

## On the course of cooperation

For Belarus, Asian countries are important partners in the development of cooperation in trade and economic, industrial and cooperative, scientific and technical, educational and cultural areas. In particular, the People's Republic of China has traditionally been a key focus of the Belarusian state's foreign policy on this continent. In March 2023, the leaders of Belarus and China adopted a joint statement on the basic principles of the development of exemplary relations of all-weather and all-round strategic partnership between the two countries in the new era. Mutually beneficial relations with Iran are developing. In October 2023 in Tehran, the parties agreed on a plan for further cooperation in promising areas of partnership. Regular interaction at various levels has been established with Vietnam, Pakistan and Turkey. In January 2024, Minsk hosted the 7th meeting of the joint Belarusian-Mongolian intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation, where the state and prospects of cooperation in industry, agriculture, transportation and logistics, finance were discussed. This paper discusses how Belarus is developing partnership ties with these countries.



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Boris Zalessky



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## On the course of cooperation

*Specifics of Belarus' interaction with Asian countries*

**Boris Zalessky**

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# **On the course of cooperation**

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countries**

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## Partnerships focused on the future

In 2023, the **Republic of Turkey** turned one hundred years old. Today, it is a dynamic, future-focused state with achievements in a number of specific spheres and major logistics and energy projects that link Asia and Europe. Belarus traditionally views Turkey as an important and promising partner and a reliable friend. It should be recalled that it was this country that "became the first foreign state to recognize the state independence of the Republic of Belarus"<sup>1</sup>. In March 2022, Minsk and Ankara celebrated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations. In 1996, the **Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation** between the two countries was signed during the first visit of the Belarusian head of state to Turkey.

The visit of Turkish President R.T. Erdogan to Belarus in November 2016, the first ever visit of the two countries in the history of bilateral relations, was also a milestone in the Belarusian-Turkish relations. First, it set the goal of reaching one billion dollars in mutual trade turnover. Secondly, the parties decided to focus on the maximum use of the potential of trade and economic interaction with an emphasis on the creation of "joint production of complex technical products in the regions of Belarus and Turkey, including for the purpose of their promotion to the markets of third countries"<sup>2</sup> and the organization of joint industrial zones.<sup>3</sup> In April 2019, President of the Republic of Belarus A. Lukashenko paid an official visit to Turkey, during which he identified priority areas of Belarusian-Turkish cooperation in trade and investment, implementation of joint projects in machine-building, agriculture, construction, finance, chemical and light industry, as well as outlined

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<sup>1</sup> Political relations [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: [https://turkey.mfa.gov.bv/ru/bilateral\\_relations/political/relations/](https://turkey.mfa.gov.bv/ru/bilateral_relations/political/relations/)

<sup>2</sup> Official visit of the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: [http://president.gov.bv/ru/news\\_ru/view/ofitsialnvy-vizit-prezidenta-turtsii-redzhepa-taiipa-erdogana-14820/](http://president.gov.bv/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnvy-vizit-prezidenta-turtsii-redzhepa-taiipa-erdogana-14820/)

<sup>3</sup> Official visit to Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [http://president.gov.bv/ru/news\\_ru/view/ofitsialnvy-vizit-v-turtsiju-20884/](http://president.gov.bv/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnvy-vizit-v-turtsiju-20884/)



concrete steps to build up contacts in the areas of technology, innovation, education, intensification of interaction "in the field of joint scientific developments, academic and research projects, as well as the implementation of joint projects in the field of science, technology and innovation".

The seriousness of the parties' intentions to actively develop cooperation in **science, technology and humanitarian areas** is evidenced by the fact of signing a number of documents following the April (2019) talks between the leaders of Belarus and Turkey - an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in education, a roadmap for cooperation between the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NAS) and the Scientific Research Council of Turkey for 2019-2021, a memorandum on scientific and technical cooperation in the Antarctic between the NAS of Belarus and the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Turkey, a memorandum on scientific and technical cooperation in the Antarctic

In particular, the **intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in education** aims to establish and develop direct contacts between higher education institutions and scientific organizations of the two countries so that students and specialists from Belarus and Turkey can participate in events aimed at demonstrating the educational, scientific, technical, and innovative potential of their countries. The parties intend to provide space for higher and postgraduate education in relevant institutions, to inform each other about mutual recognition of documents on training, education and academic degrees, as well as to create all the necessary conditions "to expand and deepen contacts between the countries in the whole range of educational activities, to attract Turkish citizens to study in Belarus"<sup>4</sup> .

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<sup>4</sup> Belarus and Turkey are interested in the development of contacts between universities and scientific organizations [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-turtsija-zainteresovany-v-razvitiu-kontaktov-mezhdu-vuzami-i-nauchnymi-organizatsijami-344261-2019/>

As for the interaction between the scientific communities of the two countries, it is based on the cooperation agreements signed by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus: in 2002 - with the Turkish Research Council for Science and Technology; in 2009 - with the Turkish Academy of Sciences. In 2016, the governments of Belarus and Turkey signed an **agreement on cooperation in science and technology**. A year later, there were memoranda of understanding between the National Intellectual Property Center of the Republic of Belarus and the Turkish Patent and Trademark Agency; and memoranda of cooperation between the Belarusian Innovation Fund and the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey. And in November 2018, the **first meeting of the joint Belarusian-Turkish Commission on Cooperation in Science and Technology was** held, during which the parties agreed to "intensify bilateral cooperation in the line of innovation structure entities, in particular between technology parks of Belarus and Turkish science parks"<sup>5</sup>. At the same meeting of the commission it was stated that "scientists of Belarus and Turkey intend to develop cooperation in the field of polar research"<sup>6</sup>.

Adopted in April 2019, the **roadmap** for the **development of cooperation for 2019-2021** is designed to intensify joint activities of Belarusian and Turkish scientists in the most promising areas of scientific and technical cooperation. "These include optics for space observation of the Earth's surface, unmanned aerial vehicles, batteries for electric cars and other vehicles, composite organomineral materials, mineral

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<sup>5</sup> Belarus and Turkey will hold a competition of joint innovation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: [http://www.gknt.gov.by/news/2018/belarus\\_i\\_turtsiya\\_provedut\\_konkurs\\_sovmestnykh\\_innovatsionnykh\\_proektov/](http://www.gknt.gov.by/news/2018/belarus_i_turtsiya_provedut_konkurs_sovmestnykh_innovatsionnykh_proektov/)

<sup>6</sup> Belarus and Turkey intend to develop cooperation in the field of polar research [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-turtsiya-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-oblasti-poljarnyh-issledovanij-324445-2018/>

enrichment, and the use of information technologies for forecasting dangerous natural phenomena"<sup>7</sup>.

In addition, the adopted roadmap provides for the organization of a joint competition of projects in priority areas of science and technology development along the lines identified during the joint seminars: in 2018 - in Gebze; in 2019 - in Minsk. In particular, in March 2019, the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus, with the support of the Belarusian Innovation Fund and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, announced a **competition for joint innovative scientific and technological projects for 2019-2020** to provide them with "direct financial support at an early stage of development"<sup>8</sup> in such priority areas of Belarusian-Turkish cooperation as information and communication technologies, optoelectronics, nanomaterials, and drones. As for the road map, the document also contained measures to develop, improve the organization and increase the efficiency of joint scientific and technical activities and joint works of the Belarusian Republican Foundation for Fundamental Research and the Research Council of Turkey.

In early December 2020, the **second meeting of the joint Belarusian-Turkish commission for cooperation in science and technology** was held, during which the parties confirmed their mutual desire to develop scientific and technical cooperation in the fields of energy, information and communication technologies, medicine, chemical technologies, and new materials. It should be noted that these partnerships intensified after the signing of the already mentioned intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in science and technology in November 2016.

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<sup>7</sup> Belarus and Turkey signed a roadmap of scientific cooperation until 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-turtsija-podpisali-dorozhnicu-kartu-nauchnogo-sotrudnichestva-do-2021-goda-344282-2019/>

<sup>8</sup> Belarus and Turkey announced a competition of joint scientific and technical projects [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-turtsija-objavili-konkurs-sovmestnyh-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-proektov-338588-2019/>

In this document, the parties agreed to provide comprehensive assistance to cooperation between organizations of both countries in such priority areas as "energy; agro-industrial technologies; industrial and construction technologies and production; medicine and medical technologies, pharmacy; chemical technologies; nano- and biotechnologies; information and communication technologies (e-services, cyber security); aerospace technologies; new materials; environmental management; prevention and elimination of consequences of natural disasters; and the development of new technologies."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>10</sup>At the same second meeting of the joint commission on cooperation in science and technology, it became known that the joint project of the Joint Institute of Informatics Problems of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Turkish company "Novosim Engineering Services" on the development of the warehouse autonomous multi-robotics system, which "will be designed to move goods in automatic mode inside both designed and existing warehouses, logistics centers, taking into account information about their configuration" has already been accepted for funding xml-ph-0000@dee In addition, the Turkish side was considering two more innovative projects of Belarusian scientists, which also received a positive expert evaluation.

Another topical area of Belarusian-Turkish scientific and technical interaction that was discussed at the second meeting of the Joint Commission for Cooperation in Science and Technology was the **interaction between Turkish and Belarusian technoparks**. For the Belarusian side this topic is relevant because "Belarus has 25 subjects of innovation infrastructure: 16 technoparks (including 3 private ones), 8

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<sup>9</sup> Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on cooperation in science and technology [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=101600046&p1=1>

<sup>10</sup> Belarus and Turkey plan to develop cooperation in the spheres of energy, ICT and medicine [Electronic resource]. - 202-. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-turtsija-planirujut-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sferah-energetiki-ikt-i-meditstvy-418159-2020/>

technology transfer centers and the Belarusian Innovation Fund. The network of technoparks covers all regional centers"<sup>11</sup> . There were also technoparks in Pinsk, Navapolatsk, Horki and Liakhovichi district. Plans for 2020 included their opening in Baranovichi, Bobruisk, Borisov, Orsha and Molodechno. All this said that Belarus was implementing systematic measures to develop technoparks as regional innovation platforms for the organization of high-tech industries. That is why it was especially important for the Belarusian side to master the best foreign experience in this area. And Turkey, it should be said, had such experience.

Technoparks or technopolises in this country began to be created in 2001. By mid-2019, their number here had increased to 84, of which 63 are operational, and another 21 were undergoing infrastructure works. "Now there are technoparks in 54 provinces of the country, more than 5 thousand companies work on the territories of technological development zones"<sup>12</sup> . The most technoparks were in Istanbul - 11. Next are Ankara - 9, Kocaeli - 5, Izmir - 4. Their aim is to contribute to the development of high-tech production and services, to provide cooperation between entrepreneurs, researchers and scientists. The scale of activities of Turkish technology parks was also very eloquently spoken about by such figures. As of mid-2019, almost 33 thousand projects had been realized in them, and about ten thousand more were under development. And the number of jobs there exceeded 55 thousand. Finally, the export of resident companies of technoparks as of July 2019 amounted to more than four billion dollars. And all this - in less than twenty years. There is something to be learned from Turkish partners for their Belarusian colleagues.

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<sup>11</sup> Shumilin, A. Forecast to 2040 - about the prospects of science development and international cooperation / A. Shumilin // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/prognoz-do-2040-goda-o-perspektivah-razvitiya-nauki-i-mezhdunarodnom-sotrudnichestve-7168/>

<sup>12</sup> 84 technology parks have been established in Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://restproperty.ru/news/v-turtsii-sozdano-84-tekhnoparka/>

Let us now turn to the most relevant events on the Belarusian-Turkish agenda of the current year. In November 2023, Ankara hosted the **11th meeting of the Belarusian-Turkish Joint Intergovernmental Commission (JIC) on Economic Cooperation**, which focused on systematizing the entire volume of bilateral trade and activating mechanisms in logistics, transport, partnerships in industrial cooperation, and agriculture, as well as a detailed review of the state of the legal framework and outlined priority areas and concrete steps to expand it. It should be noted that today "interaction with Turkey is carried out in the widest range of directions and is supported by political contacts and dialog at the highest level, at the level of intergovernmental communication, interparliamentary communication and serious interagency cooperation"<sup>13</sup>. As a result, the parties noted that trade and economic cooperation between Minsk and Ankara is developing very effectively. And there have already been significant successes in achieving the strategic goal of increasing mutual trade turnover to one and a half billion dollars and reducing the imbalance in mutual trade. "In the last two years our trade turnover has exceeded \$1 billion, but this year [2023] we expect to reach a historical maximum. According to Turkish statistics, in the first 10 months of this year, trade turnover has already totaled \$1.6 billion."<sup>14</sup>.

A separate conversation is about the participation of the Belarusian side in the work on the **reconstruction of Turkish areas** affected by the February 2023 earthquake. Belarus paid "attention to the restoration of infrastructure that was destroyed as a result of the crushing earthquake in

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<sup>13</sup> On holding a meeting of the Belarusian-Turkish Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: [https://mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/fd86a4d2dbb3f651.html](https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/fd86a4d2dbb3f651.html)

<sup>14</sup> Belarus and Turkey will reach the historical maximum in trade turnover by the end of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-turtsija-po-itogam-goda-vyjdut-na-istoricheskij-maksimum-v-tovaroobrote-599138-2023>

11 provinces of Turkey"<sup>15</sup> . In these nine months since the disaster, Belarus has tripled the volume of supplies of construction materials, which are being used to rebuild primarily social infrastructure. The commission confirmed Belarus' readiness to further expand the volume of Belarusian supplies, which are in demand in this country. The Turkish side received a catalog of products, additionally prepared by the ministries, departments and economic entities of Belarus, which will be carefully considered by the Turkish partners. In addition, a project to design and build a plant of reinforced concrete structures in the Turkish town of Kilis is at the initial stage of development, which "will also make a good contribution to the reconstruction of earthquake-affected regions of Turkey"<sup>16</sup> .

Strengthening cooperation in the **agricultural** sector is among the main tasks for the development of bilateral interaction. In 2023, Belarusian supplies of dairy products to the Turkish market started moving forward. And there are serious prospects for increasing exports of meat products and beef from Belarus. This year, a number of Turkish firms have already announced their readiness to cooperate with Belarus in the food sector. For example, "Zirhlioglu Corporate Group has expressed interest in establishing direct contacts with Belarusian enterprises on the supply of specific products and further cooperation with the National Marketing Center"<sup>17</sup> . It is noteworthy that more than 30 Belarusian enterprises - producers and processors of food products - participated in

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<sup>15</sup> Aleynik stated about serious prospects for increasing the supply of dairy products to Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aleynik-zajavil-o-serieznih-perspektivah-dlja-uvlechhenija-postavok-molochnoj-produktsii-v-turtsiju-599135-2023>

<sup>16</sup> Turkish corporation is interested in cooperation with Belarus in the food sector [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turetskaja-korporatsija-zainteresovana-v-sotrudnicestve-s-belarusiju-v-prodovolstvennom-sektore-587699-2023/>

<sup>17</sup> Aleinik: Belarus is interested in supplying goods through Turkey to the countries of the Global South [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aleynik-belarus-zainteresovana-postavljat-tovary-cherez-turtsiju-v-strany-globalnogo-juga-598312-2023/>

the videoconference in September 2023 on this topic. Returning to the meeting of the intergovernmental commission, we note that the parties also reached an agreement to "finalize the procedures on the veterinary questionnaire sent by the Belarusian side by the end of 2024, as well as the intention to hold the second meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture, without delay, at the beginning of the next [2024] year"<sup>18</sup>.

