

New partnership models

In July 2023, the fifth meeting of the Belarus-China Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation was held, which formed a new model of strategic partnership between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China and created unique opportunities and mechanisms for deepening practical cooperation across the entire range of areas. The participants of the meeting agreed that the common goal should be a new point of growth in trade turnover of at least 120 percent by 2022. In this regard, several key issues should be emphasized. These are: building up and diversifying trade, systematic accreditation of Belarusian food producers. This is deepening investment cooperation, joint industrial development, technological cooperation in licensed automobile manufacturing, assembly of electric cars, machine tool manufacturing, joint production of medical equipment, development of bio- and digital technologies. According to the results of 2022, Belarus and China reached a record volume of goods turnover - almost six billion dollars. What steps are being taken by the parties to develop these points of growth in 2023? This is the subject of the proposed study.



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Transformation of international interaction in line with sustainable economic ties

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Belarus: a comprehensive program shapes electric transport market trends

In June 2023, Minsk hosted the fourth exhibition "Electric Transport Day", which was attended by more than 30 organizations - industrial enterprises, scientific organizations and companies-importers of electric vehicles. This exhibition forum presented passenger and cargo electric transport, the latest models of Belarusian electric buses, components of the element base for electric vehicles. "Among the novelties were the MAZ electric bus, the first Volat electric bus of the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant, a multifunctional city electric truck of the National Academy of Sciences, a new model of the AMKODOR electric loader"¹.

It should be noted that this exhibition overlaps very organically with the global trends and development tendencies of the Belarusian market. After all, according to the International Energy Agency, more than ten million electric cars will be sold in the world in 2022, which is 55 percent more than in 2021. "This was facilitated by the global trend towards decarbonization, the refusal of major car companies to produce cars with internal combustion engines. <...> As a result, the total number of electric vehicles in the world exceeded 26 million units"². In 2023, the positive dynamics will continue. At the same time, the share of new electric vehicles in the market will reach 18 percent (in 2020 there were only 4 percent).

As for the Republic of Belarus, our country also has all the conditions for the development of the electric car market today. And this year, this trend is already much stronger on Belarusian roads. "First of all, it is most noticeable for

¹ More than 30 organizations will take part in the exhibition "Day of electric transport" in Minsk on June 9 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-30-organizatsii-primut-uchastie-v-vystavke-den-elektrotransporta-v-minske-9-ijunia-569850-2023/>

² Electricity consumption by charging stations for electric vehicles in Belarus has increased by more than a third [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/elektropotreblenie-zarjadvymi-stantsijami-dlja-elektrotransporta-v-belarusi-vvroslo-bolee-chem-na-tret-569857-2023/>

commercial vehicles. A lot of electric cars are appearing in cabs, carsharing and commercial transportation. <...> One of the trends is the growth of deliveries from China, the leader in electric vehicle technologies"³. It should be reminded that the first Chinese electric cars Geely Geometry C were brought to BELJI two years ago to get experience of use in Belarus and to show the new cars to the buyers. By today, 150 of them have already been sold. "As for the domestic electric car, the work is now being done jointly with the Academy of Sciences. We [BELJI CJSC] gave the NAS a sample of one of the most popular Coolray models to work out the possibility of creating an electric car on the basis of another car"⁴.

By the way, the capacity of the passenger car market in Belarus is estimated at 50 thousand cars per year. Electric cars could occupy a fourth part of this volume, if their price was below ten thousand dollars. So far, the Geometry C model costs more than 90 thousand Belarusian rubles. So today, it seems that the key directions in electric transportation for the company "BELJI" will be to provide the market with more budget models and service development. In particular, in 2023, a new Geely model - Geometry E - will be on sale, which is a car of a more budget segment. On the topic of domestic electric car in June 2023, the Ministry of Industry of Belarus also spoke out, emphasizing that it will be ready to present and show its own development very soon, so that "the model of domestic electric car will be ready this year"⁵.

Continuing the topic of electric cars of Chinese manufacturers in Belarus, we note another interesting fact: by the end of 2023, about 200 charging stations of Belorusneft will be modified for these cars, or almost 30% of all charging

³ By the end of the year about 200 filling stations of Belorusneft will be modified for charging Chinese electric cars [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/do-kontsa-goda-okolo-200-ezs-belorusnefti-modifitsirujut-dlja-zarjadki-kitajskih-elektromobilej-569935-2023/>

⁴ Svidersky: Belarus has all the conditions for the development of the electric car market [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sviderskij-v-belarusi-est-vse-uslovija-dlja-razvitija-rynka-elektromobilej-569868-2023/>

⁵ Ministry of Industry: soon we will present a prototype of domestic electric car [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-skoro-predstavim-opytnyi-obrazets-otchestvennogo-elektromobilja-571013-2023/>

stations in the country. Meanwhile, at the beginning of summer, 16 charging stations with the ability to charge Chinese electric cars have already been put into operation. Speaking in general, the power consumption by charging stations for electric vehicles in Belarus has increased by more than a third in 2022. A network of charging stations has already been "formed, there are about 700 of them in total. By this indicator Belarus is a leader in the CIS"⁶. In 2024, 105 more stations will be added.

By the way, in May 2023, the charging infrastructure of our country was recognized as a leader at the international environmental competition "Green Eurasia" among the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, where it was noted that the Belarusian superfast charging complex implemented "all modern trends in electric vehicle technology. This is a system of electric energy storage, a pantograph for electric buses, and there is also a possibility for an electric car to charge in 10 minutes for 300 kilometers"⁷. By 2025 these super-fast complexes will appear in the Belarusian regional cities and on the highway M1 - Brest - Russian border, and by the end of 2030 they will be installed 85 throughout Belarus. In the meantime, in 2024 "15 modern superfast charging complexes will be built"⁸.

Another interesting issue in the context of this topic concerns the creation of components for electric vehicles. After all, Belarus is already ready to localize these components. These are power motors, which Mogilevliftmash produces in sufficient quantities as needed. These are also control electronics,

⁶ Electricity consumption by charging stations for electric vehicles in Belarus has increased by more than a third [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/elektropotreblenie-zariadnymi-stantsijami-dlja-ekstrotransporta-v-belarusi-vyroslo-bolee-chem-na-tret-569857-2023/>

⁷ 85 superfast charging complexes for electric cars will be installed in Belarus by the end of 2030 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-belarusi-do-kontsa-2030-goda-ustanovjat-85-superbystryh-zariadnyh-kompleksov-dlja-elektrokarov-569933-2023/>

⁸ There will be more than 700 electric charging stations in Belarus by the end of the year, 105 more will be added in 2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-belarusi-k-kontsu-goda-budet-bolee-700-elektrozariadnyh-stantsij-v-2024-m-dobavitsja-esche-105-571025-2023/>

which are produced by Izmeritel plant in Vitebsk. As for the batteries, "the Academy of Sciences has three enterprises that compose battery systems. <...> Now we see a more promising direction - sodium ion batteries"⁹. In Belarus, prototypes are already being made in laboratory conditions. And China expects to produce an electric car with sodium-ion batteries by the end of 2023.

