russian region. They should significantly supplement the fleet of BELARUS-branded machines, which here are already close to ten thousand machines that are in demand in the Angara Region in agriculture and utilities sector. As part of further expansion of this cooperation, the Belarusian side made a statement about the possibility to "transfer forest and special-purpose machines for trial operation in the region's organizations. This kind of machinery has not been supplied to the region before. We are considering the possibility of buying vehicles for volunteers involved in extinguishing forest fires"⁴⁶ . Besides, the leadership of the Russian region and the Belarusian company have already discussed the possibility of opening a specialized service and technical centre that will make it possible to repair tractors from Belarus quickly and cheaply.

As a reminder, the cooperation agreement between the Irkutsk Region and

⁴⁵ BELARUS tractor assembly plant may appear in Irkutsk Region [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe-proizvodstvo- traktorov-belarus-mozhet-pojavitsja-v-irkutskoj-oblasti-222392-2016/>.

⁴⁶ Irkutsk region will buy more than 160 BELARUS tractors [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/irkutskaja-oblast-priobretet-bolee-160-traktorov-belarus-433486-2021/>

Minsk Tractor Works was signed in September 2020. At that time, the Russian region suggested "establishing several service stations in the Irkutsk Region so that it would be possible to repair Belarusian machinery, including overhauls"⁴⁷. All the more so because the region, as noted above, has territories of advanced socio-economic development with benefits, as well as a surplus of manpower. In March 2021, representatives of MTZ visited the site proposed by the Irkutsk side for the overhaul of BELARUS machinery in order to specifically determine all the components of the joint mutually beneficial project.

Note that back in November 2018, the parties agreed to establish and develop joint ventures in various areas. "Especially in those areas that the region is rich in. These are the timber processing complex, machine building, aircraft building"⁴⁸. In September 2020, the Belarusian side also announced its readiness to participate, along with other manufacturers, in tenders for the supply of cargo, timber, passenger, municipal, road-building equipment for the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects in Irkutsk Region. And among the promising areas of cooperation, she noted "cooperation in the forest industry, environmental protection and natural resources, recycling of municipal waste and provision of clean drinking water to the population"⁴⁹.

The intensification of cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Irkutsk Region five years ago had a positive impact on bilateral trade. Suffice it to say that in 2016-2019, the volume of trade turnover between the parties more than quadrupled and showed a record level of \$284 million in 2019. The basis of Belarusian exports to Priangarye then was made up of supplies of wires,

⁴⁷ MTZ and the Irkutsk region have signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-i-irkutskaja-oblast-zakljuchili-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-408690-2020/>

⁴⁸ Matveev, V. Belarus and Irkutsk region have agreed to create and develop the joint venture in different spheres / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-irkutskaja-oblast-dogovorilis-o-sozdanii-i-razviti-sp-v-raznyh-sferah-325641-2018/>

⁴⁹ Roman Golovchenko: Belarus is ready to participate in tenders for supplies of machinery to the Irkutsk Region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9587.government.by/ru/content/9587>

fluorides, trucks, tyres, car parts, rolling stock, paints, varnishes, lifts, milk and cream. For the first time in 2019, special-purpose vehicles and X-ray equipment were shipped to Irkutsk Region from Belarus. And in 2020, two new shops of Belarusian products, Traditions and Tastes, were also opened there. This is largely due to the fact that a variety of Belarusian goods and products have been represented in the region's retail market in recent years. These include "heavy trucks, passenger vehicles, trailed and crane trucks and spare parts of Belarusian manufacturers MAZ and MTZ, women's clothing - Belarusian knitwear, cosmetics, food products - cheese, dairy, meat, fruit and vegetable products"⁵⁰ . But the decline in economic activity caused by the coronavirus epidemic resulted in the fact that in 2020, "in January-October, trade turnover declined 2.1 times"⁵¹ . That is why in December 2020, at a meeting of the working group on cooperation between Belarus and the Irkutsk Region, the parties decided to focus their efforts on restoring the volume of mutual trade in 2021. The development of cooperation in the industrial sector and timber industry, as well as agriculture and the agro-industrial complex were named the most promising areas. Besides, "Belarusian mining equipment, <...> quarry machinery, public transport, electric cars, various types of transport on gas-motor fuel" can be of interest in this Russian region⁵² . As we can see, the parties have the capacity to successfully meet the challenge. Let us hope that they will be used to their full potential in the near future.

⁵⁰ Priority directions of regional cooperation development as a key factor of the union construction: informational-integration project / coauthors, interviewer: K. Gusev, B. Zalessky. Gusev, B. Zaleski. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 168.

⁵¹ The volume of trade turnover between Belarus and the Irkutsk region has doubled in five years [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/objem-tovarooborota-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-irkutskoj-oblastiju-za-pjat-let-udvoilsja-irkutskoj-oblastiju-za-pjat-let-udvoilsja-420587-2020/>

⁵² Meeting with Igor Kobzev, Governor of the Irkutsk Region of Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/vstrecha-s-gubematorom-irkutskov-oblasti-rossii-igorem-kobzevm>

CHAPTER 3

Orientation towards mutually beneficial cooperation

The results of the first two months of 2021 show that trade and economic ties between Belarus and Russia continue to develop on a steady growth trajectory. Thus, "the turnover of Belarus-Russia foreign trade in goods and services in January-February 2021 was \$5.3 billion, having increased by 11.9% against the same period in 2020. Exports of goods and services to Russia amounted to \$2.3 billion (up 2%)."⁵³ .

Among the Belarusian companies that feel confident in the Russian market is Minsk Motor Works (MMZ), which doubled its export deliveries to Russia in the first quarter of 2021. The main consumers of its products in the neighboring country are enterprises in Kursk, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod and Yaroslavl regions, the Republic of Bashkortostan and the Republic of Mordovia. "During 2021 Minsk Motor Works will continue developing the distribution network in Russia in two areas: engines and spare parts, as well as special machinery, to keep up the momentum of exports. Export of the products is planned to increase by 11%"⁵⁴ . The company also sees one more reserve for increasing its supplies to the Russian market in 2021 in organizing a permanent exhibition of a broader range of engines and special machinery at the trading and exhibition site of Trading House "Minsk Engine Plant" LLC in Noginsk and its partners in every federal district of Russia. Cooperating today with 59 Russian companies, Minsk motor builders are now working on establishing cooperation ties with ten more partners.

Belarus's Gomselmash, which has a distribution network of 60 entities in Russia, including 34 dealerships, two joint ventures and one trading house in Siberia, has also announced ambitious plans to increase supplies of its equipment to

⁵³ Roman Golovchenko: A package of proposals to deepen the integration of Belarus and Russia is in high gear [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9807.government.by/ru/content/9807>

⁵⁴ Minsk Motor Works doubled its deliveries to Russia in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. -

2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-motornyj-zavod-v-i-kvartale-v-dvahttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-motornyj-zavod-v-i-kvartale-v-dva- raza- uvelichil-postavki-v-rossijuraza-uvelichil-postavki-v-rossiju-437469-2021/>.

Russia in 2021 and has sold more than 3,200 units of self-propelled grain and forage harvesters in the Russian market over the 13 years of its existence. In 2020, sales of Gomselmash equipment in Russia increased by 163 per cent. Together with Bryanskseilmash alone, more than one thousand combines were sold to Russian regions. In addition, "in 2020, the company expanded the borders of supply and opened a new dealership in the Primorsky Krai - AgroSupport LLC"⁵⁵. All these facts give good reason for the Belarusian company to set a truly ambitious goal for itself in 2021 - to triple its supplies to Russia.

The Belarusian Steel Works (BSW) is also actively cooperating with Russian companies; its partners in Russia are both suppliers of key raw materials and major consumers of metal products. Suffice it to say that "in January-February 2021, BMZ's exports to Russia exceeded 58 thousand tons, up 8% from the same period in 2020. In monetary terms, exports to the Russian Federation exceeded \$43 million, which is a third higher than the same period last year."⁵⁶. This was due to an increase in sales of rebar, structural rolled steel, steel wire and steel cord.

The Belarusian Automobile Plant (BELAZ) is another good example of such a plan. In March 2021 alone, it supplied more than 93% of the total volume of machines and spare parts produced to foreign markets with an export growth rate of 142%. An important detail: "At the same time, the share of the Russian market, the largest among the traditional markets of the company, was 89.1% (growth rate 308.1%) in total March shipments"⁵⁷. In particular, under the long-term agreement on strategic partnership with the mining company

⁵⁵ "Gomselmash plans to triple deliveries of machinery to Russian regions in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-planiruet-utroithttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-planiruet-utroit-postavki-tehniki-v-rossijskie-regiony-v-2021-godupostavki-tehniki-v-rossijskie-regiony-v-2021-godu-436585-2021/>

⁵⁶ BMZ increases export deliveries [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uvlechivaet-eksportnye-postavki-433237-2021/www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uvlechivaet-eksportnye-postavki-433237-2021/>

⁵⁷ BELAZ increased production, sales and exports in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-v-i-kvartale-uvlechilhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-v-i-kvartale-uvlechil-objemy-proizvodstva-realizatsii-eksporta-produktsiiobjemy-proizvodstva-realizatsii-i-eksporta-produktsii-437188-2021/>

Kuzbassrazrezugol JSC, BELAZ is to supply 29 mine dump trucks by the end of April 2021. Three of them, with a capacity of 220 tons, were shipped to one of Kuzbassrazrezugol's production branch - the Kedrovsky coal mine - at the end of January of this year. It is noteworthy that the arrival of the other vehicles will substantially enlarge the technological fleet of more than half a thousand vehicles, which is dominated by the Belarusian equipment at the coal mines. "BELAZ machines are also used at the enterprises of Kemerovo Oblast's flagship coal mining company for mining and transportation operations, special machinery of the Belarusian manufacturer is used (irrigation trucks, tow-tractors, loaders, bulldozers)"⁵⁸. The presence of JSC BELAZ on the Russian market is also secured by the cooperation agreement signed with the St. Petersburg Mining University in April 2021, the implementation of which should help ensure that "in September [2021] one of Russia's largest mining universities will have modern and specialised classrooms fitted with exclusive equipment"⁵⁹. In this case, we are talking about the opening of the named university's innovative BELAZ Centre of Competence, which will be modelled on the best technological solutions in mechanical engineering, digital and information technology in the mining industry. Its main feature will be the use of virtual reality technologies, which will bring to a new level not only the training of university students, but also advanced training of specialists and managers of companies that operate machinery of the Belarusian manufacturer. The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) is also actively building ties with its partners in Russia. The dynamics of growing interest from Russian businesses in its electronic trading indicate that in 2021 Russia may become a leader on BUCE not only in the number of accredited companies, but

⁵⁸ BELAZ will deliver 29 dump trucks for one of Russia's largest coal companies [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavit-29-karjernihhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavit-29-karjernih-samosvalov-dlja-odnoj-iz-krupnejshih-ugolnyh-kompanij-rossii-samosvalov-dlja-odnoj-iz-krupnejshih-ugolnyh-kompanij-rossii-427978-2021/>

⁵⁹ BELAZ will open a competence centre at St. Petersburg Mining University [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-otkroet-tsentr-kompetentsij-v-sankthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-otkroet-tsentr-kompetentsij-v-sankt-peterburgskom-gornom-universitetepeterburgskom-gornom-universitete-437447-2021/>

also in the volume of exchange commodity turnover. Let us recall that "as at 1 December 2020, 2,482 residents of Russia were using the services of BUCE"⁶⁰. And the amount of exchange transactions carried out by them in January and February 2021, "was almost three times higher than during the same period in 2020, amounting to \$12 million"⁶¹. This has put Russia in third place on the list of the largest BUTB export markets. Lithuania (\$32 million) and Latvia (\$18 million) retained the first two places. And at the end of the first quarter of 2021, the sum of all transactions made by Russian exchange traders was close to \$38 million. Such growth in exports of Belarusian goods to the Russian market resulted from comprehensive measures taken by the BUCE to attract business entities from Russia to the exchange trade floor in Belarus. Among the main of them are: 1) simplification of the accreditation procedure at the BUTB; 2) regular webinars and online presentations for representatives of the Russian business community; 3) spot visits to leading industrial, woodworking and agrarian enterprises in various Russian regions. As a result, 30 new Russian companies interested in buying Belarusian meat and dairy products, rapeseed oil, and building materials, as well as in making transit deals for selling their goods to third countries, were accredited at the BUTB during the first two months of 2021. It should be noted that, so far, the decisive role in the increase The exchange trade figures are influenced by the close cooperation of the BUTB with the Russian border regions of Smolensk, Bryansk and Pskov.

In particular, the mention of **the Bryansk Region** in this list is explained by the fact that Belarus accounts for about half of the foreign trade turnover of this Russian region, which by itself is evidence of a fairly high level of trade and economic cooperation. Nevertheless, at a working meeting with the Bryansk Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry in March 2021, the parties noted

⁶⁰ Zalesky, B. With an eye to the future. Peculiarities of multi-vector partnership in modern conditions / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 97.

⁶¹ Russia is one of the top three export markets for BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossija-voshla-v-troiku-krupnejshih-eksportnyh-rynkov-butbhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossija-voshla-v-troiku-krupnejshih-eksportnyh-rynkov-butb-432830-2021/>.

the considerable potential for further expansion of cooperation specifically in the field of exchange trade. In this connection, the emphasis this year will be placed on "the agrarian sector and sale of industrial goods as the most promising areas for the development of cooperation"⁶². For this purpose, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Bryansk Region will use its entire network of business contacts to inform the Bryansk Region business community about the advantages of e-commerce on the BUTB.