In the field of **logistics and transport**, the parties in the format of the Mixed Commission on Road **Transport** determined the quota of permits for Belarusian carriers for 2024 within the framework of the 11th meeting of the IGC, discussing the implementation of urgent new tasks. In addition, they "considered the possibility of creating an alternative certification center for digital tachograph cards in Turkey, as well as extending for 2024 the pilot project on permit-free performance of bilateral and transit traffic on the territory of Belarus and Turkey"<sup>19</sup>. After all, from January 1, 2023, Belarusian carriers do not need permits for cargo transportation between the two countries, as well as for transit through Turkey. This simplified regime is still operating as an experiment until the end of 2023.

Active and regular interaction with the Turkish-Belarusian Business Cooperation Council under the Foreign Economic Relations Committee of Turkey, the Association of Independent Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, as well as with other associations of Turkish business, including exhibition companies, was named as important elements of the development of **trade and economic** relations between the two countries at the IGC meeting. In this regard, the parties "signed a Memorandum of

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<sup>18</sup> Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Aleinik at the plenary session of the Belarusian-Turkish Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation (November 8, 2023, Ankara) [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: [https://mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/d72f4b731323cb1d.html](https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d72f4b731323cb1d.html)

<sup>19</sup> Belarus and Turkey discuss the extension of the simplified regime of transport communication [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-turtsija-obsuzhdajut-prodlenie-uproschennogo-rezhima-transportnogo-soobschenija-598317-2023/>



Understanding between the National Center for Marketing and Price Study and the Association of Turkish Businessmen (ASRIAD), their representatives plan to participate in a joint business forum in Belarus in the first quarter of 2024<sup>20</sup>. In February next year, Istanbul will host the International Yarn Fair Istanbul Yarn Fair, which will be of interest to Belarusian light industry, chemical and petrochemical enterprises.

Recall that the high level of Belarusian products could be judged by the participation of exporters from Belarus at this exhibition forum - International Istanbul Yarn Fair, which was held in early June 2023 in Istanbul and where 650 companies from different countries, including China, India, Uzbekistan, Germany, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and the Republic of Korea, were represented. Belarusian petrochemical enterprises participated in the Made in Belarus exposition, demonstrating "a wide range of manufactured products based on the best world technologies, including various types of fibers, yarns and materials used in the textile, knitting and garment industries"<sup>21</sup>.

Thus, Naftan OJSC demonstrated at the exhibition acrylic fibers used in the production of yarn and artificial fur, and Polotsk-Steklovolokno OJSC - glass fiber and products based on it. The Belarusian chemical company "Mogilevkhimvolokno" offered a wide range of polyester fibers and yarns used in the production of yarn, fillers and artificial fur, and also presented polyester fabrics indispensable in the production of roofing materials and carpets. The branch "Khimvolokno Plant" of JSC "Grodno Azot" at the exhibition demonstrated cord fabrics for reinforcing pneumatic tires, polyamide yarns for production of ropes and fishing gear and polyamide-6. Also at the stand of the enterprise were

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<sup>20</sup> Belarus and Turkey intend to hold a joint business forum in the first quarter of 2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-turtsiia-namereny-provesti-sovmestnyi-biznes-forum-v-pervom-kvartale-2024-goda-598314-2023/>

<sup>21</sup> Belarusian enterprises presented their products at the international exhibition in Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-predstavili-produktsiju-na-mezhdunarodnoi-vystavke-v-turtsii-569846-2023/>

presented polymer composite materials, which are widely used at the enterprises of automobile, aviation and oil industries. SvetlogorskKhimvolokno OJSC showed special fabrics, yarns and fibers intended for application in the automotive industry. As a result, Belarusian exporters held very effective negotiations not only with Turkish partners and counterparties, but also with representatives of companies from other countries. So let us hope that the exhibition in Istanbul in February 2024 will be a continuation of new interesting joint projects.

Another important aspect of the partnership ties between Belarus and Turkey, which was noted at the 11th meeting of the IGC, is the further expansion of the **legal framework**. Statistics say that more than 40 intergovernmental, interdepartmental agreements have already been included in this base. A new document in this regard is the protocol of the 11th meeting of the Commission, which contains a list of eight agreements, on which the parties agreed to accelerate joint work. In fact, this final protocol is "a new program of action, a kind of roadmap for the development of bilateral economic relations in the short and medium term and will allow Belarus and Turkey to make fuller use of the available opportunities for cooperation"<sup>22</sup>.

And already in November 2023, within the framework of this program, the Belarusian-Turkish Research Center was opened in Minsk on the basis of the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, which became another step towards the development of relations between the two countries. "Its main tasks are to coordinate and conduct joint research works, individual projects in the field of historical, cultural and philosophical heritage of Belarus and Turkey, to improve the qualification of scientific personnel by studying Turkish, as

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<sup>22</sup> Belarus is working out new investment projects with Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-prorabatvvaet-s-turtsiej-novyve-investitsionnye-proekty-598324-2023/>

well as to translate the works of Turkish and Belarusian philosophers, scientists into Belarusian and Turkish"<sup>23</sup>. At the moment the new center is focused on "Philosophical and spiritual-cultural heritage of Belarus and Turkey: history and modernity". Turkish researchers are preparing a "Review of the main achievements of Turkish philosophy", while their Belarusian colleagues are researching "The influence of Belarusian-Muslim tradition on the formation of cultural and national identity". In addition, the center is expected to perform educational and popularization functions, as scientists of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus will study the Turkish language on its basis, and various lectures and master classes are planned.

Let us summarize the results. Over the past three decades of diplomatic relations, Minsk and Ankara have not only identified the priority areas of Belarusian-Turkish cooperation, but also clearly built a multilevel system of interstate, intergovernmental and interdepartmental cooperation, which jointly moves towards the realization of new strategic objectives. And in this regard, the decisions of the 11th meeting of the Belarusian-Turkish Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation are yet another weighty confirmation of partnership ties that are focused on the future.

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<sup>23</sup> Belarusian-Turkish research center opened at the National Academy of Sciences [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-turetskij-issledovatel'skij-tsentr-otkrvlsja-v-nan-597558-2023/>

## A plan for further cooperation has been agreed

In October 2023, Tehran hosted the 16th meeting of the Joint Belarusian-Iranian Commission on Economic Cooperation, during which the parties discussed trade and economic, industrial, investment, banking, petrochemical cooperation, as well as healthcare and pharmaceuticals, transportation, and air services. **Belarus** and **Iran** agreed on a plan of further cooperation in promising areas of partnership, which "includes the implementation by the parties in the near future of activities in the areas of industrial cooperation, agriculture and veterinary medicine, health care and pharmaceuticals, transport and cooperation through chambers of commerce and industry"<sup>24</sup>. In addition, the Iranian capital hosted meetings of a mixed working group on oil cooperation, a joint Belarusian-Iranian committee on international automobile traffic, as well as the Iran-Belarus business forum, during which "a cooperation agreement was signed between the Minsk branch of the BelCCI and the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, which will give an additional impetus to the development of Belarusian-Iranian business relations"<sup>25</sup>.

Recall that at the 15th meeting of the mixed commission in July 2022, discussing successful bilateral projects and joint promising activities, the participants expressed interest in increasing the volume of trade turnover between the two countries. After all, "in the best years, the sides reached 250-300 million dollars. Therefore <...> intend to reach a

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<sup>24</sup> Belarus and Iran have agreed on a plan of cooperation in promising areas of interaction [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-iran-soglasovali-plan-sotrudnichestva-po-perspektivnym-napravlenijam-vzaimodejstviya-592926-2023/>

<sup>25</sup> Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Minsk and Tehran signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/torgovo-promyshlennve-palatv-minska-i-tegerana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-594460-2023/>

trade turnover within \$500 million in a short period of time"<sup>26</sup> . In March 2023, celebrating the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, Minsk and Tehran signed a roadmap for comprehensive cooperation for 2023-2026, which envisioned interaction on a wide range of issues, from politics and economy to media and tourism. This systematic document allowed the parties to work through a list of specific practical measures, many of which are already being successfully implemented. "Intensive work at various levels has led to a significant increase in trade turnover. In 2022, trade turnover tripled to the level of 2021. In the current [2023] year, it added another 25% to the same period last year."<sup>27</sup> .

Among Belarusian exporters that are successfully developing the Iranian market, the enterprises of the **Bellesbumprom Concern** stand out. In eight months of 2023, they increased their exports to Iran by more than 1.6 times. Belarus supplies "cellulose, plywood, wood boards" to this country<sup>28</sup> . At the same time, the concern plans to increase exports and expand cooperation with Iranian partners. In particular, **Svetlogorsk Pulp and Paperboard Mill** supplies bleached pulp to Iran. In October 2023, specialists of the enterprise visited the Islamic Republic in order to "reach a qualitatively new level of cooperation. We plan to increase the volume of exports, as well as to expand cooperation on the supply of chemicals from Iran necessary for the production of pulp"<sup>29</sup> .

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<sup>26</sup> Zalesky, B. The Route of Interaction - Asia. Intensification of Belarus' multifaceted ties with the main economic partners on the continent / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 65.

<sup>27</sup> Industrial cooperation and education. Roman Golovchenko outlined promising areas of cooperation with Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10714>

<sup>28</sup> Enterprises of "Bellesbumprom" increased exports to Iran more than 1.6 times [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriatija-bellesbumproma-uvlechili-eksport-produktsii-v-iran-bolee-chem-v-16-raza-594471-2023/>

<sup>29</sup> "Bellesbumprom" plans to increase exports and expand cooperation with Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellesbumprom-planiruet-uvlechit-objemy-eksporta-i-rasshirit-kooperatsionnye-svjazi-s-iranom-594315-2023/>

When it comes to Belarusian regions interested in actively developing trade and economic relations with Iran, **Vitebsk Region** can be mentioned. The fact is that since 2022, Vitebsk Region's trade turnover with this country has multiplied, which is due to the need to build new logistics options for export cargoes. At the same time, "among the new types of products that have not been supplied to Iran before are fiberglass fabrics, wood boards, various types of acids and reagents. Vitebsk region continues to supply lumber to Iran - 49% of the trade turnover. The region buys fresh fruits and vegetables, which account for 98% of all purchases from this country, and medical equipment"<sup>30</sup>.

In November 2023, the Belarusian region offered its Iranian partners to create cooperation chains in the pharmaceutical sector. After all, a pharmaceutical cluster has already been created in Vitebsk. In addition, Vitebsk specialists are ready to offer Iran petrochemical products, which occupy almost half of the industrial output of the region, ranging from fiberglass to additives for oils. Vitebsk region can also offer food products, carpets, footwear, linen products. The Iranian side also made interesting proposals for cooperation. In particular, "there are many deposits in Iran and the mining industry is developing, so we would like to cooperate with Vitebsk region in this sphere"<sup>31</sup>. So the parties hope not only to continue old ties, but also to find new opportunities for increasing economic partnership.

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<sup>30</sup> Vitebsk region offered Iran to work in cooperation in pharmaceuticals [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskaja-oblast-predlozhi-la-iranu-rabotat-v-kooperatsii-v-farmatsevtike-600855-2023/>

<sup>31</sup> Machine building, petrochemistry. Ambassador of Iran on the possibilities of cooperation with Vitebsk region [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mashinostroenie-neftehimija-posol-irana-o-vozmozhnostyah-sotrudnichestva-s-vitebskoi-oblastiu-600832-2023/>

## Dynamics defines new reserves

In December 2023, the Republic of Belarus presented its products at the largest international multi-sectoral exhibition in Southeast Asia - **Vietnam Expo** - in Ho Chi Minh City. Within the framework of five country expositions, which were organized at this forum together with India, China, the Republic of Korea, and Vietnam, "the Belarusian collective stand brought together 36 Belarusian enterprises and organizations from the fields of mechanical engineering, petrochemicals, electrical engineering, agriculture, food and beverage production, scientific and technical research and development, as well as educational and marketing services"<sup>32</sup>. Note that this exhibition is held in Vietnam twice a year: in April in Hanoi and in December in Ho Chi Minh City. In total, more than 1,200 companies from 20 countries have registered as exhibitors in 2023. The 21st Vietnam Expo in Ho Chi Minh City showcased a wide range of products and services, making it a comprehensive and multi-faceted exhibition. The main sections of the exhibition include food processing; agriculture; machinery; electronics; metallurgy; petrochemicals; construction; science and technology; medicine and pharmaceuticals.

At the Belarusian stand, in particular, petrochemical enterprises, including JSC Belshina, demonstrated their capabilities, products and potential. The visitors and participants were presented samples of tires for cars, trucks and agricultural machinery, polyamide-6 and materials based on it, cord fabrics, acrylic fiber, high-pressure polyethylene, motor oils, nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium fertilizers. And at the stand of Beltopgaz association, with the participation of peat plants Vitebsktoř of Vitebskoblغاز, Torfopredpriyatiye Glinka and Turshovka, samples of professional peat substrates produced in Belarus were widely presented.

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<sup>32</sup>Belarus presented its products at the largest exhibition in Southeast Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-svoju-produktsiju-na-krupnejšej-vystavke-v-jugo-vostochnoj-azii-603968-2023/>

After the negotiations, representatives of Beltopgaz signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Vietnam Coconut Association in the production of biofertilizers. The Vietnamese partner "will coordinate research on bio-organic fertilizers based on Belarusian peat for coconut palms in order to increase the yield and quality of coconuts throughout Vietnam, as well as support the development of the market for the consumption of such bio-fertilizers"<sup>33</sup>. In addition, the Vietnam Coconut Producers Association will coordinate with Beltopgaz GPO in organizing seminars on the introduction of Belarusian peat-based bio-organic fertilizers for coconuts in Vietnam to find a market of consumers. The Belarusian side will select the optimal formulation of peat substrate for coconut cultivation. The parties also reached an agreement on pilot deliveries of Belarusian peat-based substrates to Vietnam for growing 500 trees with scientific research to control the growth rate and quality of fruits, and on a counter-delivery of coconut planting material to Belarus to select the optimal substrate formulation.