All these facts show that the implementation of a comprehensive program for the development of electric transport already contributes to the creation of a new sector of machine building in Belarus - electric vehicle construction, as well as the formation of a system of scientific support for the whole range of economic, environmental and social issues in this innovative area.

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⁹ Chizhik: in Belarus they create components for electric transport and are ready for their localization [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chizhik-v-belarusi-sozdajut-komponenty-dlja-elektrotransporta-i-gotovy-k-ih-lokalizatsii-569937-2023/>

Belarus-Azerbaijan: opportunities for cooperation and prospects there are

In May 2023, Baku hosted the 13th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Azerbaijani Commission (IGC) on Trade and Economic Cooperation, where the parties outlined prospects for bilateral interaction, which has the character of a strategic partnership, and mutually beneficial economic ties are the flagship of further development between Belarus and Azerbaijan. It should be noted that Minsk and Baku, noting the high dynamics of trade turnover in 2023, confirmed that "at the end of the first quarter of this year, this indicator increased by almost 55% and exceeded \$8 million"¹⁰. In particular, Belarus has significantly increased exports to Azerbaijan of transformers, cables, other electrical products, woodworking products, as well as food products. At the same time, the Belarusian side sees prospects in organizing supplies of construction, municipal, railway, emergency and rescue and various types of special equipment, as well as elevators to this South Caucasus country and setting up their assembly production for the corresponding consumption volumes.

And at the 13th IGC meeting the parties adopted a number of documents on the development of cooperation, including in the field of industry. For example, a road map for the establishment of an assembly plant in Azerbaijan was signed in the field of elevator equipment for 2023-2024 between OJSC "Mogilevliftmash" and Ulu Geycha (Baku). A dealer agreement was also signed between MAZ OJSC and TURAN (Baku), providing for the promotion of MAZ products in the Azerbaijani market and their service. Another document is an agreement on supply of electrical products between V.I. Kozlov MEETZ OJSC (Minsk) and AZMETZLLC LLC (Baku)"¹¹.

¹⁰ Efimov: the visit of the Belarusian delegation to Azerbaijan will contribute to the intensification of industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/efimov-vizit-delegatsii-belarusi-v-azerbajdzhan-posposobstvuet-intensifikatsii-promyshlennogo-566760-2023/>

¹¹ Industry and sport. Belarus and Azerbaijan signed documents on the development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/promyshlennost-i-sport-belarus-i-azerbajdzhan-podpisali-dokumenty-o-razviti-i-sotrudnichestva-566641-2023>

A special talk is about the cooperation of Belarusian machine-builders with the Ganja Automobile Plant, which has become a landmark project for the two countries, showing an excellent example of effective interaction in the field of production cooperation. "For 17 years of joint work, more than 12 thousand Belarusian tractors, as well as about 4 thousand units of other machinery (MAZ, MZKT, AMKODOR) have been assembled at the plant. The Belarusian side is determined to continue joint work on expanding the range of jointly produced machinery, including grain harvesters and modern passenger vehicles (electric buses) meeting high environmental standards"¹².

The 13th meeting of the IGC outlined key tasks in this context in order to develop the assembly of Belarusian machinery at this Azerbaijani enterprise. In particular, "it is necessary to expand the range of machinery assembled at PA Ganja Automobile Plant, including the resumption of joint production of special machinery on MAZ chassis and joint production of electric passenger vehicles. For this purpose, it is necessary to determine the models and quantities based on the existing full catalog of Belarusian vehicles and to form an appropriate order for the Azerbaijani enterprise"¹³. Another task is to continue work on systematically increasing the production of tractors from Belarusian tractor kits at the Ganja plant, including for third-country markets.

Within the framework of the 13th IGC meeting, the parties also paid much attention to such a promising area of bilateral cooperation as agriculture and food. It should be recalled that in September 2021, "the first meeting of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani Working Group on Agriculture and Food Security was held, where the issues of cooperation in the field of crop and livestock breeding, food security, agrarian education, expansion of trade and economic ties in the

¹² Mutual trade and industrial cooperation. Petrishenko on the prospects of cooperation with Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vzaimnaja-torgovlja-i-promkooperatsija-petrishenko-o-perspektivah-sotrudnichestva-s-azerbajdzhanom-566632-2023>

¹³ Petrishenko: it is necessary to expand the nomenclature of Belarusian machinery assembly in Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/petrishenko-nuzhno-rasshirit-nomenklaturu-sborki-belorusskoj-tehniki-v-azerbajdzhane-566633-2023>

field of agriculture... were discussed..."¹⁴ . In May 2023, the parties concretized the tasks for the enterprises of the agrarian and processing complex to increase mutual food supplies between Belarus and Azerbaijan, as well as to ensure the expansion of the range of food products. For this purpose, the issues of recognizing the equivalence of the Belarusian food safety system and including Belarusian food producers in the relevant register of Azerbaijan will be settled as soon as possible. In addition, the parties stressed the significant potential for joint implementation of programs for the development of the Azerbaijani agricultural sector, including livestock breeding, where Belarusian experience in creating livestock complexes can be introduced, as well as to meet the needs for breeding livestock, necessary technologies and equipment, high-yielding, balanced feeds and premixes. Apparently, in the near future, Belarusian and Azerbaijani specialists will start practical implementation of the project on joint production of veterinary drugs on the basis of an enterprise registered in Azerbaijan.

Finally, the decisions of the 13th IPC meeting also reflected other topical areas of Belarusian-Azerbaijani interaction. Thus, the Ministry of Sport and Tourism of Belarus and the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan signed a program of cooperation in the field of physical culture and sport for 2023-2025. And in order to further expand interregional ties, new interregional cooperation agreements will be elaborated, as well as the circle of twin cities between our countries will be expanded, including the signing of a corresponding agreement between the capitals Minsk and Baku. Thus, Belarus and Azerbaijan have a lot of opportunities for cooperation and prospects.

¹⁴ Zaleski, B. International Cooperation and Media. Part IV. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 110.

Belarus-China:

Toward a New Model of Strategic Partnership

In July 2023, the fifth meeting of the Belarus-China Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee (IGC) was held, which formed a new model of strategic partnership between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China and created unique opportunities and mechanisms to deepen practical cooperation across the entire range of areas. The participants of the meeting agreed that "our common goal should be a new point of growth in trade turnover of at least 120% against the last [2022] year"¹⁵. To be more specific about the most important areas of Belarusian-Chinese economic cooperation, four key issues should be emphasized in this regard.

First, increasing and diversifying trade, systematic accreditation of Belarusian food producers, and launching procurement channels for important goods through Chinese operators. Second, increasing rail container transportation to deliver Belarusian cargo to China and Chinese equipment to Belarus, ensuring the operation of green railway corridors, and organizing subsidized reverse trains from Belarus to major logistics centers in China and back. Third, "deepening investment cooperation, joint industrial development, technological cooperation in licensed automobile manufacturing, assembly of electric vehicles, machine tool manufacturing, joint production of medical equipment, development of bio- and digital technologies"¹⁶. Fourthly, financing of strategic investment projects within the framework of preferential credit lines of China, their effective implementation, building up credit-financial and technical-economic cooperation, including the purchase of necessary equipment.