The planned cooperation between the Belarusian Steel Exchange and the **Chelyabinsk Region** looks very promising. At the webinar on exchange trade with Belarus held in the middle of March 2021, several major producers and traders from the Russian region announced their plans to increase sales of metal products on the Belarus Exchange. "Interest in a more active application of the exchange mechanism, in particular, was expressed by representatives of Chelyabinsk Forging Press Plant, Liteiny Zavod LLC and Torgovy Dom MKK LLC. First of all, the matter is about an increase in supplies of ferrous rolled metal products that are consistently in high demand among Belarusian industrial enterprises."⁶³. By the way, we should mention that nearly 800 companies trade in ferrous metals and their products at the Belarusian Currency and Stock Exchange on a daily basis, and the number of transactions at one trading session can reach two million euros. It is clear that the arrival here of the largest Russian metal producers from the Chelyabinsk Region - the undisputed leader in ferrous metallurgy among other Russian regions - will only open up new opportunities and prospects for all participants in these trading sessions.

At the end of March 2021, with the help of the **Volgograd Region** Export

⁶² BUTB and the Bryansk Oblast Chamber of Commerce and Industry have agreed to cooperate [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tpp-brjanskoj-oblasti-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-431815-2021/>

⁶³ Chelyabinsk Region enterprises are interested in selling metal products at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-cheljabinskoi-oblasti-zainteresovany-v-realizatsii-metalloproducts-na-butb-oblasti-zainteresovany-v-realizatsii-metalloproducts-na-butb-433059-2021/>

Support Centre, a meeting with business representatives from this Russian region was held at the BUTB. As a result, several companies from Volgograd region "expressed interest in selling their products within the industrial and consumer goods section of the BUTB. In particular, there are plans to work out the issue of bidding for products for the construction industry, packaging materials and foodstuffs"⁶⁴. In early April 2021, the prospects for increasing exchange trade in Belarus were discussed with representatives of **Kursk** Oblast business circles during an online conference. Following the discussion, a number of enterprises of the Russian region expressed their readiness to exhibit their products on the BUTB's industrial and consumer goods platform. For instance, "the issue of selling food processing equipment, hi-tech rubber products, paper and corrugated cardboard packaging materials is being considered"⁶⁵. The BUTB also expects real results from the agreement reached in March 2021 on the activation of cooperation with the St. Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange. The exchange was set up in 2008 and is now the largest commodity exchange in Russia "specializing in trade in oil, oil products, gas, timber and mineral fertilizers"⁶⁶. It must be assumed that the actualisation of cooperation with such a serious partner can also yield equally serious results.

It appears that Russia's role for Belarusian construction services exports in 2021 will also increase markedly. But first, let us note that the growth of services exports in general is an important area for minimizing the dependence of the Belarusian economy on key factors of the foreign economic environment. In

⁶⁴ BUTB plans to establish closer cooperation with Volgograd Oblast [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-naladit-bolee-tesnoehttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-naladit-bolee-tesnoe-sotrudnichestvo-sotrudnichestvo-s--vol-go-gradskoj--oblasti-juju-434981-2021/>

⁶⁵ Enterprises of Kursk region plan to work in the Belarusian market through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-kurskoj-oblastihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-kurskoj-oblasti-planirujut-rabotat-na-beloruskom-rynke-cherez-butbplanirujut-rabotat-na-beloruskom-rynke-cherez-butb-435331-2021/>

⁶⁶ BUTB and the St Petersburg Mercantile Exchange agree to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-sankt-peterburgskaja-tovamo-svrievaja-birzha-dogovorilis-aktivizirovat-vzaimodejstvie-sankt-peterburgskaja-tovamo-svrievaja-birzha-dogovorilis-aktivizirovat-vzaimodejstvie-434334-2021/>

2021, Belarus continued to strengthen its efforts to increase its exports. Specifically, in the first quarter, "exports of services rose by 3.8% to \$2.287 billion <...>. The balance of foreign trade in services was positive at \$1.041 billion (in January-March 2020, the surplus was \$1.014 billion)." ⁶⁷ . The export of construction services, which exceeded half a billion dollars in 2020, is not the least of these figures. Today, it is one of the promising directions of development of the Belarusian construction industry, where comprehensive measures are being taken to further increase and expand its geographic reach, and where the Russian market, which has a significant potential, is beginning to play an increasingly important role. This is largely due to the fact that "there is currently a shortage of construction workers in Russia. The issue of attracting them to key construction projects, such as theatres and cultural centres in Vladivostok and Kaliningrad, and the Vostochny launch site, is an urgent one" ⁶⁸ .

Given the growth in construction in the neighboring country, the Belarusian side is already taking concrete steps to promote its export interests there. For example, coordination subgroups for cooperation in construction have already been set up in seven Russian regions, and "a portfolio has been created in Russia for the near future totaling over 3 billion Russian rubles. This includes schools in Kaluga, Voronezh and Leningrad Regions and St. Petersburg, and residential buildings in Kaluga, Kursk and Kaliningrad Region" ⁶⁹ . All in all, Belarusian builders plan to build more than ten social facilities in Russia by the end of 2025. In particular, Belstroytsentr Holding "is now simultaneously building

⁶⁷ Belarus increased exports of goods and services by 19.5% to \$10.3 billion in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-i-kvartale-uvlechila-eksporthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-i-kvartale-uvlechila-eksport-tovarov-i-uslug-tovar-i-uslug-na-195-do-103-mld195-do-103-mld-441081-2021/>.

⁶⁸ Sivak: Belarus is interested in increasing exports of construction services to Russia [Electronic resource] : <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sivak-belarus-www.belta.by/economics/view/sivak-belarus-zainteresovana-v-naraschivanii-eksporta-stroitelnyh-uslug-v-rossiiu-442169-2021/>

⁶⁹ Parkhamovich, R. The tasks set for the construction industry this year will be fulfilled / R. Parkhamovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/postavlennye-pered-stroimiroshchimi-otraslami-zadachi-v-etom-godubudut-vypolnenny-7784>

about five social infrastructure facilities in the Leningrad and Kaluga Regions"⁷⁰

⁷¹As for **Voronezh Oblast**, which is seriously interested in expanding cooperation with Belarusian partners in construction, we are talking, first of all, about implementation of a joint pilot project in the urban type settlement Strelitsa in Semiluki District to build a 520-seat school, participation of Belarusian companies BelinzhiniringstroyInvest LLC and Stroitelny Trust №12 OJSC in building pre-school and general educational institutions in Semiluki District, and also about using "Belarusian prefabricated houses in implementation of the project. The theatre and cultural centre in Vladivostok, already mentioned above, is set to become one of the largest construction projects in 2021 in cooperation between Belarus and Primorsky Krai. The centre will also house the Mariinsky Theatre's maritime stage and exhibitions of famous Russian museums. And in general, according to the governor of this Russian region, O. Kozhemyako, this centre "will become a real jewel of the entire Asia-Pacific region and can be compared, for example, to the theatre in Sydney, Australia"⁷².

Another Russian region, where the possibility for participation of Belarusian builders in the construction of housing and social facilities is being carefully considered, is **Novgorod Region**. There are 15 organizations with Belarusian capital already registered here, but until recently, cooperation with partners from Belarus was mainly in the agro-industrial sector in the form of supplies of agricultural machinery, food products and processing. This contributed to the fact that in 2020 the trade turnover between the parties reached \$57.5 million. In

⁷⁰ More than 10 social facilities in Russia are to be built by the end of 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://mas.gov.by/ru/news ru/view/do-kontsa-2025-goda-planiruetsia-postroit- bolee-10-sotsialnvx-objektov-v-rossii-1313/>

⁷¹ Voronezh region is interested in expanding cooperation with Belarus in construction [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/voronezhskaja-oblast-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-v-stroitelstve-429176-2021/>

⁷² Belarusian specialists to build turnkey theatre building in Primorye [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-stroiteli-budut-stroit-pod-kljuchhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-stroiteli-budut-stroit-pod-kljuch- zdanie-teatra-v-zdanie-teatra-v-primorj ee-434288-2021/>

this case, supplies of Belarusian goods - dairy products, eggs, plastics, sugar, timber, fertilizers, electrical machinery and equipment - increased by almost 20 percent. By all appearances, it is the construction industry that will soon be contributing to these figures. The fact is that "the region needs at least two new schools and several kindergartens. The quality of work of builders from Belarus is always quite high <...>. We have already had the experience of interaction: Belarus built the so-called medical house for us. We are interested in the construction capacities of our colleagues from Belarus"⁷³.

The sides are also discussing the idea of Belarusian specialists building a new runway "not far from Veliky Novgorod, in the place where Krechevitsy military airfield used to be"⁷⁴. The Bryansk and Gomel regions also offer great opportunities for cooperation in the construction sector. In particular, in April 2021 the parties discussed the prospects of Belarusian companies' participation in the implementation of such projects as "Construction of the Bryansk 1 - Bryansk 2 (1st stage) motorway protective levee", the Educational establishment "secondary school No 71" and the palace of martial arts in the Sovetsky district of Bryansk"⁷⁵. As we can see, the Russian vector of Belarusian exports of construction services is already quite broad and diverse. And it continues to expand. Let us hope that this trend will only contribute to the successful implementation of the tasks set for the builders of the allied countries.

Many Russian regions are actively developing ties with their Belarusian partners in 2021. Among them is **the Republic of Tatarstan**, which is among those with

⁷³ Pivovarov, E. Novgorod Oblast is working on the possibility of participation of Belarusian builders in the construction of social facilities / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novgorodskaja-oblast-prorabatvvaet-vozmozhnost-uchastijahttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/novgorodskaja-oblast-prorabatvvaet-vozmozhnost-uchastija-beloruskich-stroitelej-v-vozvedenii-beloruskich-stroitelej-v-vozvedenii-438576-2021/>.

⁷⁴ Pivovarov, E. In Novgorod region they plan to restore air communication with Minsk and Gomel / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/society/view/vhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/v-novgorodskoj-oblasti-planirujut-vosstanovit-aviasoobschenie-s-minskom-i-gomelemnovgorodskoj-oblasti-planirujut-vosstanovit-aviasoobschenie-s-minskom-i-gomelem-438579-2021/>

⁷⁵ The Gomel and Bryansk regions will discuss the development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-i-brjanskaja-oblasti-obsudjat-razvitiesotrudnichestvahttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-i-brjanskaja-oblasti-obsudjat-razvitiesotrudnichestva-437066-2021/>.

which trade turnover in January-February 2021 grew considerably - by more than 80 percent to nearly \$175 million. At the same time, Belarusian exports increased by nearly a quarter, reaching nearly \$55 million. This was due to an increase in supplies from Belarus of tractors and tractor units, oil gases, stranded ferrous metal wire without electrical insulation, parts and accessories for cars and tractors, tyres, seamless pipes, tubes and profiles made of ferrous metals, soybean oil extraction waste, fresh or chilled beef, unalloyed steel wire, cheese and curds, tyre cord material, paints and synthetic polymer-based non-aqueous lacquers, furniture and furniture parts. In April 2021, the parties signed a protocol of agreements that "envisage further mutual interest in the development of trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian cooperation between Belarus and Tatarstan"⁷⁶, which will focus on the development of cooperation in the industrial and scientific-technological sphere. It should be recalled that the interaction between the parties is currently developing within the framework of the intergovernmental Agreement on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation of 23 June 2004, which created the preconditions for the formation of a common scientific, technological and innovation space. Last year saw the completion of the Action Plan 2017-2020 to implement the basic agreement. Due to the fact that Tatarstan today pays special attention to the development of production of high-tech products and the establishment of joint ventures, in this Russian region Belarusian partners are given the opportunity to work at the "investment sites of the Republic. It is important to deepen cooperation of commodity producers, first of all, in the field of mechanical engineering and high technology"⁷⁷.

⁷⁶ Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Tatarstan actively develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9816>. [government.by/ru/content/9816](http://www.government.by/ru/content/9816)

⁷⁷ Minnikhanov, R. It is important to deepen cooperation of commodity producers, first of all, in the sphere of mechanical engineering and high technologies / R. Minnikhanov // Technologies and innovations in cooperation of the Union State regions as an impulse of Eurasian integration development: inform.-integration project / coauthors, interviewer: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2017. - C. 30.

It should be noted that back in 2017, the two sides set a goal to restore the record level of trade turnover of two billion dollars, which was achieved in 2012.⁷⁸ The 7th meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation between Belarus and Tatarstan, held in October 2019, identified specific areas for joint work in the coming years to achieve the goal, "including supplies of passenger buses, Amkodor machinery, a wide range of agricultural equipment; implementation of joint projects in the gas vehicle sector, in particular - production of passenger vehicles, tractors, municipal and agricultural equipment, engines; expansion of the volume and range of supplies of vehicles and equipment to Belarus. At the same time, cooperation agreements were signed by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, as well as the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and Kazan Federal University.