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus presented about 30 innovative developments at this forum, including novelties of the Belarusian National Technical University, the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and the Belarusian State University (BSU). In particular, BSU showed more than 20 exhibits in Ho Chi Minh City, for which it was awarded diplomas of the VIETNAM EXPO. Among them are food additives, pharmaceuticals, technological equipment. For example, "an innovative series of biopreparations "Tsipropig", "Biferon - MRS" and "Circol" was presented. They are

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<sup>33</sup> "Beltopgaz" will cooperate with the Vietnam Coconut Association in the production of fertilizers [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beltopgaz-budet-sotrudnichat-s-vjetnamskoj-kokosovoi-assotsiatsiej-v-proizvodstve-udobrenij-605045-2023>



intended for treatment and prevention of diseases of farm animals"<sup>34</sup> . Also among the exhibits are heat-resistant heat-insulating composite materials based on phosphate and silicate binders, light-absorbing composite materials, technologies of applying gradient anticorrosive heat-resistant coating, metal corrosion inhibitors, food complexes for normalization of the nervous system. As a result, at the exhibition "15 documents, three framework agreements on partnership relations and 12 contracts totaling \$26 million were signed"<sup>35</sup> .

In addition to the national exposition of Belarus at the VIETNAM EXPO international exhibition in Ho Chi Minh City, the Saigon Convention and Exhibition Center hosted a Belarusian-Vietnamese business forum, which "was attended by more than 30 Belarusian enterprises and organizations, including machine-building giants of Belarus, major Belarusian educational institutions and scientific centers, as well as food and dairy producers"<sup>36</sup> and where the participants discussed the prospects of cooperation with Vietnamese partners. The fact is that today Belarus seeks to reach a new level of cooperation with Vietnam, which would be characterized by the presence of strong production and technological ties. In particular, we are talking about the establishment of "joint ventures to produce high-tech and competitive products to meet domestic demand and with subsequent access to the markets of third countries"<sup>37</sup> .

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<sup>34</sup> Diplomas of the International Exhibition "Vietnam Expo" are awarded to BSU and "UNITEKHPROM BSU" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://bsu.by/news/diplomov-mezhdunarodnov-vvstavki-vietnam-expo-udostoenv-bgu-i-unitekhprom-bgu-d/>

<sup>35</sup> Anufrieva, O. Belarusian companies at the exhibition "Vietnam Expo - 2023" signed contracts for 26 million dollars / O. Anufrieva // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/beloruskie-kompanii-na-vstavke-vetnam-ekspo-2023-zaklvuchili-kontraktv-na-26-millionov-dollarov.html>

<sup>36</sup> Belarus and Vietnam at the joint business forum discussed the development of industrial ties [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vietnam-na-sovmestnom-biznes-forume-obsudili-razvitie-proizvodstvennyh-svjazej-603969-2023/>

<sup>37</sup> Foreign Ministry: Belarus seeks to reach a new level of cooperation with Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mid-belarus-stremitjsja-vviti-na-novyj-uroven-kooperatsii-s-vietnamom-603996-2023/>

Interesting facts should be mentioned in this context. Since 2019, the production of special vehicles based on the machines of the Minsk Automobile Plant has been operating in the province of Heunggyen. "The machinery is assembled on the basis of machine kits of Belarusian production, and previously delivered vehicles are modernized. The enterprise can produce about 500 Vietnamese-made all-wheel drive vehicles per year"<sup>38</sup>. And this assembly plant "MAZ Asia" opens good prospects to work in the markets of other countries of the region - Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos. In the same Vietnamese province, a project to build a dairy products plant using Belarusian technologies and Belarusian milk powder, which will produce yogurt, ice cream, butter, and cheese, is already under consideration. In addition, the Belarusian side proposed to the Vietnamese partners to cooperate in the field of ecology, as the number of cars and motorcycles is growing rapidly in this Southeast Asian country and there is a great need to recycle used tires. In order to turn these tires into new products, it is possible to supply from Belarus high-tech and efficient complexes for the use of solid domestic waste with obtaining from them secondary resources for the production of new products. As a result, "Vietnam can make confident steps towards building a so-called circular economy based on the maximum use of all types of secondary resources"<sup>39</sup>.

All these facts show that the Belarusian-Vietnamese trade and economic cooperation today is characterized by sustainable positive trends. Suffice it to say that "at the end of last year [2022], trade turnover between the two countries amounted to \$180 million. In January-September this year, it has already exceeded \$200 million, with both

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<sup>38</sup> Bet on the development of industrial cooperation. What Golovchenko talked about with the Prime Minister of Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/stavka-na-razvitiye-promkkooperatsii-o-chem-golovchenko-govoril-s-premierom-vietnama-604054-2023/>

<sup>39</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus contributes to strengthening food security in Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-vnosit-vklad-v-ukreplenie-prodovolstvennoj-bezopasnosti-vietnama-604073-2023/>

Belarusian and Vietnamese exports growing"<sup>40</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that this dynamics will only increase. But for this to happen, of course, in 2024 the parties will have to not only develop the existing opportunities, but also find new reserves for bilateral economic interaction.

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<sup>40</sup> MAZs, dairy products and environmental issues. What Roman Golovchenko negotiates in Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10746>

## **Purpose - 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"<sup>41</sup> .

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"<sup>42</sup> . 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.

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

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<sup>41</sup> 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-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-pakistanskom-karachi-554860-2023/>

<sup>42</sup> 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-nauchnotekhnicheskie-i-innovatsionnye-razrabotki-na-mezhdunarodnov-vstavke-inter/>

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..."<sup>43</sup>. 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 cost of a ton of polyurethane foam due to a 15-20 percent

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<sup>43</sup> 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-bsu-na-mezhdunarodnoy-vystavke-international-trade-and-industry-fair--d/>

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"<sup>44</sup>. 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.

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

## To make the relationship strategic

**Mongolia** is a state located in East Asia, with which Belarus develops effective cooperation in a wide range of areas. The countries are actively developing trade and economic cooperation, building partnership ties between Belarusian and Mongolian regions, strengthening interparliamentary contacts, and continuing the implementation of joint projects in education. It should be noted that since the establishment of Belarusian-Mongolian diplomatic relations in January 1992, Belarusian exports have traditionally formed the basis of bilateral trade. In this context, promising areas of cooperation include "mining (supplies of quarry and special machinery), transportation (transit, supplies of passenger vehicles, railway cars, and equipment), road maintenance (supplies of special machinery, equipment, and technologies), agriculture (supplies of machinery, equipment, and technologies, cooperation in crop production, animal husbandry, and veterinary medicine), and prevention of emergency situations (supplies of fire-fighting equipment).<sup>45</sup> .

At the end of 2018, with the total volume of trade turnover of \$19.5 million, the value of exports from Belarus exceeded \$19 million with a positive balance for the Belarusian side - \$18.8 million. The bulk of goods supplies from Belarus to Mongolia were milk, condensed and dried cream, trucks, plastic containers, road and construction machinery, butter, medicines, bread and flour confectionery, synthetic combed fibers, footwear, sugar, engines and power units. In the same year of 2018, the turnover of services between the two countries also increased almost 1.8 times, exceeding the figure of six million dollars. The facts show that bilateral ties between Belarus and Mongolia have noticeably intensified in recent years after:

1) establishment of the Joint Belarusian-Mongolian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation in 2013;

<sup>45</sup> Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://export.by/mongolia>

- 2) opening of the Belarusian embassy in Ulaanbaatar in June 2014;
- 3) the emergence in 2015 of the Joint Belarusian-Mongolian Commission on Cooperation in Science and Technology and the bilateral interdepartmental Working Group on Cooperation in Agriculture.

In June 2018, on the margins of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in the Chinese city of Qingdao, the leaders of the two countries stated during a bilateral meeting that "Belarus and Mongolia are located between large states or blocs, so it is important to be able to take advantage of this position and find advantages in terms of economy"<sup>46</sup>. At that time, the Belarusian side voiced its readiness to create highly productive enterprises and machinery production on Mongolian soil, while the Mongolian side expressed its interest, first of all, in the creation of dairy production using Belarusian technologies. In general, in recent years, Belarus and Mongolia have "expanded their legal framework and strengthened trade and economic cooperation. Cooperation in the agricultural and scientific-technical spheres has been launched. Bilateral ties in education and sports have been restored"<sup>47</sup>. And in the future, the Mongolian side is not only interested in more active cooperation with Belarus in agriculture, mechanical engineering, food industry, science, education, but also sees great opportunities in the wide mutual use of each other's transit potential. According to the parties, "Belarus can become an outlet to Europe for Mongolia and its goods, and Mongolia can become a conduit to Asia for Belarusian products"<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> Negotiations with the President of Mongolia Haltmagiin Battulga [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/vstrecha-s-prezidentom-mongolii-xaltmagijn-battulgoj-18894/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-prezidentom-mongolii-xaltmagijn-battulgoj-18894/)

<sup>47</sup> Transcript of the approach to the press of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus V. Makei following the talks with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia (June 4, 2018, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: [http://mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/d211839fb93936d7.html](http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d211839fb93936d7.html)

<sup>48</sup> Tsogtbaatar, D. Belarus can become for Mongolia and its goods an exit to Europe / D. Tsogtbaatar // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/opinions/view/belarus-mozhet-stat-dlja-mongolii-i-ee-tovarov-vyhodom-v-evropu-6281/>



In April 2019, an **intergovernmental general agreement on the provision of an export credit** was adopted to ensure the supply of Belarusian machinery to Mongolia. According to this document, "in the coming years, the parties will work out the issues of supplying firefighting, agricultural, municipal, road-building and road-cleaning equipment, passenger elevators, and railway cars"<sup>49</sup>. It was also discussed that a dairy cluster will be created in Mongolia with the use of Belarusian technologies, including a milk processing plant and dairy farms, and "opportunities for cooperation in the construction and mining industries, education, as well as expansion of the bilateral legal framework"<sup>50</sup>. And in June 2019, the **fifth meeting of the joint Belarusian-Mongolian commission on trade and economic cooperation** was held in Ulaanbaatar, where the issues of practical implementation of the intergovernmental general agreement on granting export credit were considered, and the **Roadmap for the development of cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Mongolia for 2019-2021** was signed.

And already within the framework of this loan for 2021 several major projects were implemented. "More than 70 units of fire-fighting equipment on MAZ chassis were delivered for the needs of the State Emergency Situations Agency of Mongolia. <...> The supply of road cleaning and repair equipment on MAZ chassis for the needs of the Ministry of Roads and Transportation Development of Mongolia became highly demanded. 42 units were delivered for all aimags of Mongolia"<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> Belarus will provide an export credit to Mongolia for the purchase of its equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predostavit-eksportnyj-kredit-mongolii-na-pokupku-svoej-tehniki-345020-2019/>

<sup>50</sup> The regular meeting of the Belarusian-Mongolian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Ulan Bator [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://mongolia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/ddb45d27a11bdef0.html>

<sup>51</sup> Interview of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Mongolia D. Gorelik to the information portal "GOGO" (January 5, 2022). Gorelik to the information portal "GOGO" (January 5, 2022) [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/bf44fc21553530dd.html>

The Belarusian side also transferred the technology for road pavement repair and assisted in setting up in this country the production of the necessary components to ensure the operation of road repair machines. As for other results of 2021, "trade turnover of food products and agricultural raw materials with Mongolia amounted to \$14.1 million (up 2.5 times compared to 2020). The main export items were milk and milk products - 85.9%"<sup>52</sup>. In the same year, the Mongolian side decided to purchase about nine thousand heads of highly productive pedigree cattle of Belarusian selection from Belarus.

Interesting prospects have also opened up in the **Belarusian-Mongolian cooperation in the field of education**, the basic element of which is the intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in this area, signed in 2013, which provides for the possibility of annual exchange of students to study at the universities of the parties. Fulfilling the provisions of this document and within the framework of the implementation of the Memorandum on interaction and cooperation between Dalanzadgad commune of Umnugovi aimag and the city of Zhodino, signed in 2016, "in the 2017/2018 academic year, six citizens of Mongolia were enrolled to study at the Branch of BNTU "Zhodino State College"<sup>53</sup>. And in 2021, more than 30 Mongolian students have already studied in Belarus. The most popular specialties for them were: medical science, IT software, information systems and technologies, mining machinery and equipment, agronomy, veterinary science, law, and transport logistics.

**The sixth meeting of the joint Belarusian-Mongolian commission**, which discussed topical issues of expanding mutually beneficial partnership, was held already in February 2022 in the format of a videoconference, where it was noted that "among the main exported

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<sup>52</sup> Belarus and Mongolia intend to increase cooperation in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-mongolija-namereny-naraschivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-selskom-hozjajstve-498561-2022/>

<sup>53</sup> Humanitarian cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [http://mongolia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/cultural/e6d8f5ae8191d258.html](http://mongolia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/cultural/e6d8f5ae8191d258.html)

goods from Belarus to Mongolia are food products and quarry machinery"<sup>54</sup> . The parties then agreed to intensify projects to be implemented under the General Agreement on Export Credit (2019), including the replacement or reconstruction of elevators in residential buildings in Ulaanbaatar and the supply of agricultural machinery and equipment. And then there was also "an agreement on cooperation with Belarus within the framework of the national Billion Tree Movement"<sup>55</sup> , initiated by Mongolian President U. Khurelsukh in 2021. In the same year of 2022, **interregional cooperation** began to develop more actively.

**Brest Region** is among the Belarusian regions that are seriously interested in developing trade and economic interaction with Mongolian partners. Suffice it to say that the foreign trade turnover with Mongolia in 2021 increased more than 2.5 times and amounted to more than 1.2 million dollars. The positive dynamics continues in the following years, which is based on the supplies of furniture, industrial equipment, food products from Brestchina. And the parties have a good reason for the expansion of partnership ties. After all, Mongolia is a country with a developed mining industry, agriculture, where the number of cattle is more than 70 million. And "more than half of the world's cashmere is of Mongolian origin"<sup>56</sup> .

**Mogilev Region** is also highly interested in cooperation with this East Asian country. After all, in 2020 the trade turnover of the Belarusian region with Mongolia amounted to only \$179 thousand, in 2021 - more than \$1.5 million, and "at the end of 9 months of the current [2022] year

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<sup>54</sup> Belarus and Mongolia held a meeting of the commission on trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-mongolija-proveli-zasedanie-komissii-po-torgovo-ekonomicheskomu-sotrudnichestvu-487044-2022/>

<sup>55</sup> Battsetsag, G. Mongolia and Belarus held an online meeting of the commission on trade and economic cooperation / G. Battsetsag // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://montsame.mn/ru/read/291038>

<sup>56</sup> Brest region and Mongolia are interested in the development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskaja-oblast-i-mongolija-zainteresovany-v-razviti-sotrudnichestva-497468-2022/>

this figure will be about \$2.7 million"<sup>57</sup>. In October 2022, negotiations with a delegation from **Bulgan aimag** took place in Mogilev. The main industry of the Mongolian region is agriculture, including cattle breeding and farming. Among the issues discussed during the meeting was Mogilev's experience in training highly professional specialists in these areas, as well as the development of cultural, educational, sports and tourist cooperation. And the parties have already agreed to work in these areas.