¹⁵ Snopkov: a new model of strategic partnership between Belarus and China has been formed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-sformirovana-novaja-model-straticheskogo-partnerstva-belarusi-i-kitaja-576417-2023/>

¹⁶ Chervjakov singled out important areas of cooperation to strengthen the relations between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-vydelil-vazhnye-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-dlja-ukreplenija-otnoshenij-belarusi-i-kitaja-576438-2023/>

Recall that "at the end of 2022, the countries [Belarus and China] reached a record volume of \$5.8 billion in goods turnover. Five months of this year were marked by a 1.5-fold increase in trade turnover. Exports of Belarusian goods to China are growing at a record pace: 1.8 times in 2022 and 1.6 times in the first five months of 2023"¹⁷.

At the fifth meeting of the IGC, the parties agreed to focus their efforts on the implementation of major development and cooperation projects, including grant aid from the Chinese government. In this context, it should be emphasized that Belarus has already implemented 15 important socially-oriented projects totaling more than one and a half billion Chinese yuan. "About a dozen of new strategic projects are in the works, including infrastructure development of the Great Stone industrial park, supply of necessary technological equipment with a total amount of financing of over 900 million Chinese yuan"¹⁸. At the same time, the parties plan to accelerate the implementation of these projects, including two international-class sports facilities - a stadium and a swimming pool - by September 2024.

As for other production and cooperation projects, in July 2023 the Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Chinese corporation China National Machinery Industry Corporation (Sinomach) signed an action plan to develop cooperation "on priority areas of cooperation in the production of agricultural and municipal machinery, machine-tool construction, as well as the implementation of investment projects at Belarusian enterprises"¹⁹ and even

¹⁷ Snopkov: Belarus and China demonstrates to the whole world an exemplary example of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/snopkov-belarus-i-kitaj-demonstrirujut-vsemu-miru-obraztsovvi-primer-sotrudnichestva-576412-2023/>

¹⁸ Belarus and China agreed to implement major projects in the field of development and cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-dogovorilis-o-realizatsii-krupnyh-proektov-v-oblasti-razvitiya-i-sotrudnichestva-576096-2023/>

¹⁹ The Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Chinese company Sinomach signed an action plan to develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-belarusi-i-kitajskaja-kompanija-sinomach-podpisali-plan-meroprijatii-po-razvitiyu-576228-2023/>

discussed the creation of individual models of agricultural machinery, opportunities for organizing

In the same July 2023, the Chinese company Baimen and JSC Slutsk Cheese Factory signed a strategic commercial agreement on the establishment of a joint venture to produce dairy products already this year in the administrative center of Liaoning Province - in the city of Shenyang. It should be noted that this Chinese company is a major exporter of "Belarusian dairy products (about \$50 million worth of products exported in 2022). It is implementing a project to process colostrum and produce whey protein on the site of the Great Stone Industrial Park"²⁰. By establishing a joint venture in Shenyang, Baimen and Slutsk Cheese Factory intend to further scale up the project, systematically increasing the range of dairy products produced for Chinese customers.

And one more interesting fact. In the same July 2023, OJSC "Managing Company of Bobruiskagromash Holding" held negotiations with YTO Group Corporation - a Chinese manufacturer of agricultural and construction machinery, part of the Sinomach complex machine-building conglomerate - "to organize joint production of self-propelled mowers, municipal machines, and also discussed issues of supplying components for Bobruiskagromash machinery from China"²¹. In the near future the parties will prepare the necessary documents on this project.

All these facts show that the new model of strategic, including trade and economic, partnership of the two countries, formed within the framework of the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, is beginning to take concrete innovative shape for the benefit of the two peoples.

²⁰ Belarusian-Chinese enterprise for the production of dairy products will be established in China this year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusko-kitajskoe-predpriatie-po-proizvodstvu-molochnoi-produktsii-sozdat-v-knr-v-etom-godu-576098-2023/>

²¹ "Bobruiskagromash" and Chinese company YTO Group Corporation discussed the prospects of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobruiskagromash-i-kitajskaja-kompanija-yto-group-corporation-obsudili-perspektivy-sotrudnichestva-575895-2023/>

Belarus - China: the Great Stone Industrial Park attracts anchor investors

The year 2023 marks ten years since President of the People's Republic of China (PRC) Xi Jinping announced the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, which marked a new era in the economic relations of states and united more than a hundred countries all over the planet. Among the first participants of this megaproject was the Republic of Belarus, where the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" is actively developing. It plays the role of a nodal platform of this initiative and already unites more than a hundred residents from 15 countries. Suffice it to say that "the volume of actual investments of the park has already exceeded \$830 million, and the volume of announced investments amounts to \$1.34 billion"²². And in the first quarter of 2023 alone, 11 new companies with investment projects in logistics, e-commerce, medicine, biotechnology, instrumentation, research and development have already registered here. More specifically, "the number of residents of the Veliky Kamen Industrial Park has now reached 108 <...>. The volume of production [for the three months of 2023] has increased 1.3 times, revenue from the sale of goods - 1.8 times, export of goods - 1.2 times, foreign direct investment on a net basis - 2 times, tax payments - 3.5 times"²³.

One of the priority areas of Veliky Kamen today is machine building. It should be reminded that the cluster of enterprises working in this area is the largest in the park and has more than 20 projects. In particular, there are joint Belarusian-Chinese enterprises producing internal combustion engines, gearboxes for passenger and cargo transport. Some of the Chinese residents

²² Declared investments of the residents of "Great Stone" are estimated at more than \$1.3 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zajavlennye-investitsii-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-otsenivajutsia-bolee-chem-v-13-mlrd-568784-2023/>

²³ Ministry of Economy: for the first quarter in the "Great Stone" registered 11 new companies [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minekonomiki-za-i-kvartal-v-velikom-kamne-zaregistrovano-11-novyh-kompanij-567541-2023/>

produce construction equipment based on the chassis of Minsk Automobile Plant, while the Belarusian resident produces glass for all types of land transport, which is in great demand in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. Another topical area of Veliky Kamen is high-tech and competitive production - companies carrying out research and development. Now there are already more than 25 such companies registered in the park.

Speaking of new residents, it is worth mentioning that in March 2023, another company - IRBI LLC, whose investment project has an innovative import-substituting character, was registered in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park Veliky Kamen. "The park resident will produce monoblocks, mini-computers for offices and industrial computers, as well as computer hardware components. In addition to production, the company will implement its own application software complexes"²⁴. These products will be intended for the domestic market of Belarus, as well as exported to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

In April 2023, another resident was registered in the industrial park - SinoBelMedica LLC, initiated by the Chinese company Shanghai Electric Medical Group, which is part of the structure of the largest manufacturer of power and industrial equipment Shanghai Electric Group Company Limited. The new resident "will implement a project to create a modern high-tech production of X-ray tubes in the industrial park. The sale of the products on the Belarusian market will contribute to import substitution"²⁵.