As a result of implementing the provisions of the 4-year plan, by February 2020, Tatarstan had already: two assembly factories - Belarusian tractors and Mogilevliftmash - were in operation; four companies with Belarusian capital were in operation: OOO TIC MTZ-Tatarstan, OOO Amkodor-Bel, OOO Molodechnomebel Trading House and a representative office of Pinskdrv Holding dealer network of such Belarusian enterprises as Gomselmash, Minsk Tractor Works, Mogilevliftmash, Minsk Automobile Plant, Amkodor, Borisov Plant of Automobile and Tractor Electrical Equipment; TPC MTZ-Tatarstan LLC became the official distributor of MTZ OJSC in Russia, having its own production base, transport and logistics division, being engaged in service maintenance. Successful development of cooperation in machine building has led to the fact that "almost 60% of Tatarstan's fleet of agricultural machinery is equipped with MTZ tractors, over 60% of forage harvesters and 40% of grain harvesters - with Gomselmash equipment". The fleet of passenger vehicles in

⁷⁸ The 7th meeting of the working group on cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Tatarstan of the Russian Federation was held in the Concern [Electronic resource], - 2019. - URL:

<http://http://www.belneftekhim.by/press/news/eafc42c9330d3164.html.belneftekhim.by/press/news/eafc42c9330d3164.html>

Kazan consists of more than 50% of MAZ buses and Belkommunmash trams"⁷⁹. And there are good prospects for cooperation in the NGV sector, where there are joint projects implemented by RariTEK together with Minsk plants - automobile, tractor and motor works.

At the 8th meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation, which was held via videoconference in November 2020, the parties noted the active development of economic ties between enterprises in the engineering and petrochemical industries, as well as in agriculture, passenger transport, ecology, healthcare science, while emphasizing that "the key area remains cooperation in the petrochemical sector, which accounts for half of Belarus' trade with Tatarstan"⁸⁰. As a result, the Action Plan 2021-2023 was approved, which envisages many new interesting joint projects. Already in January 2021 in Kichketan rural settlement of Agryz municipal district of Tatarstan the Belarusian UP "Polymerconstruction" "successfully implemented a pilot project in the field of ecology on water treatment"⁸¹. And now the question of participation of this UE in implementation of projects on other objects of Tatarstan is being solved.

Another Russian region I would like to mention in this context is the **Sakhalin Oblast** which signed an action plan for 2021-2023 to implement the agreement between the governments on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation in May 2021. This took place during a meeting of the working group for the development of bilateral cooperation which focused on prospects of "increasing deliveries of foodstuffs, agricultural, quarry, passenger and road

⁷⁹ Pivovar, E. Petrochemistry, industrial cooperation, transport projects - Semashko visited Tatarstan / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/neftehimijahttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/neftehimija-promkooperatsija-transportnye-proekty-semashko-posetil-tatarstanpromkooperatsija-transportnye-proty-semashko-posetil-tatarstan-378550-2020/>.

⁸⁰ Belarus and Tatarstan approve Cooperation Plan for 2021-2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<http://http://www.embassybel.ru/departments/kazan/news/53efd46968aa.html.embassybel.ru/departments/kazan/news/53efd46968aa.html>

⁸¹ The Belarusian company UP "Polimerkonstruktsiya" has successfully implemented a pilot project in the field of ecology in the Republic of Tatarstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<http://http://www.embassybel.ru/departments/kazan/news/29939dd56309.html.embassybel.ru/departments/kazan/news/29939dd56309.html>

construction machinery, lift equipment and other products"⁸² . It should be recalled that the cooperation agreement between the parties was signed in September 2015 at the venue of the Second Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia. The main objectives outlined in it were to increase mutual trade turnover, intensify business contacts, and cooperate in the social sphere - health care, education, and social protection.

Note that this Russian region is characterised by active foreign economic activity, which it conducts primarily with countries of the Asia-Pacific region - South Korea, Japan, and China. Overall, "Sakhalin Oblast foreign trade turnover in 2020 was USD 12.2 million. USD"⁸³ . Nevertheless, the Republic of Belarus has been developing its niche in these international partnerships since the signing of the cooperation agreement, as evidenced by concrete facts.

Thus, in 2017, the volume of mutual trade between Belarus and Sakhalin amounted to almost five million dollars. The Russian consumer market saw a sharp increase in Belarusian meat, sausage, dairy products, textiles and knitwear, footwear and leather haberdashery. Suffice it to say that in August 2020 in the administrative centre of the Russian region - Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk - the fourteenth (!) shop of the retail network Belorusskiy Firm was opened, where products from Belarus are represented by a wide range of sausages and meat delicacies from Brest and Grodno meat processing plants, dairy products from Minsk Dairy Plant, confectionery products from Kommunar, Spartak, Red food producer factories, canned products from ABC Group. "Besides traditional assortment, the product line of the shop now includes Belarusian ice-cream of 10-12 titles"⁸⁴ . Machinery of various classes from Belarus for the

⁸² Belarus and the Sakhalin region signed a cooperation plan for 2021-2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-sahalinskajahttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-sahalinskaja-oblast-podpisali-plan-oblast-podpisali-plan-meroprijatii-po-sotrudnichestvu-na-202-po-sotrudnichestvu-na-2021-2023-gody-2023-gody-441087-2021>

⁸³ Sakhalin Oblast Foreign Trade Results for 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://sakhalin.gov.ru/index.php?id=152>

⁸⁴ Another "Belarusian branded" shop opened in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk [Electronic resource]. - 2020. -

agro-industrial, housing and communal services, road construction and timber industries are widely used here. "Due to the large number of Belarusian-made machines in operation in Sakhalin Oblast, the need for a unified service centre to service them was raised. Thanks to joint efforts, a service centre of BelMashService LLC for servicing equipment manufactured in the Republic of Belarus was opened in the regional capital in April 2017"⁸⁵.

Over the past five years, the partnership between the republic and the Russian region in the field of agriculture has developed strongly. Already "in 2016, the Belarusian side resumed potato cultivation on Sakhalin after a 30-year break, planting its seeds on the island on the first 40 hectares"⁸⁶. Later a dairy farm for one thousand cattle was built at the Korsakov Sovkhoz using Belarusian technologies. Interestingly, this construction was divided into two stages. First there were eight hay and silage trenches with a capacity of two thousand tonnes each. In the second stage buildings and constructions of the main production, biomass processing, engineering and transport infrastructure were built. Three cowsheds and three heifer houses were erected to house animals. "When the enterprise reaches its designed capacity, it will give 7 thousand tons of milk and 200 tons of meat annually to the inhabitants of the island region. <...> The agricultural project, which has been implemented in the south of Sakhalin, has been included in the sectoral state agricultural development programme."⁸⁷. An agro-town with 50 one-storey three-bedroom houses of the Belarusian type was also built here. In February 2018, the first nine families of state farm workers received the keys to flats in the new buildings on Belorusskaya Street. "This is

URL:

<http://http://www.embassybel.ru/departments/khabarovsk/news/fe085b1056fe.html.embassybel.ru/departments/khabarovsk/news/fe085b1056fe.html>

⁸⁵ Belik, A. Our plans are to expand the range of cooperation / A. Belik // Priority directions of regional cooperation as a key factor of union building: inform.-integration project / compiled, interviewed by: K. Gusev, B. Zalesky. Gusev, B. Zalesky. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 323-324.

⁸⁶ Zalesky, B. The formula for multi-vectorism. Opportunities for international cooperation in the context of globalization / B. Zaleski. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2017. - C. 60.

⁸⁷ A 1,000-head dairy farm has opened in southern Sakhalin [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [https://sakhalin.gov.ru/index.php?id=105&https://sakhalin.gov.ru/index.php?id=105&no_cache=1&cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=12461](https://sakhalin.gov.ru/index.php?id=105&https://sakhalin.gov.ru/index.php?id=105&no_cache=1&cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=12461)

now the largest modern rural housing development in Sakhalin Oblast"⁸⁸.

As for other areas of cooperation, back in December 2017, the Belarusian side proposed to improve coal mining and transportation methods in Sakhalin, as these proposals "can significantly improve the infrastructure of the island's coal company and give a powerful boost to the development of the coal mining industry in the region as a whole. This is a whole new level of interaction between our parties."⁸⁹. And already in 2020 the island's Solntsevo coal mine "started using 14 new Belorussian mine dump trucks with the capacity of 220 tonnes"⁹⁰. The parties see serious potential for further development of interaction in active cooperation through the chambers of commerce and industry - in organising online negotiations, holding joint exhibitions, seminars, as well as establishing direct links between business circles and economic entities of the republic and the region. They have an eye for results.

At the April 2021 meeting of the leaders of the governments of Belarus and Russia, it was noted that "the topic of integration in the economic sphere is a priority issue on the bilateral agenda"⁹¹. The trend towards the restoration of the bilateral Belarusian-Russian trade turnover, which has been taking shape since the beginning of 2021, shows that the sides are successfully developing integration cooperation in many areas, despite the known objective difficulties. This gives new positive impetus to the fuller realization of the Union State's potential.

⁸⁸ Pivovarov, E. An agro-town based on a Belarusian project has been erected on Sakhalin [Electronic resource]. -

2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/agrogorodok-po-beloruskomu-proektu-vozvelina-sahaline-289289-2018/>

⁸⁹ Pivovarov, E. Belarus will help improve methods of coal mining and transportation in Sakhalin / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-usovershenstvovat-metody-dobychi-i-transportirovki-ugli-a-na-sahaline-277311-2017/>

⁹⁰ Pivovarov, E. Deliveries of Belarusian heavy trucks and cooperation in the agro-industrial complex - Semashko visited Kuzbass and Sakhalin / E. Pivovarov // [Electron resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/postavki-belorusskih-bolshegruzov-i-sotrudnichestvo-v-apk-semashko-posetil-kuzbass-i-sahalin-404918-2020/>

⁹¹ Roman Golovchenko: A package of proposals to deepen the integration of Belarus and Russia is in high gear [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9807.government.by/ru/content/9807>

CHAPTER 4

Forum of the regions as a generator of new ideas

The Eighth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, held in late June - early July 2021, focused on the topical issues of the Union State development in five thematic sections, such as: 1) Russian-Belarusian cooperation in science and education in the era of "big challenges" and digital technologies; 2) the role of digitalization in formation of the Union State common scientific and technological space; 3) interaction of Belarus and Russia on implementation of Union programmes and S&T projects under international agreements; 4) law and digitalization in the Union State: prospects and directions; 5) young people online: digital environment of the future. The Forum participants' attention to the topic of interaction of the parties in science, technology and innovation spheres is explained by the fact that large-scale cooperation in these fields is implemented via the Union State programmes, the use of which "allows increasing the integration level of our economies, developing co-operation between enterprises, increasing the competitiveness of jointly manufactured products"⁹² and which today should be aimed not only at maintaining individual enterprises and industries, but rather at creating and developing the Union State programmes. The following industries were mentioned as such at the VIIIth Forum of Belarusian Regions and Russia: 1) intellectual systems of information analysis; 2) supercomputers, neuron networks, artificial intelligence; 3) space instrument engineering and technology; 4) new laser materials; 5) microelectronics; 6) electric transport; 7) multifunctional unmanned systems; 8) nuclear power; 9) information security.

⁹³The formation of a common scientific and technological space of Belarus and Russia, which provides for harmonisation of national legislation in the scientific

⁹² Igor Petrishenko: Interaction between Belarus and Russia in science, technology and innovations is aimed at creating a common scientific and technological space [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9897.government.by/ru/content/9897>

⁹³ Belarus and Russia have achieved a lot in science and technology - Karasin [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarusi-i-rossii-udalos-mnogogo-dobitsja-vhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/belarusi-i-rossii-udalos-mnogogo-dobitsja-v-nauchno-tehnicheskoy-sfere-karasinnauchno-technicheskoy-sfere-karasin-448170-2021/>.

and technological field, is necessary to create equal opportunities for Belarusian and Russian scientists to work in the Union State and carry out joint research and development in priority areas for both countries, among which "new materials and chemical procedures, ecology and environmental management, technology for living

Let us recall that during the existence of the Union State "more than 60 Union programmes have already been implemented in the economy, space, security, agriculture, with 41 billion Russian rubles spent on these purposes"⁹⁴. In particular, scientific and technical programmes on the development of remote sensing of the Earth, fodder production and genetic research have been implemented. In 2020, such a landmark S&T programme of the Union State as Auto Electronics was completed, which envisaged "the development of a new generation of electronic components for control and safety systems of special and dual-purpose motor vehicles. The results of the programme were used in the development of robotic unmanned mine dump trucks BELAZ, which are already operating in the quarries of the Siberian Coal Energy Company"⁹⁵.

But today the task is to be even more actively involved in the preparation of proposals for new programmes not only to the federal and republican executive authorities, but also to the representatives of the regions of the two countries. Note that "eight S&T programmes are currently being implemented in the Union State, and three more are being prepared"⁹⁶. Another six new draft programme concepts are in a high degree of readiness:

⁹⁴ Mezentsev at the Forum of Regions called for more active involvement in the preparation of proposals for Union programmes [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mezentsevhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/mezentsev-na-forume-regionovna-forume-regionov-prizval-aktivnee-vkljuchitsja-v-podgotovka-predlozhenij-dlja-sojuznyh-448530-2021/>.

⁹⁵ Belarus and Russia plan to create a single registry of Union State Technoparks [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-rossija-planirujuthttps://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-rossija-planirujut-.edinyj-reestr-tehnoparkov-sojuznogo-gosudarstvasozdat-edinyj-reestr-tehnoparkov-sojuznogo-gosudarstva-448127-2021/>

⁹⁶ Pivovarov, E. 8 scientific-technical programs are being implemented in the Union State, three more are being prepared - Russian Deputy Prime Minister / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-sojuznom-gosudarstve-realizujutsja-8-nauchno-tehnicheskikhhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-sojuznom-gosudarstve-realizujutsja-8-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-programm-gotovjatsja-esche-3-vitse-premjerprogram-gotovjatsja-esche-3-vitse-premjer-448523-2021/>.