Finally, in January 2024, Minsk hosted the **seventh meeting of the joint Belarusian-Mongolian intergovernmental commission (IGC)** on trade and economic cooperation to discuss the status and prospects of interaction in industry, agriculture, transportation and logistics, finance, as well as education, culture, and science. The parties agreed that "today's mutual trade turnover does not reflect the potential of the two countries, in past periods the volume of trade turnover was much higher. <...> But we must do everything to make the relationship between the two countries acquire a strategic character"<sup>58</sup>.

Among the priority areas of cooperation between Belarus and Mongolia are agriculture-related topics. These include supplies of equipment for dairy and livestock farms, potato and other crop seeds, Belarusian-made veterinary drugs, as well as training and retraining of Mongolian specialists in Belarusian agrarian universities. Within the framework of the IGC, at the third meeting of the Belarusian-Mongolian working group on agriculture, an agreement on cooperation in the field of pedigree cattle breeding was signed between the Belarusian State

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<sup>57</sup> Isachenko on cooperation with Mongolia: success depends on the desire to work together [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/isachenko-o-sotrudnichestve-s-mongoliej-uspeh-zavisit-ot-zhelanija-sovmestno-rabotat-532389-2022/>

<sup>58</sup> Multi-brand center of Belarusian machinery is planned to open in Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/multibrendovyi-tsentr-belorusskoj-tehniki-planirujut-otkryt-v-mongolii-611362-2024/>

**Association Belplemzhivobedinenie** and the **State Agricultural Corporation of Mongolia**, which "provides for the supply of pedigree cattle of Belarusian selection to Mongolia"<sup>59</sup>.

In addition, the parties discussed the construction and operation of a multi-brand center in this East Asian country, where all Belarusian machinery - tractors, combines, trucks, and dump trucks - will be presented. And **Gomselmash** has already signed a contract with the State Agricultural Corporation of Mongolia to supply 10 self-propelled mowers. Note that "this [Mongolian] market consumes up to 300 units of self-propelled grain harvesting machinery annually"<sup>60</sup>. Gomel mowers were supplied to the Mongolian market until 2015. And today these deliveries are already being resumed. For reference: "Gomselmash" took part in the **48th international exhibition Ulaanbaatar Partnership-2023 in Ulaanbaatar in the fall of 2023**, where it showed a wide range of products, which can be further developed to meet the requirements of the Mongolian specifics and the wishes of customers based on the purpose of its application. Within the framework of this business forum the specialists of Gomel enterprise held negotiations with the representatives of the **Ministry of Agriculture of Mongolia and KOGS "Agricultural Corporation"**, where "the main topic was the promotion of Belarusian combine harvesters on the Mongolian market"<sup>61</sup>. And already in 2024 the supplies of machinery from Gomel, which is in demand, will begin. **Minsk Tractor Works** is also interested in increasing the volume of supplies of BELARUS machines to this country. Especially since "the

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<sup>59</sup> Belarus plans to expand the range of food supplies to Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-rasshirit-assortiment-postavok-prodovolstvija-v-mongoliju-611355-2024/>

<sup>60</sup> "Gomselmash" resumes deliveries to Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-vozobnovljaet-postavki-v-mongoliju-611342-2024/>

<sup>61</sup> "Gomselmash" establishes business ties with Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-nalazhivaet-delovye-svjazi-s-mongoliej-591381-2023/>

growth rate of MTZ exports to Mongolia in 2023 amounted to 163.3% compared to 2022" .<sup>62</sup>

Returning to the 48th International Exhibition in Ulaanbaatar, it should be recalled that Ulaanbaatar Partnership-2023 is the largest multi-sectoral exhibition event in Mongolia, which annually brings together hundreds of companies from such sectors as agriculture, engineering, oil refining, construction and light industry. In 2023, the collective exposition Made in Belarus was also presented at this forum, where "six companies participated, covering such sectors as food industry, mechanical engineering, dual-use machinery and consumer goods"<sup>63</sup> . Among them was **Vitebsk Carpets OJSC**, which showed novelty samples of polypropylene carpets and classic carpet collections. A wide range of products, including sterilized milk, cheese, skimmed milk powder, whey, sweet butter, glazed cheese, milkshakes and lactose-free products, was presented by **Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1**. Optical-electronic devices and surveillance systems, including night vision devices, laser rangefinders and rangefinder modules, as well as thermal imaging surveillance devices, were demonstrated by the **Scientific and Technical Center "LEMT" of BelOMO**. Another exhibitor - **JSC "Zenit"** - showed at its stand a wide range of products and promising developments, including LED headlights and lights for harsh operating conditions, electrical products for elevators, street and industrial LED lighting, disinfection systems for rooms and elevator cabs. The company is interested in establishing business relations with Mongolian enterprises in mining, utilities and construction.

Finally, in Ulaanbaatar, visitors to the exhibition were able to familiarize themselves with the capabilities of the **Belarusian Universal**

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<sup>62</sup> MTZ is interested in expanding the supply of tractors to Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-zainteresovan-v-rasshirenii-postavok-traktorov-v-mongoliju-612157-2024/>

<sup>63</sup> Made in Belarus exposition was presented at the exhibition in Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekspozitsiju-made-in-belarus-predstavili-na-vystavke-v-mongolii-590845-2023/>

**Commodity Exchange** (BUTB), which established contacts with representatives of Mongolian businesses to attract them to the trades as sellers or buyers. And among the promising commodity items that were considered by BUTB during the exhibition, the focus was on exports of Belarusian agricultural products and petrochemicals to Mongolia. In the future, "BUTB expects to utilize the potential of the industrial and consumer goods platform, where deals are already being concluded to sell Mongolian products..."<sup>64</sup>. In September 2023, the first Mongolian stock exchange broker - **United Meres Machinery** - was accredited at BUTB. The **company** has been working in the Belarusian market for quite a long time, has a good experience in supplying raw materials for the metallurgical industry and is engaged in the sale of quarry and special equipment of the Belarusian Automobile Plant to mining companies in Mongolia. As a BUTB broker, the company intends to diversify its commodity portfolio and use all groups of goods represented on the Belarusian exchange platform. After all, "Mongolia is a promising market for Belarusian enterprises, both in terms of purchasing raw materials and supplies and selling finished products. Using the exchange platform as a link between Belarusian and Mongolian business entities will not only simplify the search for business partners, but will eliminate the main risks associated with payment and delivery of goods"<sup>65</sup>. The new broker plans to start with high-demand goods - ferrous metals and coal. In addition, the possibility of supplying petrochemical and agro-industrial products to Mongolia is being worked out. And in January 2024, with the help of the first Mongolian broker on BUTB, the first transaction for the supply of white granulated sugar to this East Asian country was registered. "The

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<sup>64</sup> Opportunities of the Belarusian exchange platform are presented at the international exhibition in Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vozmozhnosti-belorusskoi-birzhevoj-ploschadki-predstavleny-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vvstavke-v-mongolii-590839-2023/>

<sup>65</sup> BUTB accredited the first broker in Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-akkreditovala-pervogo-brokera-v-mongolii-586995-2023/>

volume of the pilot purchase amounted to 312 tons<sup>66</sup>. Given the high demand for sugar in Mongolia, it can be assumed that this product area may become one of the promising markets in Asia. Especially since after the successful fulfillment of the first contract, Mongolian partners are already expecting an increase in the volume of exchange exports from Belarus.

As for the 7th meeting of the IGC, the parties also discussed topical **issues of scientific and technical cooperation** and noted the significant potential for strengthening cooperation between Belarus and Mongolia in science and education. In particular, within the framework of the IGC, at the fourth meeting of the Joint Belarusian-Mongolian Commission for Cooperation in Science and Technology, the parties agreed to announce in the near future a **contest of scientific and technical projects for 2024-2025**. "Points of mutual interest are agriculture, agricultural and forestry machinery and equipment, intensive animal husbandry, reforestation and breeding, crop production, as well as history and archeology"<sup>67</sup>. And in the same January 2024 it was agreed to sign an updated agreement between the **National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Belarus** and the **Academy of Sciences of Mongolia** with the addition of its **roadmap of cooperation for 2024-2025**, as well as "to work out the issue of signing an agreement on cooperation between the NAS of Belarus and the Ministry of Education and Science of Mongolia"<sup>68</sup>. In addition, the parties will consider the possibility of organizing a **forum of young**

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<sup>66</sup> Belarusian sugar for the first time sold to Mongolia through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskij-sahar-vpervve-prodan-v-mongoliju-cherez-butb-611445-2024/>

<sup>67</sup> Belarusian-Mongolian competition of scientific and technical projects will be announced in the near future [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-mongolskij-konkurs-nauchno-tehnicheskij-proektov-objavjat-v-blizhajshee-vremja-611318-2024/>

<sup>68</sup> Belarus and Mongolia are considering the possibility of holding a forum of young scientists this year [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-mongolija-rassmatrivajut-vozmozhnost-provedenija-foruma-molodyh-uchenyh-v-etom-godu-612262-2024>



**scientists** in the first half of 2024 and work out the issue of training of Mongolian specialists in master's, postgraduate and doctoral studies of the **State Educational Institution "University of NAS of Belarus**.

Another interesting topic was in the focus of Belarusian-Mongolian interaction at the 7th meeting of the IGC - **ecology**. The fact is that the Mongolian government does not have a separate forestry ministry. For this reason, environmental issues are distributed among several agencies. We have already mentioned that in 2021, Mongolian President U. Khurelsukh announced an ambitious initiative to plant at least one billion trees by 2030. In this context, improving the technology of forestry is becoming a priority issue in Mongolia. In particular, this East Asian country was interested in the Belarusian experience in forestry and drew attention to several promising areas for expanding partnerships, including wooden house building. And the Belarusian side offered "Mongolia to consider high-quality ecological housing from Belarusian forestry enterprises"<sup>69</sup>. In addition, the Mongolian partners initiated joint scientific research on reforestation under climate change and desertification, cultivation of planting material, and training of specialists with the possibility of opening a sectoral training center.

Summarizing the results of the 7th meeting of the intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation, we note that today the traditionally friendly relations and cooperation between Belarus and Mongolia are actively developing in trade, economy, agriculture, light industry and other areas. As for further bilateral interaction, it will only be saturated with new innovative ideas and projects to make these partnerships truly strategic. After all, Belarus and Mongolia still have a lot of untapped opportunities for cooperation. And

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<sup>69</sup> Mongolia is interested in studying the Belarusian experience of forestry [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mongolija-zainteresovana-v-izuchenii-belorusskogo-opyta-vedenija-lesnogo-hozjajstva-611197-2024/>

the task of the governments of both states is not to miss these opportunities and create conditions for their realization.

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## Strategic partnership enters a new era

In March 2023, the leaders of the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China adopted 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, which include mutual support for the state course and on issues affecting each other's indigenous interests. In addition to this joint statement, "Belarus and China during the state visit concluded 27 intergovernmental, interagency and interregional agreements, more than 10 commercial arrangements in various fields"<sup>70</sup>, and the cumulative economic effect of this visit is estimated at more than three and a half billion dollars.

Among the signed documents is the **Program of Belarusian-Chinese Scientific and Technical Cooperation for 2023-2024**, which aims the two countries at creating joint innovative industries. After all, "a developed engineering base, a modern system of training highly qualified personnel, and many years of advanced experience of the leading Belarusian design bureaus - all this forms the basis for future high-tech industries"<sup>71</sup>. In this regard, we would like to emphasize that in 2022, Chinese investors invested over USD 100 million in the implementation of projects in Belarus. In addition, more than forty projects were realized with the participation of Chinese companies, and about twenty more promising initiatives are being worked out this year. In this context, it is worth mentioning the Great Stone industrial park, where in 2022 "Belarusian resident enterprises launched production of glass for all types of land transport, innovative photographic printing products, automated

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<sup>70</sup> Foreign Ministry: the state visit of the President of Belarus to Beijing has become a significant event in the relations with China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/mid-gosvizit-prezidenta-belarusi-v-pekini-stal-znachimym-sobytiem-v-otnosheniih-s-knr-557851-2023/>

<sup>71</sup> Belarus and China are aimed at creating joint innovative industries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-natseleny-na-sozdanie-sovmestnyh-innovatsionnyh-proizvodstv-556688-2023/>

process control systems in industry and energy. The science and technology park "InKata" was put into operation, which houses companies engaged in scientific research and experimental development"<sup>72</sup> .

Recall that in the last days of 2022, the number of residents in the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone" reached the mark of 100. For reference, we note that "as of the end of 2021, 85 residents were registered here"<sup>73</sup> . In particular, the 99th resident became LLC "Yunchenbel", the founder of which is a large Chinese company "SUMEC International Technology Trading". "The new resident will create an e-commerce platform to enable the import and export of mechanical and electrical equipment"<sup>74</sup> . And the Belarusian company Human Kraft will produce medical products - customized bone tissue prostheses based on 3D printing technologies, which will be used in surgery, traumatology, dentistry and cancer treatment. Also, at the end of December 2022, agreements of intent to enter the industrial park as residents of Foryu Information Technologies LLC and Tontun Information Technologies LLC (People's Republic of China) were signed.

In addition, at the end of 2022, the resident company IPD Group LLC signed a lease agreement for a universal production building of 5.5 thousand square meters in the industrial park. This deal became one of the largest in 2022 on the Belarusian industrial real estate market. "On these premises will be realized a project for the development and serial production of high-tech data processing and storage devices. In particular, the company will produce computer hardware, server equipment,

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<sup>72</sup> Abramenko: "Great Stone" is a colossal opportunity for doing business on the platform of "Belt and Road" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-velikij-kamen-eto-kolossalnye-vozmozhnosti-dlja-vedenija-biznesa-na-platfome-pojas-i-put-556679-2023/>

<sup>73</sup> Zalessky, B. Partnership of flexible forms. Features of Eurasian cooperation dialog in the conditions of global threats / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 5.

<sup>74</sup> The number of residents of "Great Stone" has reached 100 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kolichestvo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamniadostiglo-100-542481-2022/>

monitors, interactive smart panels. In the future, the resident plans to expand the range of import-substituting products"<sup>75</sup>. In total, by the end of 2022, 19 residents were registered in Velikiy Kamen. Also. Last year residents of the park exported their products for more than 100 million dollars to 20 countries.