In May 2023, at the talks between the park's management and a delegation from Gansu Province, the issues of traditional Chinese medicine development in Belarus were discussed, and "the possibility of establishing a center of

²⁴ The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce computers and components [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-kompijutery-i-komplektuiuschie-558151-2023/>

²⁵ The new resident of "Great Stone" plans to produce X-ray tubes [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-planiruet-proizvodstvo-rentgenovskih-trubok-560903-2023/>

traditional Chinese medicine and developing pharmaceutical production on the territory of the park was discussed"²⁶ . And in June 2023 an agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian Ministry of Health and the Chinese pharmaceutical company Jifei was reached to work out "the issue of creating in the industrial park "Great Stone" a biotechnological cluster for the production of medicines, vaccines, insulin, CAR-T technologies <...>. Work is underway to determine the prospects for localization of the nomenclature of Jifei's pharmaceuticals"²⁷ .

And in June 2023, the Belarusian and Chinese sides stated that they would continue to attract investors with major projects to the Great Stone Industrial Park, with special attention to the development of traditional Chinese medicine at the park's site. Also, "the Ministries of Economy of the two countries and the largest shareholder companies of the Industrial Park Development Company agreed to continue active work to attract anchor investors with major projects to Velikiy Kamen, to organize new demanded industries, in particular in the field of machine building and automotive components, medical equipment, to increase the localization of existing production of residents"²⁸ . The parties will pragmatically improve the investment environment on a systematic basis, consistently eliminate emerging development risks and bring the park to a new qualitative level of development, strengthening its position as a central Belarusian-Chinese project and an international industrial cluster with an eye on the Eurasian Economic Union market.

²⁶ Delegation of the Chinese province of Gansu will study the possibility of development of pharmaceutical production in the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/delegatsiya-kitajskoj-provintsii-gansu-izuchit-vozmozhnost-razvitiya-farmproizvodstv-v-velikom-kamne-567520-2023/>

²⁷ Ministry of Health and Chinese pharmaceutical company "Jifei" intend to write a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-i-kitajskaja-farmkompanija-dzhifei-namereny-podpisat-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-569796-2023/>

²⁸ Belarus and China will continue to attract anchor investors with large projects to the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-prodolzhat-privlekat-v-velikij-kamen-jakornyh-investorov-s-krupnymi-proektami-569986-2023/>

Minsk region:

Chinese vector of interregional interaction

In March 2023, in Beijing, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted at the highest level a joint statement on the basic principles of developing exemplary relations of all-weather and all-round strategic partnership between the two countries in the new era. At the same time the parties signed the plan of the Year of Regions of Belarus and China for 2023. This document "contains more than 80 bilateral agreements and initiatives to attract at least 150 million dollars of direct Chinese investment by each Belarusian region and Minsk by 2026"²⁹. **Minsk Region** is one of the active participants in deepening trade and economic, scientific and technical, and socio-cultural cooperation between the regions of the two countries.

In 2022, the trade turnover of the Belarusian capital region with China exceeded two billion dollars, with exports of Minsk Region amounting to almost one billion dollars. At the beginning of 2023, the list of items of Minsk region products supplied to the Celestial Empire has already exceeded the mark of more than a hundred. "Products of milk processing enterprises and other municipal enterprises of the region are especially in demand. All milk processing enterprises of the holding "Minoblmyasomolprom", as well as Slutsk and Stolbtsy meat processing plants have an export license"³⁰. And for five months of the current year the capital region has already provided export supplies to China for more than five hundred million dollars.

Guangdong Province should be mentioned among interesting partners of Minskshchina among Chinese regions. In 2022, the parties celebrated a decade since the signing of the cooperation agreement. In May 2023, the Belarusian

²⁹ Zaleskii, B. New Realities for Partnership. Chronicle of international cooperation under conditions of economic mobilization / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 13.

³⁰ What production of Minsk region in the near future can appear in the market of China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://mlvn.by/01032023/kakaya-produkciya-minskoi-oblasti-v-blizhajshee-vremya-mozhet-povavitsya-na-rynke-kitaya/>

region and the Chinese province agreed on the prospects of interaction. And now the roadmap for the development of bilateral relations is already being supplemented and updated. After all, the products of the central region of Belarus are indeed in demand in China. For example, "last year [2022], supplies of meat and dairy products and woodworking products to China more than doubled. <...> Our products are in demand and needed"³¹. In addition, the parties are discussing the issue of attracting investments from Guangdong Province to the economy of Minsk Region, as well as options for cooperation between major companies producing household appliances and cars, including electric cars, at production sites that are located in preferential zones of Minsk Region, such as the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone".

As for another partner of Minsk Region in China - **Zhejiang Province**, the parties intend to expand cooperation in the field of traditional Chinese medicine. As is known, a relevant center has been established on the basis of Minsk Regional Clinical Hospital. In June 2023, during the talks between the delegations of the Zhejiang Provincial Health Committee and the Main Health Department of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, they discussed the directions of development of this center, "supply of medicines from China, the possibility of training doctors of the capital region in new methods. The Belarusian side also proposed to consider the issue of organizing joint production of biologically active additives, herbal medicines"³². In addition, the task is to expand the capabilities of the mentioned Center of Traditional Chinese Medicine, where such procedures as acupuncture, manual therapy, and massage are already performed on its basis.

³¹ Export of Minsk region products to China has exceeded \$500 million since the beginning of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-produktsii-minskoj-oblasti-v-kitaj-s-nachala-goda-prevysil-500-mln-569809-2023/>

³² Minsk region and Zhejiang province intend to develop cooperation in the field of traditional medicine [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-chzhetszjan-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-traditsionnoj-574675-2023/>

Finally, one of the promising partners of Minsk Oblast among Chinese regions should be noted the **city of Chongqing** - the only municipality of central subordination of China, which is also the economic center of the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, where more than 32 million people live. This city is the anchor point of China's development strategy in the western part of the Middle Kingdom and the hub of the Belt and Road project. Logistics hubs, ports and customs infrastructure are being built here to participate in the logistics development of the China-Europe Express. Chongqing is China's modern manufacturing base, with a full chain of electronic information industry and automobile manufacturing. Suffice it to say that in 2022 the output of automobiles here amounted to more than two million cars, and 284 thousand units were exported.

As for interregional ties, Chongqing and Minsk Region established twinning relations in 2017. With the launch of the regular service of the Chongqing-Minsk China Railway Express, the trade turnover between the two sides has been growing every year. "In 2022, imports and exports between Chongqing and Belarus exceeded 500 million yuan, up 54.8% year-on-year. Belarus is an important supplier of meat products and butter to Chongqing. Belarusian dairy products and confectionery products are highly popular among the city's residents"³³.

In 2023, the parties are taking new concrete steps to further deepen trade and economic cooperation and establish humanitarian and cultural contacts. In particular, within the framework of the Exhibition of Chinese Goods and Services - 2023, which took place in late June - early July this year in the Great Stone Industrial Park, where about 180 Chinese companies presented their products, the thematic exposition of the Chongqing Export Goods Exhibition

³³ More than 20 enterprises from Chongqing will take part in the Exhibition of Chinese goods and services in "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-20-predpriatij-iz-chuntsina-primut-uchastie-v-vystavke-kitajskih-tovarov-i-uslug-v-velikom-kamne-573747-2023/>

Pavilion was also shown. More than 20 city enterprises on the area of about 300 square meters placed the products of mechanical engineering, including cars, motorcycles and components. In addition, official representatives of Minsk Region and Chongqing "discussed cooperation in mechanical engineering, food supplies to the Chinese region, and logistics"³⁴.