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

In addition, a project is being prepared to expand the research computer network to connect leading centres and universities not only in Belarus and Russia, but also in the entire Eurasian Economic Union, which will allow scientific and educational organizations of the participating countries to interact effectively, including through remote access to research infrastructure. And the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus, the Association of Clusters and Technoparks of Russia, and the Standing Committee of the Union State are creating an IT platform for a unified register of technoparks of the two countries with the subsequent development of a system for storing, systematising, analysing and graphically visualising data. The Union State has also recently started preparing a common basic research programme and a roadmap for cooperation, which defines objectives and priorities such as "capacity building in space research, expansion of nuclear research topics, informatics and robotics, development of quantum research, research on the creation of advanced nanomaterials"⁹⁷. All of this, of course, is yet to come.

The eighth forum also demonstrated the very extensive potential for further development of interaction between the specific regions of the two countries that

⁹⁷ Gusakov suggested accelerating the creation of a unified science and technology space in the SG [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/gusakov-predlozhit-uskorit-sozdanie-edinogo-nauchno-tehnologicheskogo-prostranstva-sgozdanie-edinogo-nauchno-tehnologicheskogo-prostranstva-sg-448546-2021/>.

make up the Union State. When it comes to the contracts signed during the forum, "in the real sector of the economy, it is about \$800 million."⁹⁸ . Undoubtedly, such high results of the Belarusian-Russian partnership are facilitated by the fact that about 80 regions are involved in this interregional cooperation on the Russian side. "The Republic of Bashkortostan, the Samara Region, the Stavropol Territory, the Kursk Region, the Komi Republic, the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, the Nenets Autonomous District are actively developing cooperation"⁹⁹ . The **Moscow region**, among whose foreign trade partners Belarus ranks second only to China, can also be mentioned. There are already "120 Belarusian companies operating successfully in this Russian region, and representative offices of Belarusian companies supplying food and engineering products have been opened"¹⁰⁰ . While 23 companies from the Moscow Region concluded export contracts with Belarusian partners in the entire year 2020, 28 companies already did so in the first half of 2021. The role of Russian partners is high for the Belarusian metropolitan area as well. First, over the five months of 2021 trade turnover with Russia increased by 30 percent at once, amounting to more than \$2.2 billion. In this case, exports from the Belarusian capital region increased by more than a third, and "the foreign trade balance with goods has turned positive at \$624.3 million"¹⁰¹ . Secondly,

⁹⁸ Kochanova: the Forum of Regions has a solid baggage of signed agreements and contracts [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/kochanova-u-forumov-regionovhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/kochanova-u-forumov-regionov-solidnyi-bagazh-iz-podpisannyh-soglashenij-i-kontraktovsolidnyi-bagazh-iz-podpisannyh-soglashenij-i-kontraktov-448569-2021/>.

⁹⁹ About 80 Russian regions participate in interregional cooperation with Belarus - Vorobyov [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/okolo-80-rossiiskihhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/okolo-80-rossiiskih-regionov-uchastvujut-v-mezhregionalnom-sotrudnichestve-s-belarusiju-vorobievreionov-uchastvujut-v-mezhregionalnom-sotrudnichestve-s-belarusiju-vorobiejevregionov-uchastvujut-v-mezhregionalnom-sotrudnichestve-s-belarusiju-vorobiejev-448283-2021>

¹⁰⁰ Pivovar, E. Belarus is second only to China in terms of trade with Moscow Region - Governor / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-po-objemu-torgovli-s-podmoskoviem-ustupaet-tolko-kitaju-gubematorobjemu-torgovli-s-podmoskoviem-ustupaet-tolko-kitaju-gubemator-448521-2021/>.

¹⁰¹ Minsk Region and Russia plan to implement a unique business project in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskaja-oblast-https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskaja-oblast-i-rossija-planirujut-realizovat-unikalnyi-biznes-proekt-v-sfere-selskogo-hozjajstvarossija-planirujut-realizovat-unikalnyi-biznes-proekt-v-sfere-selskogo-hozjajstva-451727-2021/>.

the volume of foreign direct investments from Russia in 2021 increased as well. In the first quarter alone, they amounted to almost \$95 million. And, judging by the available investment cooperation plans, this value is far from being the limit. Speaking about the Brest region in this context, we note that it "has concluded and is implementing 26 agreements on cooperation with Russian regions, including the Penza, Astrakhan, Belgorod, Bryansk, Irkutsk regions, Kaliningrad, Kaluga, Kostroma, Lipetsk, Novosibirsk, Pskov, Saratov, Smolensk, Tyumen Regions, Stavropol Territory, Karachay-Cherkessia, Buryatia, Udmurtia, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District"¹⁰². Besides, there are more than 40 agreements on cooperation between Brest region's cities and districts and Russian municipal entities. This may be the reason why, in the course of preparations for the VIII Forum of Belarusian-Russian Regions, the region's enterprises signed commercial contracts worth over \$120 million with Russian partners. Note that the share of the Russian market in the total volume of supplies from the Belarusian region exceeds 60 percent. The main export commodities include meat and dairy products, cattle meat, ready-made and tinned fish, gas cookers, and children's toys. More than 330 enterprises with Russian capital are registered in the Brest region. The best known of them are JV Brestgazoapparat OJSC, Vastega FLLC, ANREX FLLC, BelINEKO LLC, STiM FLLC, RusBelGaz FLLC, Frost & Co LLC.

The Russian vector of interaction remains a key foreign trade area for the Grodno Region as well, as it accounts for more than half of foreign supplies from here. Grodno Region works with 74 regions of Russia and signed agreements on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation with 27 regions. The Republic of Bashkortostan and Tomsk Oblast added to this list of partners at the VIII Forum of Belarusian-Russian Regions. With the intensification of interregional ties in Russia, the enterprises of Grodno Oblast

¹⁰² Brest Region enterprises signed contracts worth \$120 million for the Forum of Regions [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatija-brestskojhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatija-brestskoj-.podpisali-k-forumu-regionov-kontrakty-na-120-mlnoblasi-podpisali-k-forum-regionov-kontrakty-na-120-mln-447664-2021/>

are able to increase the range of goods and expand the geography of supplies. "The total amount of contracts of the region's producers, primarily in the meat and dairy industries, as well as industrial enterprises, with Russian counterparties is 12 billion Russian rubles"¹⁰³.

Russia's foreign economic relations are successfully developing in the Gomel Oblast as well. The trade turnover between the Oblast and Russia increased by nearly 20 percent over the first five months of 2021 and totaled nearly USD 2.5 billion. The top five recipients of Gomel Oblast enterprises are Moscow Oblast, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Bryansk and Smolensk Oblasts. The most popular products are rods and wire made of iron and non-alloy steel, dairy products, agricultural machinery and spare parts, synthetic fibers, nonwoven materials, metalware. An equally important area of cooperation is investment. "In January-March 2021, foreign investments from the Russian Federation amounted to \$154.3 million"¹⁰⁴. This is largely due to the fact that 361 companies with Russian capital are already operating in the Gomel region, 12 of which are residents of the Gomel-Raton free zone. Moreover, the Gomel Oblast Executive Committee has signed 22 bilateral agreements on cooperation with Russian regions. Another 78 similar documents were signed at the level of towns and districts of the Gomel region and their partners in the neighboring country.

Among the Russian regions actively developing cooperation with Belarusian partners in 2021 is **the Vladimir Region**. In May this year, a meeting of the working group on cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and this Russian region was held, at which the parties considered the whole range of trade and

¹⁰³ Grodno region signs agreements with the Republic of Bashkortostan and Tomsk region [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblasthttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-podpisvvaet-soglashenija-s-respublikoi-bashkortostan-i-tomskoi-oblastijupodpisvvaet-soglashenija-s-respublikoi-bashkortostan-i-tomskoi-oblastiju-448192-2021/>

¹⁰⁴ Belarus and Russia need to develop cooperation in IT - Lukyanov [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/societv/view/belarusi-i-rossii-neobhodimo-razvivathttps://www.belta.by/society/view/belarusi-i-rossii-neobhodimo-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-it-lukjanovsotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-it-lukjanov-452331-2021/>

economic cooperation - in industry, agriculture, construction, housing and utilities sector, exhibition and fair activities, as well as at the level of districts and cities. The tone of the discussion was set by the fact that in 2020 the trade turnover between the republic and the region "amounted to \$244 million and fell by 6.7% compared to 2019"¹⁰⁵. In this regard, the working group outlined ways to rectify the situation in mutual trade. To this end, new points of growth in the development of partnerships with this region of Russia were identified. These include cooperation in light industry, mechanical engineering, construction, and the agro-industrial complex.

The two countries signed an agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technical, and socio-cultural cooperation in September 2015 as part of the Second Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which was held in Sochi. This document contained agreements "to create the necessary organisational, financial, economic and legal conditions for the operation of joint ventures, development and implementation of joint projects and programmes of mutual interest"¹⁰⁶. In December 2017, it was supplemented by an action plan for the implementation of this agreement for 2018-2020, which played a positive role in boosting interaction between the parties. In particular, it was already noted at that time that "products from Belarusian companies are of great interest to the Vladimir Region. Among the imported products are binders for the production of foundry molds and cores, fiberglass and fiberglass products, cheeses and cottage cheese, tableware and kitchenware"¹⁰⁷. At that time 34 enterprises, in which Belarusian

¹⁰⁵ Chervikov: New points of growth identified in trade with the Vladimir region of Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervikov-opredelenyhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervikov-opredeleny-novve-tochki-rosta-v-torgovle-s-vladimirskoj-oblastiju-rossii-novve-tochki-rosta-v-torgovle-s-vladimirskoj-oblastiju-rossii-443237-2021/>.

¹⁰⁶ Zalesky, B. Belarus-Russia: formula for integration. Chronicle of union building. / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. - C. 45.

¹⁰⁷ Konyshch, A. Belarusian goods are sold in a considerable part of the regional trade objects / A. Konyshch // Priority directions of regional cooperation as a key factor of the Union construction: inform.-integration project / co-compiled, interviewed: K. Gusev, B. Zaleski. Gusev, B. Zalesky. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 118.

investors fully or partially participated in the founding capital, were already operating on the territory of this Russian region. And the search for new areas of cooperation continued all the time.

In May 2018, the Belarusian side offered its partners from the Vladimir Region to implement joint cooperation projects in mechanical engineering, energy, construction of social facilities and apartment buildings. Specifically, they talked about the possible construction of the "Belarusian Quarter" in Vladimir, as well as "the possibility and readiness of Belarusian companies to meet the region's needs for lift equipment for new buildings and housing under reconstruction, to increase supplies of construction products, materials, equipment and machinery, as well as to participate in the construction and repair of the region's highways, organization of supplies of road construction and utility equipment required for this purpose"¹⁰⁸. In June 2019, a Belarusian proposal was made to expand the volume of mutual trade to include industrial cooperation in food production, as well as to "supply the region with modern domestic electric vehicles"¹⁰⁹. In the construction sector, Belarusian design and manufacturing organizations could participate in housing construction programs implemented in the region, based on the principle of integrated development with the construction of social facilities, construction and repair of public roads, and supply of necessary road construction and utility equipment.

The two sides had a thorough discussion on ways to expand cooperation in October 2020, when a representative Belarusian delegation visited Vladimir. A number of joint projects in terms of cooperation between industrial enterprises of the republic and the region were outlined then. "These are Kovrov

¹⁰⁸ Pivovar, E. Belarus is interested in joint projects with Vladimir region in mechanical engineering and construction / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-sovmestnyh-s-vladimirskoi-oblastijuihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-sovmestnyh-s-vladimirskoi-oblastijui-proektah-v-mashinostroenii-i-stroitelstveproektah-v-mashinostroenii-i-stroitelstve-304088-2018>

¹⁰⁹ Valagin, A. Belarus proposed to build up the Vladimir region / A. Valagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://rg.ru/2019/06/06/reg-cfo/belarus-predlozhila-zastroit-vladimirskuiuihttps://rg.ru/2019/06/06/reg-cfo/belarus-predlozhila-zastroit-vladimirskuiui-oblast.html>

Electromechanical Plant and Minsk Engine Plant regarding the production of forklifts using the internal combustion engine that will be manufactured in Belarus. Samples are now being tested"¹¹⁰ . In addition, other business entities from both sides also proposed interesting projects. Among them are the Betal company from Vladimir, which produces water tanks, as well as Minsk Tractor Works, Mogilevliftmash, and Novy Resource from Kovrov.

In December 2020, at the Vladimirskiy Investment Congress, a new action plan was approved - for 2021-2023 - to implement the cooperation agreement aimed to "expand direct links between business entities of both sides"¹¹¹ and to increase commodity turnover between Belarus and the Vladimirskiy region. It is believed that the agreement will reflect the theme of further development and expansion of the movement of twinning between the cities and regions of the parties, which has already had its considerable history. The treaty on twinning between the cities of Vladimir and Bobrujsk was signed back in 1998. For the passed time "they have developed mutually advantageous partnership relations in economy and business, science, culture, education, sports..."¹¹² . Since 2006, Kovrov and Brest have been twinned. And in 2016 an Agreement on cooperation in trade and economic, scientific and technical, humanitarian and cultural spheres was signed between the Vladimir Region Administration and the Gomel Regional Executive Committee. All these facts show that the parties have a good foundation for further movement forward in terms of implementation of the set objectives to increase mutual trade turnover.