In 2023, Velikiy Kamen is expected to attract at least 20 residents. In January alone, several investors from Belarus have already been registered. In particular, "very interesting projects in the field of production of products for veterinary medicine. And the second project is in the field of science, <...> in the field of nuclear energy"<sup>76</sup>. At the end of January, Velikiy Kamen registered a new resident - BaikalGroup LLC. "The company with Chinese capital will create a transport and logistics center <...> in the park. The park resident plans to provide warehousing and logistics services, including storage, packaging, tracking, labeling..."<sup>77</sup>. Goods will be delivered to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

In February 2023, three more new residents were registered in the industrial park: two with capital from Belarus and one from China. Heprotrade LLC will produce environmentally friendly thermal paper, the products of which will be widely used in sales and services. "The production capacity will be up to 300 tons per month. The realization of the project will make it possible to provide the domestic market with such products and reduce imports, as well as to supply them for export"<sup>78</sup>. The

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<sup>75</sup> Velikiy Kamen" ended the year with the largest deal [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-zavershili-god-krupnejshei-sdelkoj-542635-2022/>

<sup>76</sup> "Great Stone" this year plans to attract at least 20 residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-v-etom-godu-planiruet-privleche-menee-20-rezidentov-547180-2023/>

<sup>77</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will create a transport and logistics center [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-sozdast-transportno-logisticheskij-tsentr-547574-2023/>

<sup>78</sup> Two more residents with Belarusian capital registered in "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/esche-dva-rezidenta-s-belorusskim-kapitalom-zaregistrovany-v-velikom-kamne-549664-2023/>

second February resident, Rivex LLC, will produce innovative dressing materials and for sterilization, which are intended both for the domestic market and for the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. Bel-Nord Logistics LLC, founded by a Chinese company in the field of international logistics, one of the largest in the Inner Mongolia region, intends to "develop logistics infrastructure by building warehouses and introduce a wide range of services in this area. In addition, road transport of goods along the China-Europe route will be organized"<sup>79</sup>. This initiative will also help in addressing the most important strategic task - expanding the presence of Belarusian products in the Chinese market.

In just a month and a half of 2023, seven new residents have already registered in Veliky Kamen. And in general, already during the life of the industrial park, "the total number is 107 residents with a planned investment volume of \$1.3 billion"<sup>80</sup>. It is expected that in order to create additional conditions for attracting new investors in 2023, work will continue to further improve the special legal regime of the park with a focus on the implementation of new high-tech projects, including in the field of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine. Promising projects are also planned in logistics, e-commerce, fine chemistry, biotechnology, instrumentation, research and development. In February 2023, at a meeting of the working group on the China-Belarus Industrial Park, it was noted that on the sites of Veliky Kamen "it is possible to quickly increase the level of localization in the production of medical and technological equipment, transport and other areas, to quickly replace the falling imports with these products. In order to maximize the available potential, it is necessary to continue to actively develop the park, build

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<sup>79</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will develop international logistics [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-razvivat-mezhdunarodnuju-logistiku-551642-2023/>

<sup>80</sup> This year "Great Stone" registered 7 new residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-etom-godu-velikij-kamen-zaregistroval-7-novyh-rezidentov-551821-2023/>

infrastructure and announce the project on a global scale<sup>81</sup>. In short, the current challenges dictate a window of opportunity for the residents of the industrial park - in particular, and also create additional competitive advantages for the prospective development of the Belarusian economy - in general.

Another important document adopted in March 2023 is the **Comprehensive Strategy for Joint Industrial Development**, implemented by the Ministry of Industry of Belarus and the Ministry of Industry and Informatization of China, which provides for the creation of incentive mechanisms for Belarusian and Chinese enterprises to intensify and strengthen and technological interaction. A roadmap with specific projects and initiatives has been prepared to implement this strategy. "It is planned to establish joint ventures in China, use Chinese technologies and competencies to modernize Belarusian industries and attract Chinese investment to implement projects in Belarus"<sup>82</sup> in such key areas as mechanical engineering, electronics, woodworking, opto-mechanical, pulp and paper and chemical production.

In particular, **Minsk Tractor Plant** is ready to intensify cooperation with China. The project to organize the assembly of BELARUS tractors with a capacity of 350 horsepower is currently underway in the Celestial Empire. The first prototype was tested in 2020-2021. Last year, two more BELARUS 3523 tractors were delivered to China for certification, after which a decision will be made to localize the assembly of Belarusian tractors. And in Minsk, testing of the BELARUS 3523 model with a diesel engine of the Chinese corporation Weichai

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<sup>81</sup> Cherviakov: the current challenges of the economy - a window of opportunity for the residents of "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherviakov-tekuschie-vyzovy-ekonomiki-okno-vozmozhnostej-dlja-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-550498-2023/>

<sup>82</sup> Abramenko, A. On the peculiarities of doing business in CCW, joint projects and prospects for cooperation / A. Abramenko // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/ob-osobennostyah-vedenija-biznesa-v-knr-sovmestnyh-proektah-i-perspektivah-sotrudnichestva-8633/>

continues. It is expected that 100 such engines will be delivered to the plant in the near future. "Another direction is related to the supply of components from China. Last year, imports from China amounted to \$1.8 million, at the end of two months of the current [2023] year - \$400 thousand."<sup>83</sup> . So the parties are interested in joint investment projects.

During the state visit of the Belarusian delegation to China, several documents were signed concerning the development of production and **agro-industrial complex**. In particular, "the largest pig breeding complex in Belarus for 300,000 heads will be built in Minsk Region. <...> And we will modify our beef cattle breeding on the basis of Mogilev region. First of all - construction of a separate slaughterhouse. About a thousand lightweight sheds will be built for keeping cattle of Aberdeen-Angus or Limousin breeds"<sup>84</sup> .

Belarus also plans to almost double the volume of food supplies to China in 2023. Last year, these exports exceeded more than \$500 million. Belarusian supplies "increased in poultry meat (3 times), rapeseed oil (3.1 times), milk and cream (1.4 times) <...>. At present, 148 Belarusian producers are accredited to supply China with 171 categories of goods"<sup>85</sup> . And by the beginning of 2024, the goal is to reach \$900 million in product exports. Overall, in trade and economic cooperation with its partners from China, this year the Belarusian side has every chance to increase the volume of exports to \$2.2 billion.

Two more interesting documents signed in Beijing in early March 2023 concern the topic of **regional cooperation**. The first: it is the **plan**

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<sup>83</sup> General Director of MTZ told about the intensification of cooperation with China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ob-aktivizatsii-sotrudnichestva-s-kitaem-rasskazal-gendirektor-mtz-553348-2023/>

<sup>84</sup> Belarus expects to almost double the volume of food supplies to China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschitvvaet-pochti-v-dva-raza-narastit-objemy-postavok-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-553023-2023/>

<sup>85</sup> Belarusian exports to China almost doubled in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/za-2022-god-eksport-belorusskih-tovarov-v-kitaj-prakticheski-udvoilsja-556681-2023/>



**of the Year of Regions of Belarus and China for 2023**, which "contains more than 80 bilateral agreements and initiatives"<sup>86</sup> to attract at least 150 million dollars of direct Chinese investment by each Belarusian region and Minsk by 2026. Second: it is the **Agreement between the Ministry of Economy of Belarus and the Ministry of Commerce of China on deepening trade and economic cooperation between the regions of the two countries**, in which the parties emphasize three Chinese regions. First, **Tianjin** is a city of central subordination, where the production and logistics orientation prevails. Secondly, **Qingdao**, located in **Shandong** Province, where enterprises of production and medical orientation are especially developing and where the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization** free trade zone is actively used. Third, **Chongqing** is another centralized city. "It is the heart of logistics, transit. Here it is mainly e-commerce, emphasis on transportation and logistics, including green corridors. This is when the train is not checked at the border, but controlled at the destination, which gives a big advantage in cost and time."<sup>87</sup> .

Also in early March 2023, Belarus and China signed a **plan to develop cooperation in the field of health care for 2023-2025**, which notes that "the parties will develop cooperation in health care, science and education based on the principles of national legislation of the countries, as well as on the principles of mutual benefit and mutual assistance"<sup>88</sup> . The two countries will give priority to cooperation in such areas as: organization of joint scientific research in the field of medicine, exchange

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<sup>86</sup> Abramenko: Belarus and China seek to deepen bilateral cooperation in all areas [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-belarus-i-kitaj-stremjatsja-k-uglubleniju-dvustoronnego-vzaimodejstvija-vo-vseh-oblastjah-556675-2023/>

<sup>87</sup> . Nikolai Snopkov: The cumulative economic effect of the Belarusian-Chinese agreements is estimated at more than \$3.5 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10547>

<sup>88</sup> The plan on development of cooperation in the field of health care for 2023-2025 between Belarus and China has been signed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/sobytija/podpisan-plan-po-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-zdravookhraneniya-na-2023-2025-godv-mezhdu-bela/>

of experience in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases; organization of seminars and master classes for experts; cooperation in the field of epidemiology and microbiology and exchange of data on the spread of epidemic diseases; cooperation in the field of surgery, transplantation and hematology; participation in international medical exhibitions held in the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Belarus.<sup>89</sup> It is important to note that as early as in the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, published in September 2022, Belarus and China agreed to develop cooperation in the field of high-tech medicine, vaccines and pharmaceuticals and "prioritized the formation of a joint pharmaceutical cluster, the commercialization of new pharmaceutical products and technologies, and the establishment of a high-quality center of traditional Chinese medicine in Belarus" xml-ph-0.

For reference: the two countries have long-standing ties in the field of medicine. The first agreement on cooperation in healthcare and medical science between the Belarusian and Chinese Ministries of Health was signed back in 1994. In 2021, a decree of the Belarusian government "On the state registration of strategically important medicines" was adopted, which allows for their accelerated registration to fight a pandemic. And at the same time, the Ministry of Health for the first time carried out state registration of Chinese traditional medicine (TCM) - soft capsules "Qingyi". And today "810 items of medical equipment, 502 medical devices and 480 medicines produced in China are registered in Belarus. From April 2020 to the present day, PRC has provided gratuitous assistance in the amount equivalent to \$30 million. Belarus has received

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<sup>89</sup> China and Belarus adopted the Joint Declaration [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://zviazda.by/ru/news/20220916/1663330543-kitav-i-belarus-prinvali-sovmestnuvu-deklaraciyu>

personal protective equipment, medical and diagnostic equipment, vaccine against COVID-19"<sup>90</sup>.

Our country has already established TCM centers and the necessary business conditions for the creation of pharmaceutical production facilities. In particular, the Ministry of Health of Belarus has developed a compendium "Main Aspects of Admission to Circulation of Medical Devices and Medicines" in Russian and Chinese languages for the residents of the Great Stone Park to inform them about opportunities and preferences. In addition, work has already been completed on the architectural project "Construction of a polyclinic on the territory of the park "Great Stone" taking into account the creation in it of a regional center for the promotion of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine", work is being completed on the inclusion of the specialty "doctor of traditional Chinese medicine" in the nomenclature of positions, which will give an additional impetus to the promotion of this topic in Belarus.

At the end of February 2023, the Ministry of Health of Belarus and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of China reported that they were preparing a memorandum on TCM issues, which should reflect the creation of a TCM center in Belarus, a pharmaceutical cluster and the development of traditional Chinese medicine in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone". It should be noted that "reflexotherapy methods, diagnostic methods, therapeutic gymnastics, classical acupuncture, Chinese massage, as well as treatment methods based on modern technologies - electroacupuncture, laser acupuncture, ultrasonic acupuncture <...> are used in Belarus. Centers of traditional Chinese medicine have been established in regional centers of Belarus. Cooperation has been established with a number of universities - Tianjin, Changchun, the University of Traditional Chinese Medicine of Zhejiang

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<sup>90</sup> Ministry of Health of Belarus and Weigao Company signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-belarusi-i-kompanija-weigao-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-552445-2023/>

Province..."<sup>91</sup> . In addition, the educational process in this specialty is carried out at the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education at the Department of Reflexology. On average, more than 200 doctors are trained annually. The staff of the department has been repeatedly trained in Beijing, Taiyuan and Tianjin. These methods have shown their effectiveness, including in the treatment of postcovidic syndrome. Reflexologists perform about 900 thousand procedures of reflexotherapy in Belarus annually.

In 2023, the parties continue to actively cooperate in this context. In February, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus signed a number of cooperation agreements with Chinese partners. First, in the city of Weihai, Shandong Province, with Weigao International Medical Trading Company, which supplies Chinese-made medical devices and spare parts. Second, in Shijiazhuang City in Hebei Province, with North China Pharmaceutical Company Limited (NCPC). "This company has been selected as a strategic partner to represent the interests of Belpharmprom Holding in the field of procurement of pharmaceutical substances in the People's Republic of China, as well as to perform the functions of studying the market conditions, submitting proposals for the supply of substances and raw materials to the holding company's management company in accordance with the applications"<sup>92</sup> .

As for the development of cooperation between Belarus and China in the new era in the **field of education**, in February 2023, Beijing hosted the International Educational Exhibition China Education Expo, within the framework of which a thematic exposition "Education in Belarus" was organized, where the leading Belarusian universities made presentations

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<sup>91</sup> Belarus and China are preparing a memorandum on traditional Chinese medicine [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-knr-gotovjat-memorandum-po-voprosam-traditsionnoj-kitajskoj-meditsiny-552902-2023/>

<sup>92</sup> Agreement on cooperation signed by the Ministry of Health of Belarus and Chinese pharmaceutical company [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisali-minzdrav-belarusi-i-kitajskaja-farmkompanija-552543-2023>

of educational programs: the Belarusian State University of Economics, the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, the Minsk State Linguistic University, and the Belarusian State University of Economics and Radioelectronics. It should be noted that the Belarusian exposition was the only foreign one presented at this educational forum, which was visited by more than two thousand young men and women from China interested in studying in Belarus.

In addition, during the talks in the Chinese capital, the Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture discussed the possibility of higher education institutions of Belarus joining the International Engineering and Architectural Consortium of Educational Institutions. In general, "as a result of meetings of representatives of Belarusian universities in Chinese universities and consulting companies, 17 agreements on cooperation in the field of educational services were signed, 16 agreements are being worked out for signing"<sup>93</sup>. For reference, we note that "Belarusian and Chinese partners have already signed more than 540 direct cooperation agreements. To date, almost 500 citizens of the Republic of Belarus are studying in China, the number of Chinese students in Belarusian universities has reached 8000 people"<sup>94</sup>. In addition, Belarus and China are actively promoting the creation of joint educational structures. For example, seven joint projects are already functioning: three laboratories, two centers and two institutes. There are 40 joint educational programs of the first and second levels of higher education, 10 of which have been developed over the last two years.

In this context, an important participant of international cooperation with the People's Republic of China in the field of education is

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<sup>93</sup> Belarus - China: 17 new agreements in the field of education signed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-kitaj-podpisano-17-novvih-soglashenij-v-oblasti-obrazovaniia-553144-2023/>

<sup>94</sup> Zalesky, B. The Route of Interaction - Asia. Intensification of Belarus' multifaceted ties with the main economic partners on the continent / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 19.

**Belarusian State University** (BSU), which already cooperates with more than 50 Chinese universities, and more than three thousand citizens of the Celestial Empire are currently studying in its classrooms. In March 2023, BSU identified new vectors and forms of cooperation with leading universities in China to strengthen, intensify and expand the areas of partnership.