All these facts suggest that Belarusian-Chinese interregional interaction is gradually reaching a new level of cooperation in an all-weather and all-round strategic partnership. So, in the near future, the parties will demonstrate even more innovative approaches to make it much easier and simpler for the regions to work on joint projects and programs.

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³⁴ Machine building, medicine, tourism: Minsk region and Chongqing discussed areas of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mashinostroenie-meditsina-turizm-minskaja-oblast-i-chuntsin-obsudili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-574541-2023/>

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: the quantity and quality of transactions with Chinese partners is growing

At the end of 2022, the amount of transactions made by Chinese companies at the trading sessions of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) increased by almost 15% and amounted to about \$53 million. At the beginning of 2023, the number of trading session participants from China also increased significantly, from 67 to 113, two of which have the status of stockbrokers. "Last year, lumber, rapeseed oil, milk powder, vet-blue leather and synthetic fibers were supplied to China through the exchange platform. In turn, Belarusian enterprises purchased Chinese-made ferrous metal products and soybean meal on BUTB"³⁵. The positive dynamics of the Belarusian-Chinese exchange trade volumes was achieved due to the active work on attracting residents of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to the exchange trading, as well as due to the creation of favorable conditions for representatives of Chinese business. In particular, the accreditation procedure at the exchange was simplified, the possibility of settling transactions in Chinese yuan was provided, and consulting support in Chinese was organized. In addition, special export trade sessions focused on the Chinese market were regularly held during 2022, which allowed Chinese importers to buy Belarusian lumber products with delivery to convenient locations in the Middle Kingdom. In 2023, BUTB expects to further increase supplies of a number of domestic products to this country. In particular, lumber, vegetable oils, and meat and dairy products.

For example, in March 2023, the Chinese company **SUMEC International Trading**, which accounts for about three percent of all imports of timber and sawn timber to that country, expressed interest in cooperating with the BUTB. The parties are considering "two forms of interaction: the company's

³⁵ The amount of transactions of Chinese companies on BUTB increased by 14% [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/summa-sdelok-kitajskih-kompanij-na-butb-vozrosla-na-14-551264-2023/>

participation in exchange trading as a visitor with the conclusion of transactions on its own behalf and at its own expense, or obtaining the status of an exchange broker, allowing to attract new buyers from China to the Belarusian trading platform"³⁶. Now the geography of purchases by SUMEC International Trading is quite diversified. Timber products are imported from Brazil, Canada, Congo, Russia, Finland and other countries, including Belarus, where the company has recently opened a subsidiary. At the same time, the Chinese side is ready to purchase Belarusian sawn timber through BUTB on a regular basis, provided that the price offers of domestic woodworkers are competitive and the rhythm of supply is guaranteed. Recall that in March 2023, at a special session at BUTB, focused on the Chinese market, Belarusian bidders placed bids for the sale of sawn timber in the volume of more than 100 thousand cubic meters.

In April 2023, the Chinese corporation **Xiamen Xiangyu Group Corporation** (XMYG), which is included in the list of the 500 largest companies in the world according to Fortune magazine, confirmed its readiness to increase the volume of purchases of wood products on the BUTB trading floor, as well as to develop cooperation in other promising commodity areas, and since March 2022 its subsidiary - Xiamen Xiangyu Superchain Supply Chain Development Co. - regularly participates in lumber trading on the Belarusian exchange platform. "During this time, XMYG has purchased nearly 10,000 cubic meters of sawn timber products worth about \$2 million through BUTB"³⁷. Thanks to the exchange, the company has already purchased four trains of sawn timber and is determined to continue cooperation in the same way, progressively increasing the volume of purchases. XMYG is also interested in expanding the list of goods that the corporation buys on BUTB, and

³⁶ BUTB agreed to cooperate with one of the largest Chinese importers of forest products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-dogovorilas-o-sotrudnichestve-s-odnim-iz-krupnejshih-kitajskih-importerov-lesoproductsii-553935-2023/>

³⁷ Chinese corporation is ready to increase purchases of Belarusian sawn timber through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajskaja-korporatsija-gotova-naraschivat-zakupki-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-cherez-butb-560768-2023>

not only in the segment of the timber industry. We are talking about the possibility of bidding for agricultural products and, first of all, rapeseed oil, which is in stable demand in China and was already supplied to the PRC market through BUTB in 2022. At that time it was sold for more than 42 million dollars, including within the framework of import transactions made by Chinese participants. Therefore, given the significant production capacity of Belarusian oil extraction plants, this area may become a new growth point for the Chinese corporation in Belarus.

Another partner of BUTB, which is interested in cooperation with the Belarusian exchange platform, was the Chinese company **Beijing Huibaocheng Technology** in May 2023. This importer buys dairy products and vegetable oils, which are widely used in China's food industry. The company plans to "buy about 10,000 tons of rapeseed oil on the exchange on a monthly basis with the possibility of increasing supplies in the future"³⁸. The Chinese importer is interested in Belarusian dried milk, so it will actively participate in the bidding.

In June 2023, another major Chinese importing company announced its intention to increase purchases of lumber products on the BUTB - it is **Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology**. The fact is that according to the results of five months of this year, the company has already purchased through the exchange about 53 thousand cubic meters of these products, which is almost twice as much as last year's figure for the same period. But this is far from the limit. And by the end of 2023, "it is planned to purchase at least another 20 thousand cubic meters. Thus, Belarus may become one of the three main markets from where Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology imports woodworking products"³⁹. Interestingly, in 2022, Russia, Canada and Sweden

³⁸ BUTB expects to increase supplies to China of sawn timber, vegetable oils, meat and dairy products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasschityvaet-narastit-postavki-v-kitaj-pilomaterialov-rastitelnyh-masel-mjasa-i-molochki-567273-2023/>

³⁹ A large Chinese importer intends to increase purchases of lumber products at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnyi-kitajskij-importer-nameren-naraschivat-zakupki-piloproduksii-na-butb-571701-2023/>

were the strategic partners of this company for the supply of sawn timber, while Belarus ranked only fourth.

To summarize, it should be noted that 119 Chinese companies have already been accredited at BUTB by early summer, two of which have the status of stock brokers. By the end of 2023, the Belarusian exchange platform expects a significant increase in participants from China. After all, "so far Chinese partners mainly act as importers on the exchange, buying Belarusian lumber, rapeseed oil, dairy products, oil products"⁴⁰. But BUTB already wants to see more exporters from the Celestial Empire, who can supply import-substituting goods that are in high demand in Belarus.

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⁴⁰ BUTB presented the platform of import substitution in Chinese Tianjin [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-prezentovala-ploschadku-importozameshenija-v-kitajskom-tjantszine-567412-2023/>

Belarus-Pakistan: the aim is to establish new business contacts

In March 2023, the International Trade and Industrial Fair-2023 was held in the Pakistani city of Karachi. It is an exhibition specialized forum in South Asia, where annually more than 350 companies from around the world and more than 50 thousand visitors take part. The main sections of the exhibition are: agriculture, automobile industry, machine tool industry, power engineering, metallurgical and mining industry, construction, petrochemicals. The National Exposition of Belarus was organized at this exhibition, where "20 Belarusian companies took part, which produce industrial, petrochemical, diagnostic goods, materials and equipment, as well as provide educational services, research and development works"⁴¹.