Another Russian region to focus on in this context is **the Novosibirsk Region**. In June 2021, the fifth meeting of the Business Cooperation Council of the

¹¹⁰ Vladimir region / Belarus - expanding cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<http://http://export33.ru/news/vladimirskaya-oblast-belarus-rasshirvaem-sotrudnichestvo/33.ru/news/vladimirskaya-oblast-belarus-rasshirvaem-sotrudnichestvo/>

¹¹¹ Belarus and the Vladimir region have approved an action plan to implement the cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-ihhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vladimirskaja-oblast-utverdili-plan-meroprijatij-po-realizatsii-soglashenija-ovladimirskaja-oblast-utverdili-plan-meroprijatij-po-realizatsii-soglashenija-o-420545-2020>

¹¹² Vladimir region takes part in the forum of Russian and Belarusian regions [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.zsvo.ru/press/view/3058/www.zsvo.ru/press/view/3058/>

Republic of Belarus and the Novosibirsk Region was held to discuss the results of the Programme for the Development of Interaction between the sides for 2019-2021. As a reminder, the Government of Belarus and the Novosibirsk Region Administration signed an agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technological, and cultural cooperation back in 1998. In 2020 the trade turnover between the parties exceeded 150 million dollars. This has made the Novosibirsk Region third in terms of bilateral trade with Belarus among the constituent entities of the Siberian Federal District after Krasnoyarsk and Altai Krai. The wide range of trade and economic interaction between the sides is evidenced by Belarusian supplies to this Russian region, the main part of which are tractors and truck tractors, trucks, spare parts for cars and tractors, trailers and semi-trailers, ferrous metal structures, aluminum rods and profiles, furniture, TV sets, monitors and projectors, meat, cheese and cottage cheese, sugar, fresh and canned fruit vegetables, hosiery, footwear. It is also important that more than 40 companies with the participation of Belarusian legal entities and individuals are registered in Novosibirsk Oblast today. In general, the region cooperates with the Belarusian side not only under the aforementioned agreement of 1998, but also under a number of other agreements with Mogilev, Grodno and Brest regions, which gives a concrete yield in industry, agriculture and transport. In particular, cooperation in the transport sector has been recently stepped up. For instance, in 2020 Novosibirsk bought from its Belarusian partners "15 gas-engine buses of large class; this year [2021] plans to buy another 50 city buses, 20 trolleybuses with large autonomous running, and 10 low-floor trams. It has also been decided in principle to purchase a large consignment of 150 buses on lease ¹¹³ programmes"¹¹³ .

But perhaps even more promising is the intention of the parties to develop cooperation in science, technology, innovation, and education. An interesting

¹¹³ The Novosibirsk Region and the Republic of Belarus are stepping up the pace and scope of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.nso.ru/news/47415>www.nso.ru/news/47415

fact: during more than 20 years of the cooperation agreement between Belarusian and Novosibirsk universities 28 direct agreements on the development of partnerships have been signed, within which scientific projects are implemented, experience is exchanged and joint events are held. Another 11 contracts and agreements were signed during the fifth meeting of the Business Cooperation Council. For example, "the development of a joint program between the Department of Digital Economy at the Belarusian State Economic University and the Department of Information Technology at Novosibirsk State University seems promising. The Science and Technology Park of BNTU "Polytechnic" is ready for further cooperation with the Novosibirsk colleagues in implementation of the Belarusian-Russian project on the production of medical products for cardiac surgery"¹¹⁴ . The Belarusian side also suggested continuing the practice of exchanging undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students and intensifying the invitation of leading scientists under the "Visiting Professor" programme. And a number of Belarusian universities are included in the implementation of the "University 3.0" project - trinity of science, education and technological innovations, with technoparks, interdisciplinary laboratories and technology transfer centres as a platform for its implementation.

Among the active participants of the Belarusian-Russian cooperation in education is the Novosibirsk State Technical University (NSTU), which develops partnerships with Belarusian universities based on the Agreement on cooperation in science, technology, culture, sports, student and academic mobility NSTU in 2016-2021, which was signed with the Belarusian State University in 2017-2022 - with the Belarusian-Russian University, cooperation agreements for 2018-2023 - with the Brest State University, with the Belarusian State University of Technology. Another promising project in this regard is the International Russian-Belarusian Centre for Interregional Cooperation in

¹¹⁴ Belarus and Russia interested in strengthening direct contacts between educational institutions - Karpenko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-rossijahttps://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-rossija- zainteresovany-ukrepliat-priamve-kontakty-mezhdu-uchrezhdenijami-obrazovanijazainteresovany-ukrepliat-priamve-kontakty-mezhdu-uchrezhdenijami-obrazovanija-446424-2021/>

Education, Science, and Culture, whose founders are Novosibirsk State Technical University, the Belarusian-Russian University, the Novosibirsk Centre of Belarusian Culture, and the social and cultural public association Heritage. "Among the main objectives of the centre are to establish and develop effective mutually beneficial partnerships between scientific, educational, social, cultural, youth and sports organizations of the Mogilev and Novosibirsk regions; to organize participation in international scientific, educational, sports, cultural events held on the basis of the centre founders; to acquaint citizens of Belarus and Russia with the history, culture, traditions of the peoples, their achievements in economy, science, culture and sports"¹¹⁵. In 2020 it helped to organize an interethnic cultural online dialogue "Russia and Belarus - 2020", which has become an important educational and cultural platform aimed at supporting and strengthening the Union State. At the meeting of the Business Cooperation Council a task was set to intensify the work of the centre to promote the ideas of the Union State, patriotic education, and involvement of young people in the development of civic initiatives aimed at supporting and strengthening the statehood.

All these facts show that the reserves for cooperation between the two countries' regions are indeed enormous. And there is good reason to believe that they will definitely be used in the very near future.

¹¹⁵ Belarus and the Novosibirsk Region interested in developing cooperation in education [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-novosibirskaia-oblasthttps://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-novosibirskaia-oblast- zainteressovany-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-obrazovanijazainteressovany-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-obrazovanija-446260-2021/>

CHAPTER 5

Direct regional partnerships as a tool to strengthen economic interaction

In September 2021 the Council of Ministers of the Union State of Belarus and Russia approved the guidelines for the implementation of the provisions of the Union State Treaty for 2021-2023 and 28 Union Programmes aimed at carrying out ambitious tasks to enhance Belarus-Russia integration. At the same time, the sides emphasized that "direct partnership between the regions is becoming an increasingly important factor for strengthening mutual trust and economic cooperation"¹¹⁶. This is confirmed by the specific practice of Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation in 2021, which is being implemented in a variety of formats. Let us consider some of them.

One of the important trade and economic partners of the Republic of Belarus in the Central Federal District of the Russian Federation is the **Voronezh Region**. The parties signed an agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technical, humanitarian and cultural cooperation within the framework of the Fifth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, held in October 2018. The trade turnover between them in the first half of 2021 increased by almost 15 percent and amounted to almost 160 million dollars with a share of supplies from Belarus amounting to almost 102 million dollars. "The bulk of Belarusian exports consisted of ferrous metal structures and other metal products; parts and accessories for cars and tractors; cheese and cottage cheese; frozen beef; soybean oil products; and butter."¹¹⁷.

In addition to trade in goods, other areas of cooperation are also actively developing here, in particular construction services. The fact is that Voronezh Oblast, along with Kaluga, Pskov and Leningrad Oblasts, is among those

¹¹⁶ Joint statement by Roman Golovchenko and Mikhail Mishustin on current developments and further steps to deepen integration processes within the Union State [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9960.government.by/ru/content/9960>

¹¹⁷ Pivovar, E. Belarusian delegation headed by Semashko will visit Voronezh / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskaia-delegatsiia-vohttps://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskaia-delegatsiia-vo-glave-s-semashko-posetit-voronezhglave-s-semashko-posetit-voronezh-457530-2021/>.

Russian regions where today "a scheme for the construction of social facilities that is acceptable to both Belarusian builders and customers has been worked out"¹¹⁸.¹¹⁹ In February 2021 a delegation of the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of Belarus visited Voronezh region to discuss with the Voronezh partners opportunities of "implementation of a joint pilot project in urban village Strelitsa of Semiluki district to build a school for 520 pupils, participation of Belarusian companies BelenginiringstroyInvest LLC and Building Trust №12 OJSC in construction of pre-school and educational institutions in Semiluki district, as well as prospects for the use of Belarusian prefabricated construction sets for construction of a kindergarten in Semiluki district". On the eve of the new school year - at the end of August 2021 - an opening ceremony of a secondary school was held in Strelitsa. The school had become a pilot project for cooperation in the construction sphere between Belarus and Voronezh region on the investment-construction principle with the use of export credit of the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus and such Belarusian manufacturers of construction materials and equipment as "Mogilevliftmash", "Gomelstroyaterialy", "Keramin". The general contractor for construction of the school in quite a short time, less than a year, was Stroitelny Trest #12 of Mogilev, which has already gained a good image outside Belarus. In the Voronezh region "even at the stage of construction the customers are more than satisfied with the quality and progress of works and invite Mogilev residents to participate in the tender for the construction of several more facilities"¹²⁰. The Strelitsa experience with the investment-construction principle showed that

¹¹⁸ Belarus' exports of construction goods and services in January-June amounted to \$637 million [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-stroitelnyh-tovarov-i-uslug-belarusi-v-v-i-anvare-anvare-ij-une-sostavil-637-mln-une-sostavil-637-mln-45-2543-2021/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-stroitelnyh-tovarov-i-uslug-belarusihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-stroitelnyh-tovarov-i-uslug-belarusi-v-v-i-anvare-anvare-ij-une-sostavil-637-mln-une-sostavil-637-mln-45-2543-2021/).

¹¹⁹ Zalesky, B.L. Russian vector of export of construction services / B.L. Zalesky // Материалы XVII Международной научно-практической конференции "Актуальные проблемы современных наук - 2021", Volume 3. Промысл: Наука и студия. - С. 7.

¹²⁰ Rusyi: Sustainable Workforce Performance at the Core of the Country's Economic Well-being [Electronic Resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rusvi-ustoichivaja-rabota-trudovyh-kollektivov-v-osnove-ekonomicheskogo-blagopoluchija-stranytrudovyh-kollektivov-v-osnove-ekonomicheskogo-blagopoluchija-strany-450830-2021/>.

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

One of such new facilities will be a 2,560-seat megashool in Voronezh. In August 2021, OOO Stroyengineering, established with the participation of the Belarusian side, received the right to build it. The facility, a two- to four-storey building with an estimated construction cost of three and a half billion Russian rubles, will be one of the largest educational institutions in Russia. "The megashop will have 110 classes, studying in one shift, with 220 teachers to teach the children. <...> The project envisages segregated learning units, the creation of a barrier-free environment, conditions for the development of children's creative potential and sports"¹²¹. In addition, the Belarusian specialists are expected to reconstruct the region's main sports ground. At the same time, "the reconstruction of the Fakel football stadium is estimated at 812 million Russian rubles"¹²². Another school and a kindergarten are to be built with Belarusian participation in the village of Semiluki.

Note that Belarus and Voronezh Region have a number of other areas for cooperation: supplies of machinery, food, waste recycling, and industrial cooperation. In particular, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange "plans to provide a single channel for sales and purchases for agricultural

¹²¹ Pivovarov, E. Belarusian specialists will build one of the largest schools in Russia / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusskie-spetsialistyhttps://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusskie-spetsialisty-postrojat-odnu-iz-krupnejshih-shkol-v-rossii-postrojat-odnu-iz-krupnejshih-shkol-v-rossii-456043-2021/>.

¹²² Pivovarov, E. Belarus reconstructs stadium and builds educational institutions in Voronezh region / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-rekonstruiuet-v-voronezhskoj-oblasti-stadion-i-postroit-obrazovatelnye-uchrezhdenij-a-457654-2021/](https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-rekonstruiuet-v-voronezhskoj-oblasti-stadion-i-postroit-obrazovatelnye-uchrezhdenija-457654-2021/)

producers, because it is the products of the agro-industrial complex that have all chances to become the driver of exchange trade with this Russian region"¹²³ . This is because oilseed meal, fodder supplements, cereals and grains are traditionally in demand in the Belarusian market, and Voronezh Region, as we know, is one of the leaders in this segment. In 2022 the Republic of Belarus and the Voronezh Region "plan to increase the volume of trade turnover by 7-9% by the level of 2021 on the basis of bilateral projects"¹²⁴ . The outlined concrete plans show that the parties have everything they need to achieve this objective. In the North Caucasian Federal District (NCFD) of the Russian Federation, cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and **the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic (KBR)** is developing in an interesting way. In October 2021, a meeting of the joint working group for interaction between the parties was held, at which an action plan was signed to implement the Agreement on cooperation in trade and economic, scientific and technical and socio-cultural spheres, adopted at the VII Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which was held in September 2020. It will be recalled that in 2020 the trade turnover between the parties decreased by more than a quarter to \$8.6 million. At the same time, "the balance is positive for the Republic of Belarus - plus 3.1 million dollars"¹²⁵ . As a matter of fact, these trends have determined the desire of both sides to return interaction in the economic area to a growth trajectory. All the more so because "Belarus and Kabardino-Balkaria are united not only by longstanding traditions of friendship and mutual assistance, but also by multilateral economic partnership"¹²⁶ , which the parties intend to further

¹²³ Zalessky, B.L. Regional orientation as a condition for successful partnership / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVII International scientific and practical conference "Prospects of world science - 2021", July 30 - August 7, 2021: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 3.