In particular, BSU is entering a new level of cooperation with Peking University, which is the oldest university in China and was founded back in 1898, where the local library has more than eight million books and has more than 46 thousand students, among them more than four thousand foreigners. Recall that the two universities signed a memorandum of understanding in 2019. In March 2023, the parties initiated cooperation in the field of mathematical sciences. "The development of joint research projects, academic exchange for lecturing on modern advances in probability theory, mathematical statistics and data analysis are seen as promising"<sup>95</sup>. In addition, cooperation in the field of joint training of master's and postgraduate students will be expanded. For this purpose, in the near future this topic will be analyzed in detail to determine the specialties and scientific fields of knowledge on which they plan to cooperate.

Another partner of BSU in China is Beijing Foreign Studies University, one of the leading universities in the country in the field of training linguists. In March 2023, BSU signed an agreement on exchange of students to develop academic mobility of undergraduate and graduate students studying Chinese, Belarusian and Russian languages. The parties will also develop joint innovative pedagogical methods.

As a result of the meetings held in March 2023, the Chinese University of Political Science and Law became a new partner of BSU.

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<sup>95</sup> BSU enters a new level of cooperation with Beijing University [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bgu-vyhodit-na-novvi-uroven-sotrudnichestva-s-pekinskim-universitetom-557082-2023/>

The universities signed a memorandum of understanding, which will allow cooperation in the field of jurisprudence in numerous vectors. "These include exchange of students, opening joint educational programs, implementation of joint research and educational projects, exchange of information, teaching materials and scientific reports, organization of conferences, seminars, workshops and courses and preparation of joint publications"<sup>96</sup>.

**Brest State Technical University (BrSTU)** is also among the active Belarusian universities developing cooperation with Chinese partners. In January 2023, BrSTU signed an agreement on cooperation in education, science, and culture with Guangdong Construction Vocational Technical Institute to combine the efforts of the two educational institutions to jointly train qualified specialists for the benefit of the economies of the two countries. The parties plan to create a joint educational program to train Chinese students. It is a question of recruiting training groups, where children will study in China for the first two years and then - in Belarus. The Chinese side was particularly interested in the specialty "architecture". "These joint educational programs are very popular because they allow students to get two diplomas in one cycle of study"<sup>97</sup>.

It should be noted that Guangdong Construction Vocational Institute is the largest and the only state higher vocational educational institution that trains builders and architects and is located in the industrial center of southern China. It has 22,000 students. With the support of the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China, an industrial and educational integration base has been built on

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<sup>96</sup> Student exchange, joint programs: BSU and leading universities of China have identified new vectors of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obmen-studentami-sovmestnye-programmyv-bgu-i-vedushchie-vuzy-kitaja-opredelili-novye-vektory-557224-2023/>

<sup>97</sup> Brest University and Guangdong Institute will jointly train architects and builders [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskij-universitet-i-guandunskij-institut-budut-sovmestno-gotovit-arhitektorov-i-stroitelej-543128-2023/>

the basis of the institute, where students study various innovative and traditional construction technologies, design methods, water supply systems, BIM-technologies, real estate management. As for BrSTU, more than 200 Chinese citizens are studying in Brest today. The most popular among them are specialties in economics, construction and mechanical engineering.

Finally, another set of documents signed in early March 2023 in Beijing concerned cooperation in the **media sphere**. This included an **agreement on cooperation between the news agencies of Belarus and China - BELTA and Xinhua**. In this regard, we note that the cooperation agreement between BELTA and Xinhua was first signed back in January 1993, then re-signed in June 2018. The new document - already the third - "implies the exchange of text news, photos and videos, mutual support and promotion on the Internet and social networks"<sup>98</sup>. The agencies agreed to exchange experiences and train journalists, editors and technical staff to improve their skills.

All these initiatives and projects adopted this spring in the relevant documents show that cooperation between Belarus and China in general tends to strengthen in all directions, but there is still a great unrealized potential, which will be realized already in a new era - exemplary relations of all-weather and all-round strategic partnership of the two states.

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<sup>98</sup> BELTA and Xinhua signed an agreement on strengthening cooperation and intensifying news exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/societv/view/belta-i-xinhua-podpisali-soglashenie-ob-ukreplenii-sotrudnichestva-i-aktivizatsii-obmena-novostiami-553192-2023/>



## On a foundation of new ideas

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"<sup>99</sup>. 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"<sup>100</sup>. 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

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<sup>99</sup> 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-strategicheskogo-partnerstva-belarusi-i-kitaja-576417-2023/>

<sup>100</sup> Cherviakov singled out important areas of cooperation to strengthen the relations between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherviakov-vydelil-vazhnye-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-dlja-ukreplenija-otnoshenij-belarusi-i-kitaja-576438-2023/>

equipment. 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"<sup>101</sup> .

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"<sup>102</sup> . 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

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<sup>101</sup> 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/>

<sup>102</sup> 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-kрупnyh-proektov-v-oblasti-razvitiya-i-sotrudnichestva-576096-2023/>

Belarusian enterprises"<sup>103</sup> and even discussed the creation of individual models of agricultural machinery, opportunities for the organization of

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"<sup>104</sup>. 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"<sup>105</sup>. In the near future the parties will prepare the necessary documents on this project.

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<sup>103</sup> 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-meropriatij-po-razvitiuu-576228-2023/>

<sup>104</sup> 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-molochnoj-produktsii-sozhdadut-v-knr-v-etom-godu-576098-2023/>

<sup>105</sup> "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/>

A separate conversation in this context is about the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park Great Stone. Let us recall that 2023 marks ten years since the 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 Great Stone Park is actively developing. The park 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"<sup>106</sup>. 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"<sup>107</sup>.

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.

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<sup>106</sup> 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-otsenivajutsja-bolee-chem-v-13-mlrd-568784-2023/>

<sup>107</sup> 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-zaregistrirvano-11-novyh-kompanij-567541-2023/>

Some of the Chinese residents 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 can be noted that in March 2023 another company was registered in the Velikiy Kamen industrial park - IRBI LLC, whose investment project has an innovative import-substituting character. "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"<sup>108</sup>. 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 realization of the products on the Belarusian market will contribute to import substitution"<sup>109</sup>.

In May 2023, at the talks between the park's management and a delegation from Gansu Province, the issues of traditional Chinese

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<sup>108</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" will produce computers and components [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-kompjutyery-i-komplektujuschie-558151-2023/>

<sup>109</sup> The new resident of "Great Stone" plans to produce X-ray tubes [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-planiruet-proizvodstvo-rentgenovskih-trubok-560903-2023/>

medicine development in Belarus were discussed, and "the possibility of establishing a center of traditional Chinese medicine and developing pharmaceutical production on the territory of the park was discussed"<sup>110</sup> . 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"<sup>111</sup> .

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 on attracting anchor investors with major projects to Velikiy Kamen, to organize new demanded production, in particular in the field of machine building and automotive components, medical equipment, to increase the localization of existing production of residents"<sup>112</sup> . 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

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<sup>110</sup> 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/delegatsija-kitajskoj-provintsii-gansu-izuchit-vozmozhnost-razvitiija-farmproizvodstv-v-velikom-kamne-567520-2023/>

<sup>111</sup> 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-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-569796-2023/>

<sup>112</sup> 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-jakornvyh-investorov-s-krupnymi-proektami-569986-2023/>

Belarusian-Chinese project and an international industrial cluster with an eye on the Eurasian Economic Union market.

At the already called fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, which took place in July 2023, the parties discussed, among other things, the dynamics of mutual contacts in the field of education in order to strengthen direct inter-university ties and implement a number of large-scale joint educational and scientific projects. Among the promising areas of cooperation, the participants of the meeting noted the following: training of personnel and expansion of the practice of implementation of joint educational programs on innovative specialties by the leading universities of Belarus and China; cooperation on the creation of digital platforms that provide public access to educational resources; joining efforts to develop norms and standards of digitalization of education; and elaboration of the possibility of creating an Association of Higher Education Institutions of the two countries.

It should be noted that to date more than 560 direct cooperation agreements have already been signed between the educational institutions of Belarus and China, which is about 10 percent of the total number of existing inter-university agreements of Belarusian institutions of higher education. "On the basis of educational institutions of the two countries there are also 9 joint educational and scientific structures (3 laboratories, 4 centers and 2 institutes), 40 joint educational programs are being implemented, 10 of which have been developed in the last two years, the implementation of 6 of them started in the 2022/2023 academic year. The possibility of implementation of 20 more joint educational programs and organization of joint training of personnel of higher scientific qualification is being worked out"<sup>113</sup>. In the fall of this year, the educational

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<sup>113</sup> Bakhanovich: education provides intellectual, cultural and linguistic rapprochement between Belarus and China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bakhanovich-obrazovanie-obespechivaet-intellektualnoe-kulturnoe-i-iazvkovoe-sblizhenie-belarusi-i-kitaja-576391-2023/>

departments of the two countries plan to approve a plan for the development of academic and scientific exchanges for 2023-2025, within the framework of which new concrete steps will be taken for constructive interaction between Belarusian universities and Chinese partners.

The Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU) is among the active participants of this cooperation. Back in April 2023, the Belarusian university discussed promising areas of partnership with members of the Guangdong Union for Scientific and Technical Cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States. In particular, BSTU signed an agreement on cooperation and establishment of a joint laboratory of applied technologies with Guangdong Vocational College of Light Industry. "The parties agreed to organize academic exchanges, summer schools, discussed the prospect of contacts in the field of polymers, functional coatings, paper production technology and other areas"<sup>114</sup>. Also signed documents on the implementation of joint educational programs with Guangdong Nanhua Vocational College of Industry and Commerce, Guangdong Vocational College of Communications. And a bilateral agreement on scientific and technical cooperation was concluded with Ningbos International Science and Innovation Center to jointly develop modern polymer composite materials, elastomers and plastic masses, additive technologies.

In May 2023, BSTU signed a cooperation agreement with Kunshan Institute of Industrial Technology to establish joint Belarusian-Chinese transfer centers in the field of high technologies and 3D modeling. The agreement stipulates that "annually the Belarusian side will select at least 10 projects to be financed by the PRC in order to develop cooperation in

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<sup>114</sup> Educational and scientific potential of BSTU presented in the Chinese province Guangdong [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obrazovatelnyj-i-nauchnyj-potentsial-bgtu-prezentovan-v-kitajskoj-provintsii-guandun-563887-2023/>



the field of high technologies"<sup>115</sup>. In addition, the parties agreed to create a joint university "Kunshan-Minsk" on the basis of the Belarusian State Technical University so that students could study part of the time in China and part in Belarus, and eventually receive two diplomas. And another interesting idea: together with Chinese companies, a biomedicine center will be created in Minsk City Technopark, where they will develop testing technologies and drugs aimed at treating human and various animal diseases. In short, an agro-industrial complex related to vaccines will be developed.

Another Belarusian university that continues close cooperation with Chinese partners in 2023 is the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics (BSUIR). In July this year, BSUIR opened a Belarusian-Chinese research laboratory of external electromagnetic influences in Minsk together with the North China Research Institute of Electromagnetic Protection. One of the key tasks of the new laboratory is to develop a finished product of practical interest and in demand in the global technology market, "to conduct fundamental and applied research, to implement their results, to promote training and professional development, internships for engineering staff and researchers of BSUIR and the partner institute"<sup>116</sup>, as well as to strengthen international cooperation of scientists and specialists for joint scientific research within the framework of the implementation of the Chinese initiative.

As for Chinese universities, there is a high interest in cooperation with Belarusian partners in Liaoning University, which became a partner of Brest Pushkin State University and Brest State Technical University (BrSTU) in July 2023. In particular, the agreement between BrSTU and

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<sup>115</sup> Investments, creation of a joint university and biomedicine center. Kunshan delegation visited BSTU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investitsii-sozdanie-sovmestnogo-universiteta-i-tsentra-biomeditsiny-delegatsija-kunshanja-posetila-569539-2023/>

<sup>116</sup> Belarusian-Chinese research laboratory opened in BSUIR [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-kitajskaja-nauchno-issledovatel'skaja-laboratorija-otkrylas-v-bguir-576810-2023/>

Liaoning University "provides for academic exchanges, joint educational programs, implementation of scientific projects and social and cultural interaction. We plan to fill the agreement with real activities, in the future to develop a roadmap"<sup>117</sup>. For example, to train Chinese students in the specialty "Smart Transportation" on the basis of the faculties of mechanical engineering and information technology.

Returning to the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, it should be noted that the participants in this discussion proposed to bring scientific and technical cooperation to a new level and considered the possibility of creating joint high-tech production facilities in a number of areas. "Such directions <...> could be robotics, electric transportation, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, laser technology"<sup>118</sup>. By creating a full innovation cycle - from the idea to the production of high-tech products, the parties will expand promising areas of partnership, interacting on the educational foundation of new ideas, which ensures intellectual rapprochement between Belarus and China. In addition, all these facts indicate that the new model of strategic, including trade and economic, scientific, technical, and educational, partnership between the two countries formed within the framework of the Fifth IGC meeting on cooperation is beginning to take concrete innovative shape for the benefit of the two peoples.

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<sup>117</sup> Universities of Brest signed cooperation agreements with Liaoning University [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vuzv-bresta-podpisali-soglasheniya-o-sotrudnichestve-s-liaoninskim-universitetom-576902-2023/>

<sup>118</sup> Shlychkov: the realization of joint projects with China will allow to reach the creation of new high-tech industries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shlychkov-realizatsiya-sovmestnyh-proektov-s-kitaem-pozvolit-vyiti-na-sozhdanie-novyh-576315-2023/>

## Regional cooperation reaches a new level

In the spring of 2023, China and Belarus at the highest level adopted a joint statement on the basic principles of developing exemplary all-weather and all-round strategic partnership between the two countries in the new era. At the same time, the two sides signed a plan for the Year of Regions in 2023. This document "contains more than 80 bilateral agreements and initiatives for each Belarusian region and Minsk to attract at least 150 million dollars of direct Chinese investment by 2026"<sup>119</sup>. In September 2023, the third meeting of the **working group on interregional trade and economic cooperation of the commission on trade and economic cooperation of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee** took place in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", where they discussed topical issues of interaction between the regions of the two countries and prospects for its development. The parties noted that certain economic indicators of cooperation between Belarus and China have reached a fairly high level. "In the first half of 2023, mutual trade turnover exceeded \$4 billion, with Belarusian exports approaching the landmark mark of \$1 billion."<sup>120</sup>.

**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 the Chinese side 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

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<sup>119</sup> Zaleskii, B. New Realities for Partnership. Chronicle of international cooperation under conditions of economic mobilization / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 13.