In particular, almost forty developments of Belarusian scientists from seven scientific and research and production organizations of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Belarus and institutions of the Ministry of Education were presented. "Among the most interesting were electronic ceramics and products based on it from the Materials Science Research Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, including ceramic insulators and housings for microwave filters, dielectric resonators, resonators for antennas, and products based on piezoceramics"⁴². In addition, the Materials Research Center presented graphene-containing material and products based on it. It can be used in structural elements, energy storages, lubricants, sorbents, sensors.

⁴¹ The national exposition of Belarus opened at the industrial exhibition in Pakistan's Karachi [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-otkrylas-na-promyshlennoi-vystavke-v-pakistanskom-karachi-554860-2023/>

⁴² Belarus will present scientific, technical and innovative developments at the International Trade and Industry Fair in Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://edu.gov.by/vi-ru/news/belarus-predstavit-nauchnotehnicheskie-i-innovatsionnye-razrabotki-na-mezhdunarodnov-vystavke-inter/>

The Institute of Meat and Dairy Industry of the National Academy of Sciences presented dry starter and bioconservative at the exhibition. Bacterial starter for balancing feed additive regulates microbiological processes in cows' stomachs. The biopreservative consists of a mixture of specially selected and lyophilically dried strains of lactic acid bacteria - lactococci. It is intended for silage of plant raw materials - annual and perennial cereals and legumes.

Micro- and nanotechnologies of superfine magnetic abrasive polishing of the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU) were also presented at the exhibition. Their purpose is ultrathin polishing of high-precision surfaces to nano-level roughness, correcting the shape of the surface of optical parts, increasing the radial strength of parts of optical and laser devices, cleaning surfaces before welding and coating, increasing the resistance to corrosion, wear and mechanical destruction of parts made of metal alloys, single crystals and ceramics. The developments surpass the best world analogs in terms of technological capabilities, economic and environmental indicators. The technologies and equipment are of interest to machine and instrument making enterprises, including manufacturers of optics, lasers and electronics.

The Belarusian State University (BSU) was among the active participants of this exposition, presenting about 20 developments. BSU innovations included "radio-absorbing materials of the KUP series. They are designed to protect aircraft from electromagnetic radiation. In particular, the materials can be used to cover the inner niche of weather radar in civil aircraft, as an absorber in the development of compact anechoic chambers, coordinated loads..."⁴³ . Also among the developments of BSU - "Technology of synthesis of new polyols from secondary and natural raw materials for the production of polyurethane foams", which is based on the processing and use of secondary raw materials for the production of polyols. They provide a five to ten percent reduction in the

⁴³ About 20 developments will be presented by BSU at the International Trade and Industry Fair exhibition [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://bsu.by/news/okolo-20-razrabotok-predstavit-bgu-na-mezhdunarodnov-vvstavke-international-trade-and-industry-fair--d/>

cost of a ton of polyurethane foam due to a 15-20 percent reduction in the cost of polyol. In addition, BSU presented liquid crystal materials, a multichannel spectrometer, a mobile power supply for charging supercapacitors and batteries of electric transport, a recorder of movement parameters of elevator equipment B-590 PALTUS, light-absorbing composite materials.

And the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU) presented "heat-resistant ceramic materials for thermal units. They are designed for thermal and electrical insulation of furnaces in foundries, thermal and forging shops"⁴⁴. These materials have a number of advantages over their analogs. They have improved mechanical, thermal and electrophysical properties. In addition, BSTU showed glass-ceramic proppants - granule-like materials used in the oil industry to improve the efficiency of well recovery using hydraulic fracturing technology.

It should be noted that on the margins of the International Trade and Industrial Fair-2023, a Belarusian-Pakistani business forum was held, during which Belarusian participants presented their products to the Pakistani audience. Negotiations were also held to sign contracts on supplies of Belarusian goods and services to Pakistan. This shows that this South Asian country is an important trade partner of Belarus, where the basis of Belarusian exports is complex technical, chemical and food products with high added value: tractors, trucks, parts and accessories, tires, chemical fibers, pulp. Karachi is the financial and economic capital of Pakistan, which is among the five largest cities in the world in terms of its share of gross domestic product.

⁴⁴ Belarus will present developments in the field of electronic ceramics and nanotechnology [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/news/569/107455/>

Belarus - Nicaragua: when partners have respect, trust and friendship

Latin America is one of the political and economic centers of the emerging multipolar world, home to more than 650 million people. "Many countries of this region are aimed at pursuing an independent foreign policy and seek through accelerated innovative development to move away from the historically raw material character of their economies"⁴⁵. And the Republic of Belarus can provide effective assistance to these states by developing the most concrete trade and economic interaction. For example, "the dynamically developing agrarian sector of Latin American countries needs appropriate machinery. Reliable and price-competitive tractors, combines and other Belarusian machinery can take a worthy place here"⁴⁶.

Among the important political and economic partners of Belarus in Latin America is Nicaragua. Moreover, in May 2024, the two countries will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. And in May 2023, Minsk and Managua said that they aim to seriously intensify trade, economic and humanitarian ties in order to constantly support and promote the bilateral agenda, filling it with new projects and cooperation programs. It should be noted that trade relations between Belarus and Nicaragua are still relatively small. They are based on supplies of Belarusian products. The legal framework is still in the process of formation.

In May 2023, a government delegation from this Latin American country visited Minsk. This visit showed that Belarus and Nicaragua intend to actively develop the legal foundation of bilateral relations. In particular, several

⁴⁵ Aleinik said that cooperation with Latin American countries is interesting for Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/aleinik-rasskazal-chem-belarusi-interesno-sotrudnichestvo-so-stranami-latinskoj-ameriki-567456-2023/>

⁴⁶ Zalesky, B.L. Trade demonstrates steady growth / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVIII Mezinardni vedecko-prakticka conference "Aplikovane vedecke novinky - 2022". Volume 2: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 7-10.

important documents were signed in the Belarusian capital. First, the General Agreement between the two governments on the provision of export credits, which will strengthen the position of exporters from Belarus. "The buyers of Belarusian machinery will be the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Nicaragua, the Municipal Institute of Transport Regulation of Managua, and the Nicaraguan Institute of Municipal Development. The lending will be carried out with the use of loan funds from the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus OJSC"⁴⁷.

Second, the basic agreement, which opens up opportunities for industrial cooperation and will make it possible to "significantly increase supplies of Belarusian machinery that is in demand in Nicaragua in the future. This will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the increase in joint trade"⁴⁸. Third, an agreement on cooperation in education, which will provide a legal basis for interaction between the parties and establish working contacts between educational institutions of the two countries, "training specialists in the specialties most in demand in Nicaragua"⁴⁹, as well as facilitate the exchange of specialized information and develop scientific and technical cooperation, which is part of this work. In addition, Minsk and Managua are working on draft agreements on trade and economic cooperation, promotion and mutual protection of investments, establishment of a joint committee on trade and economic cooperation, as well as on the abolition of visa regime.