¹²⁴ Belarus and Voronezh region signed an agreement to increase trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/12260267>tass.ru/ekonomika/12260267

¹²⁵ Topical issues of cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic discussed in remote format [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/rostov/news/bdc349beac26.html>russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/rostov/news/bdc349beac26.html

¹²⁶ Belarus and Kabardino-Balkaria intensify economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kabardmo-balkariaia-aktiviziruiut><https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kabardmo-balkariaia-aktiviziruiut>

develop. This trend is characteristic of the entire North Caucasus Federal District, one of the key factors in its development being its integration into the Eurasian economic space. "At the same time, the Republic of Belarus can be one of the effective partners of the entities of the North Caucasus Federal District"¹²⁷

As far as the partnership between Belarus and the CBD is concerned, it is based on a variety of economic ties between specific enterprises on both sides. Thus, the products of the diamond tool manufacturer, Terekalmaz JSC, are well known both at Minsk plants - tractor, automobile and motor works, and at the Baranovich Auto Aggregate Plant, Borisov Auto Aggregate Plant, as well as at the enterprises Avtogydrousilitel, Belcard, Machine-Tool Plant Krasny Borets, Belgran and Belgeo. The Belarusian market has been actively developing the presence of JSC Kavkazkabel cable plant and JSC Nalchik plant of high-voltage apparatus. Another interesting example in this regard: "Prokhladnensky plant of semiconductor devices JSC (production of integrated voltage regulators) has been a partner of JSC "Integral" for more than 20 years, buying transistor and microchip crystals"¹²⁸. In order to actively develop partnerships in the agricultural sector, the first international "Prokhladnaya Fair" was held back in 2014 in Prokhladny, which included an exhibition of Belarusian agricultural machinery for crop production, horticulture and animal husbandry and a demonstration of energy-saturated machines from the Minsk Tractor Plant. Since then, measures have also been taken to grow original seeds of Belarus zoned hybrids of various ripeness groups, which will make it possible to "supply up to 15 thousand tons of maize seeds to the Belarusian market"¹²⁹.

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¹²⁷ Zalesky B.L. SKFO - Belarus: topical media topics of cooperation / B.L. Zalesky // Mediachteniya SKFU: Materials of the Third International Scientific and Practical Conference (Stavropol, 23-25 May 2019) / ed. by O.I. Lepilkina, A.M. Gorbachev, N.N. Borisenko, D.A. Shevtsova. - Stavropol: Servyshkola, 2019. - C. 174.

¹²⁸ Rahaev, B. Mutual economic interests are based on historically established economic ties and are successfully developing / B. Rahaev // Interaction of Regions: Union State - the locomotive of Eurasian integration: inform.-integration project / coauthors, interviewing: B. Zaleski, M. Valkouski, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2016. - C. 25.

¹²⁹ Ibid. C. 27.

Among the Belarusian regions that are planning to intensify their cooperation with the CBD is the Brest region, which is "working on the successful development of business initiatives, implementation of projects aimed at producing competitive products, introduction of innovations, expansion of markets, as well as establishment of joint ventures"¹³⁰. To effectively develop partnerships with this Russian region, the Brest branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a cooperation agreement with the union "Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic" in April 2018. This structure is one of the centres of business activity in the Russian region, "created to support and assist entrepreneurs and to develop business contacts both in the republic and with other regions, as well as with the CIS and non-CIS countries"¹³¹. We must assume that with the appearance of the action plan, the results will not be long in coming.

An important area of partnership with the Kabardino-Balkaria is the socio-cultural one. After all, it is in this Russian region that the only Belarusian centre in the North Caucasus Federal District - the Kabardino-Balkarian public movement "For Unity - Syabry" - operates, which annually holds a number of events to strengthen cultural ties between the sides. For example, in February 2021, the centre organised a meeting 'Syabry Gathering Friends' with the participation of other national cultural centres at the Kabardino-Balkarian Cultural Foundation, at which "the young winners of the 'Shores of Friendship' international youth poetry and poetic translations festival-contest, paintings and works of arts and crafts were presented, poems and songs were heard"¹³².

¹³⁰ Investment agreements worth over Br20 million signed at business contacts forum and exhibition in Brest [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investsoglasheniia-na-https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investsoglasheniia-na-summu-svyshe-br20-mln-podpisanv-na-forume-vvstavke-delovyh-kontaktov-v-brestesummu-svyshe-br20-mln-podpisanv-na-forume-vvstavke-delovyh-kontaktov-v-breste-300386-2018/>.

¹³¹ Mission, areas of activity [Electronic resource].

-2021

- URL:

<https://kbr.tpprf.ru/en/mission/>

¹³² The Fund of Culture of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic held a traditional evening "Syabry

Speaking of other priorities in the socio-cultural sphere, we should also recall such an interesting format as the annual international summer school at the local state university "The roots of friendship between our peoples are in our history", involving students, postgraduate students and young scientists from Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. In August 2019, as part of the fourth such summer school, the master class "Patriotic Education of Youth through the Prism of the Projects of the Union State of Belarus and Russia", which was "conducted by Tatiana Senkevich, PhD, Dean of the Faculty of Philology at Pushkin Brest University, and Alla Senkevich, Deputy Head of Educational Work of the Main Department for Education of Brest Regional Executive Committee", was of particular interest to the students"¹³³ . All these facts show that the necessary prerequisites for successful cooperation are in place.

Diverse opportunities for cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the regions of the Far Eastern Federal District are opening up. This is confirmed by the fact that the first "Days of the Republic of Belarus in **Primorsky Krai**" were held in the first decade of October 2021 in Vladivostok, where 160 representatives of different fields - trade, economic, investment, cultural - represented the Belarusian side. The most important events within the framework of the Days were: 1) meeting of the working group on cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the Primorsky Territory; 2) trade fair and sale of Belarusian goods and equipment exhibition with participation of 18 largest Belarusian enterprises; 3) business forum of Belarusian and Primorsky business circles on expansion of cooperation with already existing partners and search of new ones.

A good backdrop for all these events was the fact that in 2021 Belarusian

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

¹³³ Representatives of A.S. Pushkin Brest University participated in a summer school in Kabardino-Balkaria [Electronic resource].-2019:

<https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/rostov/news/652289590c9c.html>

companies' exports to this Russian region increased by 43 percent to \$13 million. However, judging by how keenly and concretely the working group discussed in Vladivostok the prospects of further interaction between the parties, this value is just a starting point in terms of the implementation of new joint projects. Let us name some of them. In particular, a full-fledged exhibition and service centre is to be set up in Primorye Territory to sell and support Belarusian equipment. This will make it possible not only to sell the equipment, but also to service it and present it to a wide circle of Primorye consumers. A project to promote Mogilevliftmash products is expected to be implemented in the industrial sector. "It concerns both lifts and lift equipment, as well as rotary and carousel-type car parks, a new direction mastered by the enterprise"¹³⁴. In agriculture, the promotion, testing and introduction of Belarusian potato varieties in Primorsky Krai, expert support and scientific assistance in the cultivation of orchards, as well as the conversion of agricultural machinery to caterpillars are planned.

As for the exhibition of products of Belarusian enterprises, the main square of Vladivostok displayed municipal, agricultural and construction machinery of machine-building factories of Belarus. Another number of enterprises - Babushkina krynka Holding, Kobrin Butter and Cheese Plant, Domochay Company, Krasny Pischevik OJSC, Kommunarka OJSC, Brest, Bobruisk, Mogilev and Pinsk meat packing plants - presented Belarusian confectionery, dairy and meat products, which are well known here and are traditionally in high demand. Suffice it to say that in 2020, "\$2.1 million worth of Belarusian food was supplied to Primorye. Compared to 2019, this was an increase of 63%. This year, in the first eight months alone, supplies have increased by 34%, we have already traded for \$2 million."¹³⁵.

¹³⁴ Mogilev Oblast exports to Primorsky Krai increased by 84% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-mogilevskoi-oblasti-v-primorskij-krai-ii-uvlichilsijahttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-mogilevskoi-oblasti-v-primorskij-krai-ii-uvlichilsija-_na-84-463897-2021/

¹³⁵ Belarus counts on a multiple increase in food supplies to Russia's Primorye Territory [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschitvvaet->

The business forum held as part of the Days of the Republic of Belarus in the Primorye Territory demonstrated high interest of the local trading networks in increasing supplies of Belarusian foodstuffs. Negotiations held by representatives of business circles to increase the assortment of products supplied make it possible to count on a multiple growth in their volume in the near future. The Belarusian holding AMKODOR, which incorporates 30 legal entities, including 21 factories in Belarus, Russia, Uzbekistan and Lithuania, should be mentioned among the companies that have worked very fruitfully in Vladivostok. Particularly, "a contract has been signed to supply another 15 AMKODOR machines to one of the economic entities. In addition, another dealer's contract was signed, the needs of Primorsky Territory in special AMKODOR machines for 2022 and the scope of their delivery were specified"¹³⁶. A few weeks later - at the end of October 2021 - a presentation of a wide range of AMKODOR machines was held in Vladivostok. It allows "to provide comprehensive support for the logging industry, which, in turn, increases productivity and efficiency of the consumer's equipment at each stage of the production process"¹³⁷. It appears that new contracts are just around the corner.

The fact that Primorsky Krai is seriously interested in Belarusian machinery is also confirmed by the fact that Bobruiskagromash Holding Management Company OJSC signed a dealer agreement with Utyos LLC with the right to sell machines for application of pulverized chemical ameliorants in Primorsky Krai. An important detail: "For 22 years, OOO "Utes" has been developing the "Gora Glubinnaya" quarry and has proved to be a reliable producer of mineral fertilizers: limestone dolomite meal, limestone grit and mineral powder for

https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-na-kratnvi-rost-postavok-rost-postavok-prodovolstvii-a-v-a-v-primorskij--kraj_rossii-rossii-463698-2021/

¹³⁶ "AMKODOR will deliver another batch of machinery to Primorsky Krai [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amkodor-postavit-ocherednuiu-partiiu-tehniki-v-www.belta.by/economics/view/amkodor-postavit-ocherednuiu-partiiu-tehniki-v-primorskij--kraj-463805-2021/>

¹³⁷ Presentation of Belarusian timber industry machinery was held in Vladivostok [Electronic resource]. - URL: <https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/vladivostok/news/e6bb6d0efeea1757.html>

asphalt-concrete plants"¹³⁸ . Now this Russian company is using Western European machinery as its main machines for applying mineral fertilizers, which is seven times more expensive than the Belarusian machinery. So, there are good prospects for Bobruiskagromash machines in the seaside market. We remind that the VIII Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia held in the summer of 2021 showed "extensive potential in terms of further development of interaction between the specific regions of the two countries that are members of the Union State"¹³⁹ , which should be fully used in the near future. This is exactly the approach we see today in the cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Primorsky Krai.

The twinning movement is also a very effective tool for the development of Belarusian-Russian interregional ties. In October 2021, the Belarusian city of Zhodino hosted their 10th meeting, which was attended by representatives of 52 cities of the two countries - Moscow, Kaluga, Grozny, Novorossiysk, Zaslavl, Mogilev, Vileika, Kolomna, Smolensk and many others. It should be recalled that the previous nine meetings were held since 1998, in Gomel, Mytishchi, Vitebsk, Bryansk, Novopolotsk, Smolensk, Minsk, Podolsk and Mogilev. And almost all of them "have become an eloquent illustration of the conclusion that Belarusian-Russian town twinning creates a unique environment for productive trade and economic interaction as well as for spiritual component of the brotherhood of the two peoples and development of national diplomacy"¹⁴⁰ . In particular, the 9th meeting held in March 2017 in Mogilev brought together representatives of 24 Belarusian and 35 Russian cities, including from Moscow, Vologda, Tula, Smolensk, Volgograd, Penza, Pskov and Vyazma.

¹³⁸ Primorsky Krai is interested in Belarusian agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/primorskij-krai-zainteresovan-v-belorusskoj-selhoztehnike-464889-2021/>

¹³⁹ Zalessky, B. Time for new opportunities. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 26.

¹⁴⁰ Zalessky, B.L. Twin-cities of Belarus and Russia: in an atmosphere of trust - to mutually beneficial projects / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Perspektywiczne opracowania sa nauka i technikami - 2016" Volume 3. Ekonomiczne nauki. Zarzadzanie. Politologia. Historia. Filozofia : Przemysl. Nauka i studia. - C. 42.

The topic of the meeting in Zhodzina was "Twinning as an important potential for strengthening the Union State of Belarus and Russia and the unity of peoples". Specific areas of discussion at the meeting by the Belarusian public organisation "Twin Cities" (BOPG) included proposed such as economy and business, encouragement of mutual investments, expansion of production cooperation, "interaction in the social sphere, infrastructure development, as well as cultural, educational cooperation and twinning as a platform for improving youth work"¹⁴¹. Note that at the end of 2020, there were 36 cities in the BOPAG, which have established twinning and partnership links with over 450 cities in 38 countries, with Russia being the clear leader.

Belarus assumes that such bilateral meetings of the twin cities are very important for the development of the twinning movement as a whole, as they represent new opportunities for expanding cooperation in the implementation of investment, trade and economic relations, cultural and educational programs. After all, "twin cities are an important and effective sector of international cooperation, the feature of which is openness, mutual trust, tolerance and kind-heartedness"¹⁴². In the Union State these relations are even more pronounced and should be used within the framework of the Union integration as an effective tool of local authorities for the development of constructive dialogue and implementation of various cooperation projects. The main goal of cooperation between the cities in this regard is "comprehensive development of urban environment, infrastructure, social sphere, culture, education, sports, leisure and recreation opportunities in order to improve the well-being of the

¹⁴¹ Grishkevich, A. Belarus and Russia at the meeting of twin-cities in Zhodino will discuss expansion of interaction / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource] : <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-rossija-na-vstreche-gorodov-pobratimov-v-zhodino-obsudiat-rasshirenie-vzaimodejstviya-462834-2021/>

¹⁴² Batura, B. Twinning - small links of big friendship / B. Batura // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/interview/view/pobratimskoe-dvizhenie-malenkie-zvenija-bolshoi-druzhbymalenkie-zvenija-bolshoi-druzhby-7603/](https://www.belta.by/interview/view/pobratimskoe-dvizheniehttps://www.belta.by/interview/view/pobratimskoe-dvizhenie-malenkie-zvenija-bolshoi-druzhbymalenkie-zvenija-bolshoi-druzhby-7603/).

population, strengthen tolerance, deepen business cooperation"¹⁴³.