<sup>120</sup> Chebotar: Belarus aims to expand trade and economic cooperation with the regions of the People's Republic of China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chebotar-belarus-natselena-na-rasshirenie-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-regionami-knr-590444-2023/>

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"<sup>121</sup>. 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.

Among interesting partners of Minskshchina among Chinese regions we should mention **Guangdong province**, which is home to more than 127 million people and is attractive not only as a part of the market for products, but also as a supplier of technologies in the field of mechanical engineering and agriculture. After all, the province is one of the most developed provinces in China, with strong machinery and processing companies. In 2022, the parties celebrated the tenth anniversary of the signing of the cooperation agreement. In May 2023, the Belarusian region and the Chinese province agreed on the prospects of cooperation. And now the roadmap for the development of bilateral relations is already being supplemented and updated. Note that "in the first half of 2023, trade turnover between the regions increased by 20%. Exports reached Br646.2 million. Poultry meat, beef, flax fiber are supplied to China from Minsk region. The main imports are machines for automatic information processing, textile products, auto parts"<sup>122</sup>. 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

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<sup>121</sup> What production of Minsk region in the near future can appear in the market of China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://mlyn.by/01032023/kakava-produkcziva-minskoj-oblasti-v-blizhaishee-vremya-mozhet-povavitsva-na-rvnke-kitava/>

<sup>122</sup> Minsk Regional Executive Committee discussed the road map of cooperation with the Chinese province of Guangdong [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minskom-oblispolkome-obsudili-dorozhnuju-kartu-sotrudnichestva-s-kitajskoj-provintsiej-guandun-583608-2023/>

appliances and cars, including electric cars, at production sites that are located in preferential zones of Minsk region, such as the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", where in the first nine months of 2023 "12 new residents were added"<sup>123</sup> .

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"<sup>124</sup> . 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.

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

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<sup>123</sup> The Ministry of Regional Executive Committee told what the Chinese province of Guangdong is interesting for the economy of the region [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minoblispolkome-rasskazali-chem-dlja-ekonomiki-oblasti-interesna-kitajskaja-provintsija-guandun-593552-2023/>

<sup>124</sup> 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-traditsionnoi-574675-2023/>

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"<sup>125</sup>. In 2023, the parties are taking new concrete steps to further deepen trade and economic cooperation, 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 industrial park "Great Stone", where about 180 Chinese companies presented their products, the thematic exposition of the Exhibition Pavilion of export goods of the city of Chongqing 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"<sup>126</sup>.

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<sup>125</sup> 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/bole-20-predpriyatij-iz-chuntsina-primut-uchastie-v-vystavke-kitajskih-tovarov-i-uslug-v-velikom-kamne-573747-2023/>

<sup>126</sup> Machine building, medicine, tourism: Minsk region and Chongqing discussed areas of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

**Vitebsk Region** is also among the active participants in the Belarusian-Chinese interregional cooperation. In 2022, it almost doubled the volume of supplies to China, which amounted to over USD 55 million. And in fact, back in 2006, the basis of exports of the Belarusian region to the Celestial Empire was represented by only 12 consolidated items, of which 97 percent was a bundle of synthetic yarns. "And at the end of 2021, the export basket of Vitebshchina expanded to 28 items, and its basis began to be formed by supplies of agricultural products (meat, milk and dairy products) - about 70 percent"<sup>127</sup>. Today, these supplies also include dry confectionery, rapeseed oil, polyethylene, acrylic tourniquets, glass fabrics, flax processing and woodworking products, peat, and alcoholic beverages.

But recently the interaction between Vitebsk region and China has gone beyond buying and selling, as the parties are moving "to the next level - exchange of technologies, assistance in their refinement, in their research, in the development of new types of products"<sup>128</sup>, to enter the plane of attracting investors, investing Vitebsk funds on the Chinese territory and mastering new technologies. Besides, the stake in the development is made on the educational, scientific and cultural segments. It should be reminded that Vitebsk region has signed eight bilateral documents - agreements, protocols, programs - on cooperation, established and maintained regular contacts at the level of executive authorities, organizations and companies with four provinces and one city of China. In addition, 19 bilateral documents on cooperation between

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<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mashinostroenie-medsitina-turizm-minskaja-oblast-i-chuntsin-obsudili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-574541-2023/>

<sup>127</sup> Mishin, A. What are the prospects of cooperation between Vitebsk region and the provinces of China? / A. Mishin // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://vitbichi.by/news/ekonomika/analitik-obvasnit-kakovy-perspektivy-sotrudnichestva-vi-tebskov-oblasti-i-provintsiv-kitava/>

<sup>128</sup> Subbotin: cooperation with China goes beyond buying and selling, into the plane of investment projects [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/subbotin-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitajem-vyhodit-za-ramki-kupli-prodazhi-v-ploskost-investproektov-598640-2023/>

cities and districts of Vitebsk region and Chinese partners have been concluded.

The Belarusian northern region has the most intensive interaction with **Heilongjiang Province, which is** located in the north of China, where rice is grown and agriculture is generally very developed. Over the past 18 years, the parties have created a good legal framework of mutual relations: 1) Agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific-technical, humanitarian-cultural and other spheres (2005); 2) Agreement on the establishment of twinning relations (2011); 3) Cooperation Development Program for 2016-2020. "Twinning agreements with the cities of this region of the Celestial Empire were once concluded by Polotsk, Novopolotsk and Vitebsk"<sup>129</sup>. In May 2023 at the XI International Economic Forum "Innovation, Investments, Prospects" in Vitebsk, enterprises from Heilongjiang Province expressed interest in partnership with Vitebsk producers of meat products, as well as "expect to establish mutually beneficial cooperation with Orsha and Dubrovensk flax processors in the near future, to share their experience and discuss the possibility of supplying modern equipment"<sup>130</sup>. And in June this year at the international trade and economic exhibition in Harbin - the administrative center of Heilongjiang - a memorandum of intentions to establish friendly relations between the Vitebsk concern "Meat and Dairy Products" and an enterprise from the city of Suihua from the same province was already signed. In addition, the Belarusian side is interested in cooperating in the production of electrical equipment and instrumentation, as the Chinese partners have great competence in this

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<sup>129</sup> Pushnyakova, A. Food products, MDF boards: Vitebsk region will present in June in Harbin the potential of the region / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/prodovolstvennye-tovary-mdf-plity-vitebskaja-oblast-predstavit-v-ijune-v-harbine-potencial-regiona-567209-2023/>

<sup>130</sup> Pushnyakova, A. Chinese industrialists intend to establish cooperation with the enterprises of Vitebsk region / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitajskie-promyshlenniki-namereny-naladit-sotrudnichestvo-s-predpriyatijami-vitebskoj-oblasti-567149-2023/>



area. So, new promising projects in this regional interaction may appear in the near future.

Another - new - partner of Vitebsk region in China is **Jiangxi province**, with which the Belarusian region signed an agreement on cooperation in trade, logistics, investment, economy, education, healthcare, sports and tourism in October 2022. "As another practical step, it was decided to establish direct interaction between FEZ Vitebsk and special economic zones of Jiangxi province and their residents in order to work out the creation of joint production facilities in Belarus and the use of cross-border trade mechanisms by Belarusian exporters to China"<sup>131</sup>. They also discussed the expansion of supplies of Belarusian products to China by the reverse container train Orsha-Nanchang and the exchange of practical experience in the investment sphere. After all, the city of Orsha has established cooperation with the administrative center of this province - Nanchang - in the field of innovative and traditional medicine at the level of individual medical institutions. In December 2022 the document of intentions on cooperation was signed by the City Hospital No. 2 of Orsha Central Polyclinic and Hongdu Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, which "provides for the exchange of practical and scientific experience, medical technologies, mutual internships and advanced training of medical workers, as well as the implementation on the basis of Orsha Central Polyclinic of projects in the field of traditional Chinese medicine, including physiotherapy, reflexology, electro-acupuncture, acupuncture, qigong"<sup>132</sup>.

As for the third Chinese partner of Vitebsk region - **Shandong Province**, back in 2005 the parties signed a memorandum of cooperation,

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<sup>131</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" and special economic zones of Jiangxi province will establish direct interaction [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-osobve-ekonomicheskie-zony-provintsii-tszjansi-naladjat-prjamoe-vzaimodejstvie-566987-2023/>

<sup>132</sup> Orsha and Chinese Nanchang agreed on the exchange of medical experience [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/orsha-i-kitajskij-nanchan-dogovorilis-ob-obmene-meditsinskim-opytom-540364-2022/>

and in October 2019 adopted an Agreement on the establishment of relations of friendship and cooperation, in which they "identified as priorities for the development of partnership ties the development of an effective mechanism of interaction in the field of trade and investment, the development of cooperation ties..."<sup>133</sup> . In February 2023, an agreement on establishing friendly ties between Novopolotsk and the city of Liaocheng in Shandong Province was signed. The parties noted the importance of developing interregional ties as one of the key links in bilateral cooperation. They also discussed the implementation of a number of joint projects. It should be noted that in order to strengthen Belarusian-Chinese ties, Vitsebsk voblast and Shandong province regularly hold joint events, as well as conclude bilateral documents. "Earlier agreements on the establishment of friendly relations at the municipal level between the cities of Vitebsk and Jinan, Novopolotsk and Weihai, Orsha and Qingdao, Polotsk and Dezhou, Glubokoe and Jining were signed"<sup>134</sup> . And in September 2023, three more memoranda on cooperation were signed: in innovation, education and youth policy. "Based on them and on the results of the negotiations, roadmaps for interaction on specific projects and areas of activity will be developed"<sup>135</sup> .

Finally, in November 2023, within the framework of the 6th China International Import Expo in Shanghai, where more than 10 enterprises of the Belarusian northern region took part, including - Vitebsk concern "Meat and Dairy Products", Polotsk Dairy Plant, Verkhnedvinsk Creamery, branch "Lepelsk MCC" of Vitebsk Meat Processing Plant,

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<sup>133</sup> Zalessky, B. From Regions to Innovations. Features of the Belarusian-Chinese strategic partnership / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 11.

<sup>134</sup> Novopolotsk and Chinese Liaocheng established friendly ties [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novopolotsk-i-kitajskij-ljaochen-ustanovili-druzhestvennye-svjazi-550863-2023/>

<sup>135</sup> Kochetov, S. Vitebsk region and the Chinese province of Shandong intend to develop and expand partnership in innovation, education and youth policy / S. Kochetov // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.vitbichi.by/news/ekonomika/vitebskava-oblast-i-kitajskaya-provintsija-shandunamereny-razvivat-i-rasshirvat-partnerstvo-v-inno/>

confectionery factory "Vityba", plant "Naftan", The Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee signed a memorandum of cooperation with the company Zonghai Business Management (Jinan) to create the China Industry Park in Vitebsk and the Belarus Industry Park in Shandong Province - on the site of Qingdao, where enterprises will be able to present their products and work out the issues of their sales in different regions of China. This will be one of the leading platforms from where Vitebsk goods will be distributed. It will be a point of growth of export of Vitebsk region, which they want to "maximally utilize, and not only for the sale of goods. <...> This is probably one of the most fresh and promising projects"<sup>136</sup>. All this in general suggests that in 2024 Vitebsk region intends to develop cooperation with Chinese regions even more actively in a wide range of areas, including economy, trade, science, engineering, technology, education, health care, and sports.

And now let us turn once again to the 6th China International Import Expo 2023 in Shanghai, where the Day of **Brest Region** was held in November this year, where the economic, cultural, tourist, educational, medical potential of the Belarusian region was presented with an emphasis on exporting goods and services to China. It should be noted that this exhibition forum was attended by "more than 150 countries representing the regions of Asia, Africa and Europe"<sup>137</sup> and featured various thematic sections, including automotive industry, high-tech equipment and information technology, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, consumer goods, trade in services, food and agricultural products. In this regard, the participation of Belarusian companies at the

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<sup>136</sup> Subbotin: import exhibition in Shanghai helps enterprises to make themselves known and find partners in China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/subbotin-vvstavka-importa-v-shanhae-pomogaet-predpriyatijam-zajavit-o-sebe-i-najti-partnerov-v-kitae-598641-2023/>

<sup>137</sup> What will be the national exposition of Belarus at the international import exhibition in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kakoi-budet-natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vvstavke-importa-v-shanhae-582374-2023/>

Import Fair in Shanghai is of strategic importance. After all, China is one of the largest and most dynamically developing markets in the world and "provides an opportunity for Belarusian companies to expand their horizons and establish business ties with potential partners and buyers, including Chinese state corporations"<sup>138</sup>. An important detail: if at the 5th forum China International Import Expo 2022 in Shanghai, 27 organizations from the food industry, logistics, science and education participated in the Belarusian exposition, this time more than 70 representatives from Belarus took part in the exhibition.

As for **Brest Oblast**, it is among the leaders among Belarusian regions in terms of trade and economic relations with China. Suffice it to say that "for eight months of the current [2023] year, the volume of trade turnover [with China] amounted to almost \$280 million and increased almost one and a half times. Thanks to contacts with businesses, Chinese foreign direct investment has already increased by 40%."<sup>139</sup>. At the import exhibition in Shanghai Brestchina demonstrated a wide range of goods and services that interested consumers not only from China, but also from other countries. In particular, at the collective stand of "Brestmyasomolprom" concern Brest meat processing plant, Berezovsky meat canning plant, Kobrin butter and cheese factory, Luninetsky dairy plant, Pruzhany dairy plant presented their products with tasting. The educational potential of the region was presented by Brest State Technical University, and the medical potential was presented by Brest Regional Clinical Hospital.

As a result, representatives of the Belarusian region at the exhibition "signed 18 bilateral documents: seven agreements, four

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<sup>138</sup> International import exhibition opened in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mezhdunarodnaja-vvstavka-importa-otkrivas-v-shanhae-597935-2023/>

<sup>139</sup> Chinese partners are interested in the creation of production and logistics companies in Brest region [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitajskim-partneram-interesno-sozdanie-proizvodstv-i-logisticheskikh-kompanij-v-brestskoj-oblasti-598059-2023/>

memorandums, six commercial contracts, and one action plan. They concern different areas, including trade and economic cooperation, cooperation in education, health care, tourism"<sup>140</sup>. For example, the Brest Regional Executive Committee signed agreements with two corporations involved in the creation of freight forwarding centers and the development of electronic commerce; Brest State Technical University signed agreements with the Hubei Institute of International Business and Economics. As for the memorandums on the development of cooperation, they were concluded by: the free economic zone "Brest" and the Brest branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the administration of the Coastal Park of the Integrated Bond Zone in the city of Shenyang, which is the administrative center of Liaoning Province; the Department of Sports and Tourism of the Brest Regional Executive Committee with the Belarusian-Chinese Center for Culture and Development of the PRC. Speaking about commercial contracts, they primarily concern supplies of Brest foodstuffs, mainly meat and dairy processing products, and are estimated at more than twenty million dollars.