Belarus and Nicaragua also decided to take a comprehensive approach to trade and economic interaction with a focus on industrial cooperation and

⁴⁷ Ministry of Industry: the agreement with Nicaragua on granting export credits will strengthen the positions of Belarusian exporters [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-soglashenie-s-nikaragua-o-predostavlenii-eksportnyh-kreditov-ukrept-pozitsii-belorusskih-567470-2023/>

⁴⁸ Transcript of the approach to the press of the Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Aleinik on the results of negotiations with the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua (May 19, 2023, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b1045153bb04077c.html>

⁴⁹ Belarus signed an agreement with Nicaragua on granting export credits [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-podpisala-s-nikaragua-soglashenie-o-predostavlenii-eksportnyh-kreditov-567453-2023/>

investment cooperation. The parties focused on the implementation of joint projects in agriculture and the supply of Belarusian passenger, road-building and agricultural machinery to the Nicaraguan market. In particular, "in economic terms, first of all, we are talking about the development of industrial cooperation and the use of Belarusian agricultural technologies in the development of Nicaraguan agriculture..."⁵⁰. Back in June 2022, at the talks in Minsk between the Ministries of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and Agriculture and Livestock of Nicaragua, the parties considered the prospects for cooperation in agriculture. They agreed to cooperate in livestock breeding, veterinary medicine, agrarian education, and exchange of experience in crop production. Besides, "Belarus is interested in supplies from Nicaragua of raw cane sugar, coffee, cocoa beans and semi-finished fruit products for baby food production"⁵¹.

Another interesting topic that may become promising in the Belarus-Nicaragua economic agenda is the possibility of Belarus' participation in the construction of the Nicaraguan Canal. The fact is that back in 2012, the National Assembly of Nicaragua approved the project for the construction of the "Great Transoceanic Canal of Nicaragua," which "if completed, will connect the waters of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. It is expected. that the new interoceanic canal will be a longer, wider and deeper alternative to the Panama Canal (opened in 1920) and will seriously relieve maritime traffic"⁵². So, despite geographical remoteness, distance is not an obstacle to establishing cooperation when partners have respect, trust and friendship.

⁵⁰ Aleinik: Belarus and Nicaragua are aimed at serious intensification of trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/aleinik-belarus-i-nikaragua-natseleny-na-serieznuiu-aktivizatsiju-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-567428-2023/>

⁵¹ Belarus and Nicaragua intend to cooperate in animal breeding and agrarian education [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-nikaragua-namereny-sotrudnichestv-v-zhivotnovodstve-i-agrarnom-obrazovanii-506979-2022/>

⁵² Foreign Minister of Nicaragua does not rule out the possibility of Belarus' participation in the construction of the Nicaraguan Canal [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/glava-mid-nikaragua-ne-iskljuchaet-vozmozhnosti-uchastija-belarusi-v-stroitelstve-nikaraguanskogo-567406-2023/>

Belarus-Africa: Agriculture is the Key Factor of Partnership

The African region is one of the promising and quite familiar destinations for food and agricultural exports from Belarus. Suffice it to say that "in January-April of this [2023] year, Belarusian products were supplied to such African countries as Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, and Uganda. The nomenclature of export supplies includes dried dairy products, horn-hoofed raw materials, by-products, beef, poultry meat, alcoholic beverages and other products"⁵³. This year, Belarus continues to discuss with its African partners promising areas of cooperation in agriculture. The discussion is not only about mutual trade, but also about mechanization, irrigation, fertilizers, cooperation in education and science, including training of students from African countries in Belarus.

In particular, in June 2023, a communiqué was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment of **Kenya**, in which the parties agreed to further cooperation in agriculture. The fact is that in this African country there are no problems with food, but there are problems with its storage. Also, they have a lot of small farmers, but no large farms. In addition, "another problem is the small percentage of cultivated land"⁵⁴. That is why Kenyan partners are interested in mechanization of agriculture in the country and, accordingly, in increasing its efficiency, as well as in Belarus's experience in agricultural mechanization and personnel training in order to "equip the industry with machine systems, carry

⁵³ Export of products, cooperation in education. Ministry of Agriculture and Food on the work with the regions of Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-produktsii-sotrudnichestvo-v-obrazovanii-minselhozprod-o-rabote-s-regionami-afriki-573991-2023/>

⁵⁴ The supply of tractors and potash fertilizers from Belarus to Kenya was discussed in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/postavku-traktorov-i-kalijnyh-udobrenij-iz-belarusi-v-keniju-obsudili-v-minselhozprode-570585-2023/>

out mechanization and provide our [Belarusian] agricultural technologies⁵⁵ , create enterprises for processing and storage of products. Apparently, representatives of the country's leading regions will soon come from Kenya to further build trade and economic relations.

Zimbabwe has also become a new market for Belarus. In June 2023, at the first meeting of the Belarusian-Zimbabwean working group for cooperation in agriculture in Minsk, the leadership of the Belarusian Ministry of Agriculture and Food said that it looked forward to long-term cooperation with Zimbabwean partners. In particular, "another important area of cooperation is the development of dairy cattle breeding"⁵⁶ in Zimbabwe, as well as the supply of Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment, the use of advanced Belarusian experience and technologies in the establishment of agro-industrial enterprises on Zimbabwean soil. In addition, "the Zimbabwean side was particularly interested in grain dump trucks and tractor-trailers with semi-trailers"⁵⁷ .

To expand the geography of supplies from Belarus, domestic exporters continue to work to ensure access of agricultural products, machinery, and equipment to promising markets of the "black" continent. In February 2023, OJSC "Managing Company of Bobruiskagromash Holding" signed a contract with Bemaco from **Madagascar for the** supply of 24 units of machinery of the Belarusian company - mounted plows, disk harrows, universal pneumatic seeders. And "in the near future it is planned to expand the range of Belarusian machinery supplied to the Republic of Madagascar, including new samples of plows, seeders,

⁵⁵ Mechanization of agriculture, processing plants. What Kenya is interested in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mechanizatsija-selskogo-hozjajstva-pererabatyvajushchie-zavodny-chem-v-belarusi-zainteresovalas-kenija-570564-2023/>

⁵⁶ Brylo: Belarus counts on long-term cooperation with Zimbabwe in the sphere of agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brylo-belarus-rasschitvayet-na-dolgosrochnoe-sotrudnichestvo-s-zimbabve-v-sfere-apk-571063-2023/>

⁵⁷ Zimbabwe is interested in dump trucks-grain trucks and truck tractors MAZ [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zimbabve-zainteresovano-v-samosvalah-zernovozah-i-sedelnyh-tiagachah-maz-571222-2023/>

trailers and harrows"⁵⁸. At the same time, Bemaco was awarded a certificate to extend the status of the official dealer of Bobruiskagromash for 2023.

Another African country that is interested in expanding trade and economic cooperation with Belarus is **Ghana**. In June 2023, the two states celebrated the 31st anniversary of the establishment of Belarusian-Ghana diplomatic relations. And the parties expressed their common mood for intensive work to expand contacts at all levels. Recall that Ghana is the largest producer of high-quality fruits and cocoa and is ready to supply the Belarusian market in any volume. As for Belarus, it is "ready to participate in Ghana's agricultural mechanization programs, supply this country with a wide range of municipal and municipal equipment, medicines, introduce the latest technologies in the agro-industrial complex, train Ghanaian students in Belarusian universities in various specialties"⁵⁹.