One of the concrete results of this twinning meeting in Zhodino was the signing of a cooperation agreement between the cities of Grodno and Ukhta from **the Republic of Komi**. The first agreement to establish and develop trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural relations between them was adopted in September 2017 during the International Investment Forum "Grodno Region at the Crossroads of Borders". The new document primarily envisages trade and industrial cooperation. The fact is that Grodno has quite a few twins and partners in Russia today. Among them are Dzerzhinsk (2005), Khimki (2005), Moscow Schukino (2005), Vologda (2007), Cheboksary (2009), the Tuapse region of the Krasnodar Krai (2012) and Tambov (2015). As we can see, few of them are located in the northern part of the neighbouring country. Thanks to the new agreement, supplies from Grodno are expected to increase, not only of meat and dairy products, but also of other products. "Among the companies whose products may soon appear in large quantities in the Russian city [Ukhta] are JSC Molochny Mir, JSC Grodno Meat Factory, JLLC Quinfood, JLLC Conte Spa"¹⁴⁴.

The intensification of partnerships between Grodno and Ukhta is an interesting form of deepening cooperation between the Grodno region and the Republic of Komi on the municipal level. The fact is that back in April 2021 the Grodno Oblast Executive Committee noted that this Russian region is interested in cooperating in wood processing and furniture production. "There are plans to establish ties with the business community of Grodno region for this purpose. The Russian side is ready to share the Grodno experience in this field. It is also

¹⁴³ Surikov, A. City diplomacy - effective way of regional integration of not only the Union State, but also the Eurasian Economic Union / A. Surikov // Belarus - Russia: city diplomacy: informational-interactive project / co-comp. and interviewer: B. Zaleski, M. Valkovski, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2013. - C. 4-5.

¹⁴⁴ Grodno and Russia's Ukhta signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/grodno-i-rossijskaja-ukhta-podpisali-dogovor-o-sotrudnichestve-463558-2021/>

possible to set up a joint venture to produce furniture."¹⁴⁵ . In September 2021, the Belarusian and Russian regions held the second working group meeting to discuss specific areas of cooperation. The partners from the Komi Republic intend to share the experience of Grodno Oblast in agricultural business from design and construction of agricultural facilities to implementation of technologies for processing of raw materials; they also plan to interact in the construction industry. "There is great potential in cooperation in education, culture, tourism and sports"¹⁴⁶ . It goes without saying that Grodno and Ukhta are planning to make their considerable contribution to the development of all these business ties between the republic and the oblast, which will fully correspond to the contents of the agreement signed in the framework of the 10th twin-cities meeting in Zhodino.

Another driver of engagement with Russian regions in 2021 is the activities of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE). Suffice it to say that from January through August 2021 the commodity turnover between Belarus and Russia increased by half and reached 375 million dollars. It is the highest index among 68 countries represented on the BUCE. The fact that more than a half of all foreign clients of the exchange - over 2,600 - are Russian non-resident companies - speaks volumes. At the same time, "the largest volume of transactions is accounted for by representatives of the Leningrad, Moscow and Smolensk regions"¹⁴⁷ .

To a large extent, all these positive trends can be explained by the fact that "today there are no obstacles to use the technological and intellectual potential of commodity exchanges as a tool for the implementation of integration

¹⁴⁵ A meeting on cooperation between Belarus and the Komi and Tyva republics was held at the regional executive committee [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: https://grodno-region.by/ru/https://grodno-region.by/ru/oblispolkom_news-ru/view/vnews-ru/view/v-_-proshlo-zasedanie-po-sotrudnichestvu-belarusi-i-respublik-komi-i-tyva-3oblispolkome-proshlo-zasedanie-po-sotrudnichestvu-belarusi-i-respublik-komii-tyva-31118-2021/

¹⁴⁶ The Komi Republic intends to adopt the Belarusian experience in agrarian and construction spheres [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/respublika-komi-namerenahttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/respublika-komi-namerena-perenimat-belorusskoi-opyt-v-agramoi-i-stroitelnoj-sferahperenimat-belorusskoi-opyt-v-agram-i-stroitelnoj-sferah-267750-2017/>

¹⁴⁷ Zalessky, B. In search of new points of growth. The Potential of Multi-vector Foreign Trade / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 112.

programmes of the Union State"¹⁴⁸. Russian partners are also attracted by the opportunity to use the BUTB as a kind of springboard to enter third-country markets. "In the eight months of 2021, the amount of transit transactions made by bidders from the Russian Federation was \$5.5 million. These were mainly supplies of woodworking, petrochemicals, construction products, as well as equipment and machinery"¹⁴⁹. All of these were successfully sold through BUTB to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. In particular, about 30 companies from the Smolensk, Moscow, Leningrad and Bryansk regions have used this mechanism. And, to all appearances, in the near future these areas of Belarusian-Russian exchange cooperation will get new impulses for development in other Russian regions as well.

For example, there is great interest in cooperation with the BUTB in the **Samara region**, which is one of the leaders in terms of exports of agricultural products in the Volga Federal District. In November 2021, 30 production and trade enterprises of the region expressed their readiness to use the potential of the BUTB to expand the volume and geography of their exports, including "sales of agricultural products of the Samara region to the European Union. In particular, the BUTB has already formed a pool of regular buyers of vegetable oils from the Baltic States, Poland and Switzerland, who could purchase Samara sunflower oil as part of transit deals".¹⁵⁰. It should be noted that so far these

¹⁴⁸Exchanges of Belarus and Russia discuss the creation of a unified exchange commodity market SG [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/birzhi-belarusi-i-rossiihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/birzhi-belarusi-i-rossii-obsudili-sozdanie-edinogo-birzhevogo-tovamogo-rynka-sgobsudili-sozdanie-edinogo-birzhevogo-tovamogo-rynka-sg-467052-2021/>.

¹⁴⁹ Russia leads in exchange trade with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossiia-lidruet-po-obiemam-birzhevogo-tovarooborota-shttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/rossiia-lidruet-po-obiemam-birzhevogo-tovarooborota-s-belarusiubelarusiu-462016-2021/>

¹⁵⁰. BUTB and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Samara region intend to jointly develop exchange trade in agro-industrial products [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tpp-samarskojhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tpp-samarskoj-oblasti-namereny-sovmestno-razvivat-birzhevuiu-torgovliu-produktsiej-apkoblasti-namereny-sovmestno-razvivat-birzhevuiu-torgovliu-produktsiej-apk-471097-2021/>

countries mostly have been supplied with Belarusian oilseed products, the volume of which may exceed 70 million dollars in 2021. The Russian region can also see considerable potential in attracting metallurgical companies to the BUTB to sell ferrous and non-ferrous rolled metal products, which are annually used in the Belarusian industry in not small quantities. So far "as a rule, the way of the Samara metal to the Belarusian buyer is through intermediaries, which makes it more expensive and less competitive..."¹⁵¹.

The development of exchange trade with Belarus in the **Stavropol Territory** is seen as a factor contributing to the growth of mutual trade turnover and diversification of its structure. Updating contacts with the BUTB in November 2021, representatives of the regional Export Support Center expressed confidence that this exchange platform "will become "one window" for Stavropol companies, through which they will get access not only to the Belarusian market, but also be able to successfully trade with countries in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, where it is quite difficult to do business without their own distribution network"¹⁵².

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

¹⁵¹ The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Samara region sees significant potential for the development of exchange trade with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tpp-samarskoi-oblasti-vidithttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/tpp-samarskoi-oblasti-vidit- znachitelnvi -potentsial--potentsial-razvitii a-a-birzhevoj -torgovli-torgovli-s --belarusji u-4646u-464619-2021/>

¹⁵² Stavropol Territory is interested in developing exchange trade in agricultural products with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/stavropolskijhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/stavropolski-j- kraj-zamteresovan-v-razvitii-birzhevoj-torgovli-selhozproduksiej-s-belarusjiukraj-zamteresovan-v-razvitii-birzhevoj-torgovli-selhozproduksiej-s-belarusjiu-467948-2021/>

exchange has already formed a network of business partners who are ready to purchase timber products in almost any volume"¹⁵³.

The Republic of Karelia also has an interesting project at the BUTB, which is primarily interested in the possibility of applying the exchange mechanism to the sale of raw milk from nearby Russian regions in the region. It is likely that this initiative to sell raw milk from the Vologda, Kaliningrad, Pskov and other regions of the North-Western Federal District has all the chances of success, since the BUBS considers raw milk to be a commodity position with a great potential, which has yet to be discovered on the exchange trading floor. In addition, in November 2021 the Belarusian exchange confirmed its readiness "to organize separate trading sessions specifically for participants from the Republic of Karelia, which will allow <...> companies to get the maximum economic effect from the exchange mechanism"¹⁵⁴. So, hopefully, the results will not be long in coming.

¹⁵³ BUTB expects to increase sales of timber products from the Pskov region [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasschityvaet-udelichit-prodazhihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasschityvaet-udelichit-prodazhi-lesoproduktsii-iz-pskovskoj-oblastilesoproduktsii-iz-pskovskoj-oblasti-464211-2021/>

¹⁵⁴ Karelia is interested in selling dairy products through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/karelija-zainteresovana-v-realizatsii-molochnoj-produktsii-cherez-butb-469068-2021/>

CHAPTER 6

A factor of trust and cooperation

Direct partnerships between the regions of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation are identified in the September (2021) joint statement of the Prime Ministers of the two countries as an increasingly important factor for mutual trust and economic cooperation within the framework of the Union State. The following fact speaks volumes in this regard: "There are about 80 regions involved in this interregional cooperation on the Russian side"¹⁵⁵.

The Astrakhan region, which signed the Agreement on trade and economic, scientific and technical and cultural cooperation with the Republic of Belarus in May 1999, is one of its active participants. In December 2021, it adopted a new 3-year plan of joint actions on its implementation for 2022-2024. We should note that the adoption of the new 3-year plan of joint actions took place at a time of very positive development of the bilateral relations between Belarus and the region. After all, "trade turnover between Belarus and Astrakhan Region in January-September this year [2021] totaled \$23.1 million, which is nearly 29% higher than during the same period in 2020."¹⁵⁶ The bulk of Belarusian exports to the Russian region consisted of chipboard, household appliances, machines and devices for lifting, moving, loading and unloading, wool, and plastic construction parts. For example, "shipments of uncoated paper and paperboard in the first 9 months of this [2021] year alone increased 11.7 times over the same period last year"¹⁵⁷. These figures are largely due to the dealer network of Belarusian companies operating in Astrakhan region, including Minsk Automobile and Tractor Plants, Gomselmash, Bobruiskagromash, AMKODOR, and "work is underway to establish a trade and service centre for MTZ, which is

¹⁵⁵ Zalesky, B. Partnership benchmark - success. Chronicle of multi-vector interaction / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 15.

¹⁵⁶ Roman Golovchenko: Belarus intends to strengthen trade and economic ties with Russian regions [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/10081.government.by/ru/content/10081>

¹⁵⁷ Governor: Astrakhan Oblast and Belarus have long-standing partnership relations [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gubernator-astrahanskuiu-oblast-oblast-s--belarusij-u-u-svi-azvyvai-ut-mnogoletnie-partnerskie-ut-mnogoletnie-partnerskie-otnoshenij-aa-472693-2021/>.

scheduled to become operational in 2022"¹⁵⁸ . In addition, the Belarusian footwear chain "Belwest", the Belarusian furniture salon "Megapolis", and five specialized shops "Belarusian foods" operate successfully in Astrakhan. Another "about 3,500 retailers in the region sell Belarusian-made goods - lingerie, cosmetics, clothes, bedding, household chemicals"¹⁵⁹ .

The new 3-year joint action plan signed in December 2021, according to the parties, should give a new impetus to bilateral cooperation and allow identifying steps to further deepen cooperation in the most significant and strategic areas. In particular, the document contains specific measures to "increase trade turnover, joint activities in agribusiness and use of innovative technologies"¹⁶⁰ . Thus, one of the paragraphs deals with the use of Belarusian experience in the organization of urban public transport, traffic and passenger transportation, automation of transport control and cashless payment of fares, which is very relevant today for the Russian region. Experience of Belarus in using modern technologies of production and laying of asphalt mixtures as well as restoration of operational characteristics of the rainwater drainage system will also be introduced in Astrakhan Oblast. Agricultural machinery and lift equipment are also promising areas for cooperation.

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

¹⁵⁸ Governor of the Astrakhan oblast: we associate success in agriculture with the use of Belarusian equipment [Electronic resource]:

<https://www.belta.by/politics/view/gubemator-astrahanskoj-oblasti-uspehi-v-selskom-hozjajstve-my-svj-azyvaem-s-ispolzovaniem-belorusskoj-472691-2021/>

¹⁵⁹ Zhilkin, A. Implementation of joint projects requires thorough elaboration / A. Zhilkin // Priority directions of regional cooperation as a key factor of Union construction: inform.-integration project / co-compiled, interviewed: K. Gusev, B. Zaleskii. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 81.

¹⁶⁰ Belarus and the Astrakhan region signed a joint action plan for 2022-2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-astrahanskaja-oblast-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvij-na-2022-2024-godvoblast-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvij-na-2022-2024-god-472832-2021/>

will be part of it"¹⁶¹. The point is that the North-South ITC links the Scandinavian countries and the north-western part of the Eurasian Economic Union with the states of Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. It includes rail, road and inland waterway transport infrastructure, seaports on the Caspian Sea, including Astrakhan, ports in the Persian Gulf, road and rail border crossings, as well as international airports. The main advantage of the North-South ITC compared to other routes, including the Suez Canal, is a significant reduction in transport time - from 30 to 45 days. At the same time, the port of Olya, located at the mouth of the Volga River, is one of the most promising Caspian ports. It already operates on the Turkmen and Iranian routes. "In future ferry connections with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan will be developed"¹⁶². That is why new freight traffic is being actively attracted here, new technological complexes are being set up to process cargoes, which have so far been transported along other routes. The successful implementation of this port on the Caspian Sea is also facilitated by the fact that it is located in the special economic zone Lotos, which provides favorable conditions for investment projects in a wide range of areas in industrial production and transport support. So, the proposal from the partners for interregional cooperation from Astrakhan region looks very promising for the Belarusian business entities.

Another Russian region that plans to intensify cooperation with the Belarusian side in the near future is **the Republic of Bashkortostan**. In December 2021, a meeting of the Working Group for cooperation between the parties was held to discuss possible interaction in the main areas of trade and economic cooperation - in agriculture, machine building, machine tools, and construction. As a reminder, Belarus and Bashkortostan signed an Agreement on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation back in June 1999. Since then,

¹⁶¹ The Astrakhan region has suggested that Belarus use the port of Olya for exports to South-East Asia [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/astrahanskaja-oblast-predlozila-belarusi-ispolzovat-port-olja-dlja-eksporta-v-jugo-vostochnuju-aziju-472703-2021/>

¹⁶² Vinokurov, E. North-South International Transport Corridor: Creating a Transport Framework for Eurasia. Report 21/5. / E. Vinokurov, A. Akhunbaev, M. Shashkenov, A. Zaboev. - Almaty, Moscow: Eurasian Development Bank, 2021. - C. 28-29.

"Bashkortostan sees the potential for cooperation with Belarus in the fields where the maximum practical effect of the union integration can be achieved. It concerns first of all petrochemical, machine-building and agro-industrial complexes, robotics and electronics"¹⁶³. And it has to be admitted that over more than twenty years of partnership development Belarus and Bashkortostan have advanced significantly in many areas. In particular, this Russian region is now home to assembly factories of MTZ tractors, Gomselmash and Lidselmash harvesters, Bobruiskagromash machinery, trolleybuses made of MAZ vehicles, as well as 14 enterprises established with the participation of Belarusian capital. As for mutual trade, although "Belarus ranks third in terms of trade turnover with Bashkortostan, behind only China and Kazakhstan, there is still a long way to go to boost mutual trade"¹⁶⁴. Indeed, the parties achieved their best figures for trade turnover in 2018 - almost \$750 million. In 2020, the figure was nearly \$427 million, and in the three quarters of 2021 it was just over \$280 million. At the same time, "in the first 10 months of 2021, Belarusian exports will amount to nearly \$427 million. 2021, exports of Belarusian products to the Republic of Bashkortostan totaled \$122.4 million, or 107 percent against the same period last year"¹⁶⁵. Refrigerators, freezers and refrigeration equipment, plates, sheets and films made of plastic, cheese and cottage cheese made up the bulk of the supplies from Belarus. In addition, in January-September 2021, "there was a significant increase of supplies of wood-fibre boards (almost 14-fold compared to the same period last year), consoles, desks and panels for electrical equipment

¹⁶³ Zalessky, B. International relations and media. Peculiarities of multi-vector international cooperation in the period of global challenges / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2016. - C. 90-91.

¹⁶⁴ Development of exchange trade between Belarus and Bashkortostan will contribute to growth of mutual commodity turnover [Electronic resource] : <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/razvitiye-birzhevoj-torgovli-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-bashkortostanomhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/razvitiye-birzhevoj-torgovli-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-bashkortostanom-posposobstvuet-rostu-vzaimnogoposposobstvuet-rostu-vzaimnogo-473580-2021/>

¹⁶⁵ The head of Bashkortostan visits Belarus with a large delegation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/ufa/news/f288069d32f80b7a.htmlrussia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/ufa/news/f288069d32f80b7a.html>

(10-fold)¹⁶⁶. Overall, the enterprises of the Bellesbumprom Concern have increased their exports to this region of Russia by more than a quarter to almost two million dollars. "Of the new types of products that have started being supplied to Bashkortostan this year [2021] is wallpaper. The Belarusian Wallpaper Holding has signed a long-term contract with a company from Ufa to supply various assortments of wallpaper products"¹⁶⁷.

In December 2021, taking into account the existing cooperation dynamics, the parties agreed to intensify work in a number of areas in order to restore the pre-crisis trade turnover as quickly as possible, and in the future to increase it to one billion dollars, based on several priorities. "The first one is to expand cooperation of industrial enterprises in the sphere of special-purpose and heavy-duty machinery supplies. The second is cooperation in the agro-industrial complex and participation in technical modernization of Bashkortostan's agro-industrial complex"¹⁶⁸. Expansion of cooperation in petrochemistry and construction, including road construction, is also a priority area. And, it should be said, there are good prospects here. For instance, a Russian region with seven million hectares of arable land and where only Belarusian wheeled tractors are assembled at Bashkillakhhoztekhnika, is in dire need of caterpillar-mounted machinery - "we need hundreds, not dozens, of caterpillar tractors"¹⁶⁹. As a

¹⁶⁶ "Neither covid nor sanctions frighten us". Bashkortostan intends to deepen cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nas-ne-pugajuthttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/nas-ne-pugajut- -kovid-ni-sanktsii-bashkortostan-nameren-uglubljat-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusijuni-kovid-ni-sanktsii-bashkortostan-nameren-uglubljat-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusiju-473499-2021/>

¹⁶⁷ Exports of Bellesbumprom's enterprises to Bashkortostan in January-October grew by 27% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-predpriatijhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-predpriatij- bellesbumproma-v-bashkortostan-v-janvare-oktjabre-vvros-nabellesbumproma-v-bashkortostan-v-janvare-oktjabre-vvros-na-27-473805-2021/>

¹⁶⁸ Equipment supplies, agribusiness and petrochemicals: Roman Golovchenko outlines priorities for cooperation with Bashkortostan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/10091.government.by/ru/content/10091>

¹⁶⁹ Bashkortostan wants to expand the assembly of Belarusian tractors and is interested in drones [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bashkortostan-hochethttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/bashkortostan-hochet- rasshirit-sborku-belorusskih-traktorov-i-zainteressovalsja-bes-pilotnikamirasshirit-sborku-belorusskih-traktorov-i-zainteressovalsja->

result, the issue of possible assembly of Belarusian caterpillar tractors on the territory of Bashkortostan has been raised in practice.

Another promising topic concerns highways, the total length of which in this Russian region exceeds 50 thousand kilometres, and Bashkortostan ranks second in Russia in terms of the extensive network of local roads. All major federal highways pass through here. There are plans to begin reconstruction of the Kazan-Yekaterinburg section of the highway running through the Bashkir land. And in this regard they are interested in the Belarusian experience of using cement-concrete pavements, which began in our country in 2014. Then the first object was the second ring road around Minsk, followed by two more artificial runways - at the National Airport and in Orsha. Bashkortostan is determined to develop road construction with cement concrete, and is ready to step up cooperation in this direction with partners from Belarus. Besides, in view of the fact that the time between repairs of cement-concrete roads is much longer than that of asphalt-concrete ones, the Bashkir side expressed its interest in cooperation with Belarusian specialists "not only in construction of top class federal roads, but also in rehabilitation of regional roads with gravel and macadam surfacing, which demand better performance characteristics"¹⁷⁰. And to all appearances, the Belarusian holding company Belavtodor is ready to share the experience of its organizations with its Bashkir partners in these matters. Let us note that all these facts are only a part of the agreements reached in December 2021 at more than 200 meetings of business people in Minsk to develop cooperation between Belarus and Bashkortostan.

In January 2022, the **Republic of Tuva**, a Russian region located in the south of Eastern Siberia and home to 330 thousand people, also made a significant bid for a significant increase in cooperation with the Belarusian side. It is clear that geographic remoteness makes adjustments to the implementation of joint

[bespilotnikami-473514-2021/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bashkortostan-zainteresovan-v-izucheniihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/bashkortostan-zainteresovan-v-izuchenii-belorusskogo-opyta-dorozhnogo-hozjaistvabelorusskogo-opyta-dorozhnogo-hozjaistva-473566-2021/)

¹⁷⁰ Bashkortostan is interested in studying the Belarusian experience of road maintenance [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bashkortostan-zainteresovan-v-izucheniihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/bashkortostan-zainteresovan-v-izuchenii-belorusskogo-opyta-dorozhnogo-hozjaistvabelorusskogo-opyta-dorozhnogo-hozjaistva-473566-2021/>

projects of the sides. This is evidenced by the volume of trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Tyva, which amounted to about 275 thousand dollars in 2020, and even less - only 47.5 thousand dollars for 11 months of 2021. "The bulk of supplies from our republic [Belarus] was made up of supplies of machines and devices for lifting, moving, loading or unloading, steel structures made of ferrous metals, corsetry and women's knitwear."¹⁷¹ .

The issue of the need to step up cooperation between the parties was raised three years ago - in December 2018 - at a meeting of the Tyva leadership with representatives of the Belarusian commodity distribution network in the region, where it was noted that "70 BELAZ dump trucks are in operation at enterprises in the Republic of Tyva; in addition, the region has serious potential for further expansion of this equipment fleet"¹⁷² . And in January 2022, during the first visit to Belarus by the head of the Russian region, V. Khovalyg, these intentions began to take quite concrete shape.

Minsk sees the prospects for the development of these partnerships in the near future in order to significantly increase the trade turnover with the Republic of Tyva. Especially since there is considerable potential in this area: from supplies of modern Belarusian road, municipal, construction, logging, and passenger machinery to implementation of joint projects "in the agro-industrial sector, water supply and sewage, housing and social facilities design"¹⁷³ . In particular, one of the concrete results of the Tyva representative delegation's visit to Belarus was the agreement that with the help of the Belarusian side a dairy farm will be built in the region, which will be "equipped with equipment produced in Belarus, as well as with Belarusian cattle. The project is to be implemented

¹⁷¹ Agriculture, industry, tourism: Grodno Region and the Republic of Tyva signed a protocol on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/selskoe-hozjajstvo-industriia-turizm-grodnenskaja-oblast-i-respublika-tyva-podpisali-protokol-o-480420-2022/>

¹⁷² The Republic of Belarus and the Tyva Republic of the Russian Federation plan to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource] :

<https://russia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/regions/krasnovarsk/news/98cd50c57373.html>

¹⁷³ Roman Golovchenko: Belarus intends to increase trade turnover with the Republic of Tyva [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/10135.government.by/ru/content/10135>

within a year, and then the experience can be replicated"¹⁷⁴ to fully satisfy the demand of the region for milk and dairy products by setting up its own base. The Belarusian side has already expressed its preparedness to submit the project documentation for the construction of small dairy farms for about 200 cows, to be re-equipped with Belarusian milking and cooling equipment. Let us note that Belarus has a good experience of cooperation with Siberian regions in the agricultural sector. Suffice it to say that

"to the Siberian Federal District, of which Tuva is a part, Belarus [in 2021] supplied over \$100 million worth of agricultural products"¹⁷⁵.

Another promising area is the IT sphere. The fact is that the Belarusian experience related to the system of training of IT-specialists, where IT-education programmes are implemented at all levels, from universities to kindergartens, aroused great interest of the partners from Tyva. As a result of the meeting in the Hi-Tech Park in Minsk, "points of interaction between the two parties were found, which is especially important for the Russian delegation on the threshold and opening of its own IT park, planned for the next [2023] year"¹⁷⁶.

Among the Belarusian regions, Grodno Region has a great interest in cooperation with the Republic of Tyva. In January 2022, the two sides substantially considered possible joint projects in agriculture, "as the Tyva administration plans to triple its share in the gross regional product. In addition, participation of Belarusian specialists in the development of the infrastructure of the Ak-Sug mining and processing plant, which is under construction, is possible."¹⁷⁷. Apparently, the dialogue between the two sides will continue as

¹⁷⁴ Belarus will help Tyva build a dairy farm [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-tyve-v-stroitelstve-molochno-tovamoj-fermy>[https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-tyve-v-stroitelstve-molochno-tovamoj-fermyv-480369-2022/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-tyve-v-stroitelstve-molochno-tovamoj-fermyvhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-pomozhet-tyve-v-stroitelstve-molochno-tovamoj-fermyv-480369-2022/).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

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

In January 2022, Gomel Region signed a protocol of intent on cooperation with the Republic of Tuva to actively develop mutually beneficial relations in a variety of areas. The nearest plans here include providing the Russian region with Gomselmash machinery, as well as developing high technologies, including in cattle breeding. The fact is that a company Agrokomplekt is located in the Gomel region. It designs dairy equipment, dairy farms "with various volumes of milk production and different capacities - from 200 to 1200 cows with different milking rates"¹⁷⁸. It may well become an active participant in this inter-regional collaboration to support the implementation of projects in Tyva from design to farm start-up.

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