Finally, June 2023 saw a very important event in the Belarusian-African theme: the first ever visit of Belarusian Foreign Minister S. Aleinik to Equatorial Guinea. Aleinik visited **Equatorial Guinea**. This country is one of the richest and most stable states in Africa, which ranks first on the continent in terms of gross domestic product. As a result of this visit, a Joint Statement was signed on the development of political dialogue, as well as "cooperation in trade, economy and investment, cooperation in cooperation, food security, health care, medicine, maternal and child health, education, science and technology, mining and petrochemical sector, security and defense"⁶⁰. The parties outlined practical steps to expand the contractual legal framework of bilateral relations, where agreements on cooperation in agriculture and agro-industrial complex will also be developed.

⁵⁸ "Bobruiskagromash" will supply more than 20 units of machinery to Madagascar [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobruiskagromash-postavit-bolee-20-edinits-tehniki-na-madagaskar-549344-2023/>

⁵⁹ Pivovarov, E. Belarus is ready to participate in the programs of mechanization of agriculture in Ghana / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-uchastvovat-v-programmah-mehanizatsii-selskogo-hozjajstva-gany-570335-2023/>

⁶⁰ About the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus S. Aleinik to Equatorial Guinea. Aleinik's visit to Equatorial Guinea [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/fa2023a57e9ef156.html

Belarus - Zimbabwe: to develop education and economy

In May 2023, Belarus and Zimbabwe signed a roadmap for 2023-2025 in the field of higher education and university science, which identified the development of joint educational programs and training of Zimbabweans in Belarusian universities in demanded specialties as promising areas of Belarusian-Zimbabwean cooperation. "Also among the promising areas are the organization of resource centers for vocational education and training, expansion of joint scientific, scientific-technical and innovative projects, including in the field of geomechanics, biotechnology, biomechanics"⁶¹.

In addition to the roadmap, the Belarusian and Zimbabwean sides also signed over 40 bilateral agreements in the field of education in May. Note that "this is a very serious legal framework for training specialists for a wide range of specialties in industry, agribusiness, health care, and energy"⁶². It is expected that in this connection between the educational institutions of the two countries will be implemented a program of training not only specialists at the level of higher education, but also on the creation of centers of competence in the territory of Zimbabwe to train specialists in working professions. For this purpose, a center for studying Russian as a foreign language is being established, where Zimbabwean citizens will be able to undergo training in order to both work at joint ventures in Zimbabwe and continue their studies in Belarus.

The Belarusian State University (BSU) is an active participant of interaction with Zimbabwean partners. In 2019, it signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education,

⁶¹ Belarus and Zimbabwe signed a road map for 2023-2025 in the field of higher education and science [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-zimbabve-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-na-2023-2025-gody-v-sfere-vysshego-obrazovaniya-i-nauki-565748-2023/>

⁶² More than 40 bilateral agreements in the field of education will be signed following the visit of a delegation from Zimbabwe to Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-40-dvustoronnih-soglashenij-v-oblasti-obrazovaniya-budet-podpisano-po-itogam-vizita-v-belarus-566871-2023/>

Science and Technological Development of Zimbabwe. In February 2023, BSU became a partner of six universities of this country at once. And in May this year it expanded the range of existing agreements. In particular, a Cooperation Agreement with the Harare Institute of Technology and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Midlands State University were signed, which will allow developing academic exchanges, conducting fundamental and applied research, joint scientific conferences, exhibitions, symposiums and seminars. In addition, "initiatives on cooperation in the field of ecology, soil science, biology were voiced. The possibility of developing modern digital technologies, geoinformation systems, soil conservation measures and technologies on lands subject to erosion processes was considered"⁶³. The opening of a BSU distance learning center in Zimbabwe will also be a serious step towards lasting cooperation.

Also in May 2023, **Brest State Technical University** (BrSTU) signed cooperation agreements with five Zimbabwean universities, which will develop cooperation with the Harare Institute of Technology, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Lupane State University, Midland State University and the University of Zimbabwe. The Brest university will implement joint educational programs, engage in joint scientific research to be carried out in the field of Industry 4.0, digital industry and agriculture, IT-technology, on issues related to the creation of various engineering systems. In a word, "cooperation can be established in all areas in which Brest residents specialize. Three students from Zimbabwe are currently studying at BrSTU: two guys and a girl"⁶⁴. It should be assumed that in the near future Brest will have many more students from this South African country.

⁶³ BSU activates cooperation with universities of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-aktiviziruetsotrudnichestvo-s-vuzami-zimbabwe-566857-2023/>

⁶⁴ Brest Technical University concluded cooperation agreements with five universities of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskij-tehnicheskij-universitet-zakljuchil-soglashenija-o-sotrudnichestve-s-piatju-vuzami-zimbabwe-566589-2023/>

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Minsk between the **Belarusian State Technological University** and the Midland State University. This document provides for cooperation in sharing experience in education and facilitating the exchange of students, master's and PhD students, teaching staff, as well as the development of joint research projects in areas of mutual interest. In particular, "in the fields of forestry, wood processing, industrial ecology, energy efficient technologies, mineral fertilizer technology"⁶⁵.

The Belarusian National Technical University signed several international documents with Zimbabwean partners in May. First, a cooperation agreement with Harare Polytechnic College. Secondly, with the Midland State University. Thirdly, "a road map between the Belarusian National Technical University and the University of Zimbabwe was signed"⁶⁶, and eight joint educational programs with various universities of this country, including those in Harare, Chinhoyi, and Lupane, were approved.

Finally, the **National Academy of Sciences of Belarus** and the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education, Science and Technological Development of Zimbabwe agreed to sign a memorandum of intent and "identified a number of promising areas for cooperation: space technologies, new materials, technologies and complexes for processing mineral raw materials and ores, agro-industrial complex, training of scientific personnel..."⁶⁷.

Recall that in January 2023, Belarus and Zimbabwe signed a memorandum of understanding between the parties on mutual recognition of educational documents in Harare. "And they see quite great prospects for cooperation in various areas of inter-university interaction. This applies to the

⁶⁵ Discussion of cooperation, signing a memorandum: BSTU will be visited by the delegation of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obsuzhdenie-sotrudnichestva-podpisanie-memoranduma-bgtu-posetit-delegatsiya-zimbabve-566182-2023/>

⁶⁶ BNTU signed agreements on cooperation and implementation of joint educational programs with universities of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/13451-v-bntu-podpisany-soglasheniya-s-universitetami-zimbabve>

⁶⁷ Space technologies and new materials: the NAS of Belarus discussed cooperation with Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/kosmicheskie-tehnologii-i-novye-materialy-v-nan-belarusi-obsudili-sotrudnichestvo-s-zimbabve-566338-2023/>

training of specialists with higher education in such areas as agro-industrial complex, mechanical engineering, medical technologies"⁶⁸ . So, with the signing of the roadmap for 2023-2025 in the field of higher education and university science, the educational services of Belarus in Zimbabwe, to all appearances, will be in demand in all areas that develop the economy of this southern African country, and will become the most important element of Belarusian-Zimbabwean relations.

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