A separate conversation is about the twinning ties between Brest region and its Chinese partners. Brestchina has four twin cities in China - Liaoning, Shanxi, Anhui and Hubei provinces. In November 2023, in addition to the import exhibition in Shanghai, representatives of the Belarusian region held active negotiations in **Anhui province**. The agreement to establish friendly ties with it was signed back in September 2017. This time, the parties adopted an action plan to develop trade, economic, scientific, technical, scientific and cultural cooperation for 2023-2025. In addition, agreements were concluded on the establishment

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<sup>140</sup> Gorodetsky, D. In China concluded commercial contracts and new cooperation agreements / D. Gorodetsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/v-kitae-zakljuchili-kommercheskie-kontraktv-i-novve-soglashenija-o-sotrudnichestve-8970/>

of twinning relations between the cities of Brest and Hefei, Berezovsky district and the city of Benbu, and Brest Regional Clinical Hospital agreed on cooperation with Anhui Medical University. We would like to add that Brest and Hefei already intend to draw up a roadmap for cooperation. The main points to find points of contact are "production sphere, transportation and logistics, educational, medical, cultural..."<sup>141</sup>

Speaking about the economic aspect of twinning, the Chinese partners are particularly interested in setting up production and logistics companies in the Belarusian region. In turn, the Belarusian side "is ready to offer services for the conversion of railcars from narrow European gauge to broad gauge, as well as the implementation of a project to create a transport and logistics hub in Brest region"<sup>142</sup>. The fact is that Brest is a nodal point of the Chinese "Silk Road" and an important element of the cross-border corridor to promote the project "Freight trains from China to Europe". In addition, Brest region is ready to provide the Chinese side with a site for the implementation of the project to build an educational center. And this is only the beginning of new joint mutually beneficial projects.

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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<sup>141</sup> Brest and Chinese Hefei intend to draw up a roadmap for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brest-i-kitajskij-hefei-namereny-sostavit-dorozhniyu-kartu-dlja-sotrudnichestva-599168-2023/>

<sup>142</sup> Brest and Bereza got twinned in the Chinese province of Anhui [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brest-i-bereza-obzavelis-pobratimami-v-kitajskoj-provintsii-anhoj-598126-2023/>

## Promote domestic exporters and assist foreign importers

Back in early March 2023, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of Belarus adopted the **Joint Statement** on Further Developing the Relationship of All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in a New Era, in which the parties agreed to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation and steadily increase the volume of bilateral trade. One of the tools to increase and diversify Belarusian-Chinese trade today is the use of the exchange mechanism, which has been actively developing since 2019.

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 had 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 companies purchased Chinese-made ferrous metal products and soybean meal on BUTB"<sup>143</sup>.

The positive dynamics of the Belarusian-Chinese exchange trade volumes was achieved due to active work to attract PRC residents 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 to settle transactions in Chinese yuan was provided, and consulting support in the Chinese language 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

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<sup>143</sup> 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-vozroslo-na-14-551264-2023/>

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 considered "two forms of interaction: the company's 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"<sup>144</sup>. 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 (XMXYG)**, 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**

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<sup>144</sup> 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-ot-sotrudnichestve-s-odnim-iz-krupnejshih-kitajskih-importerov-lesoproductsii-553935-2023/>



**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"<sup>145</sup> . 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 not only in the timber industry segment. 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"<sup>146</sup> . The Chinese importer is interested in Belarusian dried milk, so it will actively participate in the bidding.

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<sup>145</sup> 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>

<sup>146</sup> 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/>

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 2023, the company has already purchased about 53 thousand cubic meters of these products through the exchange, 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"<sup>147</sup> . Interestingly, in 2022, Russia, Canada and Sweden were the strategic partners of this company for the supply of sawn timber, while Belarus ranked only fourth.

We would like to remind you once again that at the beginning of 2023 the number of participants of BUTB trading sessions from China already amounted to 113. And as of November 27 of the same year, 152 of them had already been accredited on the Belarusian exchange floor. "At the end of 10 months [of 2023], China became the largest export destination for Belarusian exchange trading participants. <...> As a result, compared to January-October last year, the volume of export transactions increased two and a half times"<sup>148</sup> and amounted to almost \$60 million.

One of the primary tasks that BUTB will address with Chinese partners in 2024 is to expand the range of goods from Belarus and China involved in mutual exchange trade. It should be noted that "Belarusian lumber, rapeseed oil, meat products, and milk powder are exported to China through the exchange. At the same time, the exchange mechanism

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<sup>147</sup> 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-piloproductsii-na-butb-571701-2023/>

<sup>148</sup> Osmolovsky: BUTB will provide comprehensive support to Belarusian exporters [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/osmolovskij-butb-okazhet-kompleksnuju-podderzhku-belorusskim-eksporteram-599485-2023/>

is becoming more and more in demand among Chinese businesses, ensuring a high positive dynamics in terms of the amount of transactions"<sup>149</sup>. In order to further develop these processes in Belarus and China, it is planned to focus on small and medium-sized enterprises, primarily producers of import-substituting goods. In addition, it is planned to ensure further diversification of the product mix by means of BUTB's targeted work with sectoral business associations and chambers of commerce and industry in various regions of China, which "will make it possible to establish interaction both with manufacturers of products in demand in Belarus and with potential consumers of Belarusian goods"<sup>150</sup>.

In particular, in July 2023, BUTB and the **Xinjiang Asia-European International Trade Center (AEEX)**, the operator of the **Asia Europa Exchange** electronic trading platform, agreed to increase exports to China. It will focus "on the regions through which the New Silk Road passes. First of all, these are Shanghai, Taicang and Xinjiang"<sup>151</sup>, where there are AEEX offices, which are already establishing interaction with representatives of Chinese businesses interested in working through BUTB.

In August 2023, the **China National Forestry Industry Corporation** announced its intention to expand cooperation with BUTB. It plans not only to increase purchases of Belarusian sawn timber, but also to sell Chinese-made goods through the Belarusian import substitution platform. The two sides also reached an agreement to explore the

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<sup>149</sup> BUTB and the Chinese Embassy identified priorities of cooperation in trade and economic sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-posolstvo-kitaja-opredelili-prioritetv-vzaimodejstvija-v-torgovo-ekonomicheskoi-sfere-594539-2023/>

<sup>150</sup> Prospects for the development of exchange trade between Belarus and China discussed at the business forum in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/perspektivy-razvitiya-birzhevoj-torgovli-belarusi-i-kitaja-obsudili-na-biznes-forume-v-shanhae-597700-2023/>

<sup>151</sup> Xinjiang Asia-Europe Trade Center to help boost exports to China through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sintszjanskij-aziatsko-evropejskij-torgovvi-tsentri-pomozhet-narastit-eksport-v-kitaj-cherez-butb-576501-2023/>

possibility of importing Belarusian rapeseed oil and milk powder to China as the most liquid commodity items. "In this context, the issue of accreditation of the corporation as an exchange broker is also being considered, which will allow it to attract economic entities from other sectors of the economy to the BUTB"<sup>152</sup>.

Another fact: in September 2023, the **Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region** expressed its interest in developing cooperation with the BUTB, which "has four main features: vast territory, huge reserves of natural resources, highly developed agriculture and a powerful energy industry"<sup>153</sup>. The Chinese side is confident that exchange trading can play a key role in creating favorable conditions for companies from this region of China to do business in Belarus. In this regard, the BUTB, with its wide import and export opportunities, can facilitate the activities of companies from Inner Mongolia in the Belarusian market.

Finally, in November 2023, in the framework of the 13th China International Wood Trade Conference, which was held in Nanning, the administrative center of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, a memorandum of cooperation on electronic exchange trade was signed by BUTB and the **China Timber and Forest Products Trade Association (CTWPDA)** to assist Chinese companies in entering the Belarusian market. Recall that over 467 thousand cubic meters of Belarusian lumber products were "sold on the Chinese market in the first 11 months of 2023. This is almost five times more than in January-November last year. At the same time, working with domestic suppliers, Chinese importers actively use the mechanism of exchange address transactions, the volume of which

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<sup>152</sup> China Forest Industry Corporation intends to expand cooperation with BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajskaja-lesopromyshlennaja-korporatsija-namerena-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-butb-581070-2023/>

<sup>153</sup> Belarus and China discussed the prospects of development of exchange trade [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-obsudili-perspektivy-razvitiya-birzhevoj-torgovli-590151-2023/>

has already reached 237 thousand cubic meters in just a few months"<sup>154</sup> . In this regard, the establishment of partnership relations between BUTB and CTWPDA will not only help to find new buyers for sawn timber produced in Belarus, but will also provide an additional impetus to the development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the exchange sphere.

A total of 162 Chinese residents have already been accredited on BUTB in January 2024, 51 more than in January 2023. "At the same time, the amount of transactions made by Chinese bidders increased 2.7 times - from \$30.4 million in 2022 to \$80.6 million in 2023"<sup>155</sup> . This happened mainly due to exports of Belarusian products. These were mainly supplies of sawn timber, rapeseed oil, dried milk and petrochemical products. When it comes to imports from China, "Belarusian traders mainly purchased ferrous and non-ferrous metal products through BUTB"<sup>156</sup> . For this reason, BUTB's plans for 2024 include not only a further increase in export sales, but also the expansion of the range of goods produced in China. Moreover, in 2023, about a quarter of transactions on BUTB's industrial and consumer goods platform were for products of Chinese origin.

Developing the topic of import substitution, we note that in January 2024, **Shanghai Duxia Industry and Trade Co., Ltd** became the first stock broker from China, which will specialize in the supply of import-substituting products on the BUTB and attract manufacturers of goods in demand in Belarus - industrial and consumer goods - to the exchange platform. It should be noted that this company from Shanghai has

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<sup>154</sup> BUTB and China Forest Trade Association signed a memorandum of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kitajskaja-assotsiatsija-torgovli-lesom-podpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-602012-2023/>

<sup>155</sup> The new broker BUTB will be engaged in deliveries of import-substituting goods from China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-broker-butb-zajmetsja-postavkami-importozameschajuschih-tovarov-iz-kitaja-611688-2024/>

<sup>156</sup> BUTB and the Chinese Shenyang administration agreed to cooperate in exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-administratsija-kitajskogo-shenjjana-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-birzhevoj-torgovli-606169-2023/>

traditionally produced printing machines and equipment for the production and processing of plastic packaging, which are sold not only in the Celestial Empire, but also exported abroad, mainly to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Europe. As a broker, the Chinese partner of BUTB intends to attract producers of import-substituting goods, which are in high demand in the Belarusian market, to the exchange trading. These are, first of all, electrical equipment, household appliances, video and sound recording equipment, measuring devices, industrial tools, as well as components and spare parts for machines and mechanisms. As a result, the procurement opportunities of Belarusian bidders will be significantly expanded, and the appearance of Chinese manufacturing plants on the Belarusian electronic platform will provide more favorable conditions for concluding transactions. One more fact in this regard: the new broker was accredited on the BUTB with the assistance of the Exchange's representative office in Shanghai, which was opened in 2023 to expand the pool of Chinese users of the exchange platform, promote Belarusian goods in the Chinese market and organize supplies of import-substituting products in demand in the Belarusian market. And 19 new Chinese residents have already been accredited at the BUTB with the participation of the representative office.

By the way, in the new year 2024, BUTB has already established partnership with the Chinese holding **Osell Group**, which unites a number of electronic trading platforms for manufacturers from China and facilitates their entry into foreign markets. The fact is that "the Osell Grop digital ecosystem is used by thousands of companies from various industries and agriculture, and the purpose of cooperation with BUTB is to involve representatives of Chinese business in cross-border trade on the

Belarusian exchange platform"<sup>157</sup> . And already in January this year, BUTB and Osell Grop organized a round table for the business community of this region in the city of Wuxi, in the province of Jiangsu, given the high level of economic development and significant export potential of this province. It is expected that the results of this event will be available in the near future.

Returning to the topic of Belarusian exports to China via BUTB, it should be noted that this trend will continue to dominate in 2024. Especially in terms of successful deliveries of Belarusian woodworking products to the Celestial Empire market. This is evidenced by the figures, which show that "in 2023, Chinese companies purchased 501 thousand cubic meters of lumber products on the exchange, which is 4 times more than in 2022. Over 53% of the total sales volume was provided by exchange address transactions. At the same time, about 30 buyers from China regularly participated in the trades"<sup>158</sup> . This year, BUTB will further expand the range of buyers of these supplies in China.

For example, on the eve of 2024, as part of its efforts to diversify markets and increase exports of the Belarusian timber industry, BUTB agreed on accreditation with **BNBM Group Forest Products, which** is a subsidiary of one of the largest construction holdings in this country - **China National Building Materials Group, which is** among the leading importers of roundwood and sawn timber. In the near future, after the first trial purchase, BNBM Group Forest Products plans to gradually increase the volumes based on the demand dynamics in China and deliver to warehouses in Changxing (Zhejiang Province) and Chengdu (Sichuan Province), and then ship to end consumers.

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<sup>157</sup> BUTB started to cooperate with a major Chinese trading platform [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-nachala-sotrudnichat-s-krupnoj-kitajskoj-torgovoi-platfornoi-612305-2024/>

<sup>158</sup> . BUTB expands the range of lumber buyers from China [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirjaet-krug-pokupatelej-plomaterialov-iz-kitaja-607633-2023/>

**Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology**, already mentioned above, which became the largest foreign buyer of sawn timber on the BUTB in 2023, plans to scale its business in Belarus. Last year, the firm bought more than 140,000 cubic meters of sawn timber on the exchange, almost four times more than in 2022. The company will continue to increase its purchases in 2024. "At the same time, we are talking not only about increasing imports of lumber products through BUTB, but also about purchases of other Belarusian goods popular in China"<sup>159</sup>. These are milk powder, rapeseed oil, sugar. In order to further deepen cooperation in the field of exchange trade, the parties also agreed to work on the integration of the BUTB platform and the Taomu (Suzhou) Information Technology electronic marketplace, where banking and logistics services are already connected, which will allow Belarusian exporters accredited at BUTB to better and more effectively promote their products in the Chinese market, interacting with their end consumers.

All these facts indicate that in 2024 the application of the exchange mechanism will reach a qualitatively new level of building up and diversifying the Belarusian-Chinese trade and will give a powerful impetus to the relations of all-weather and all-round partnership of the two countries in the new era.

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<sup>159</sup> The largest foreign buyer of sawn timber at BUTB is ready to scale up business in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupneishii-inostrannvi-pokupatel-pilomaterialov-na-butb-gotov-masshtabirovat-biznes-v-belarusi-610932-2024/>



## **In focus - a new quality level education and research**

In November 2023, at the **First Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China** in Minsk, an **agreement was signed on the establishment of the Sino-Belarusian Association of Universities**, which included more than 80 higher education institutions of Belarus and China. It should be reminded that today there are more than 560 direct university agreements between the two countries. And in the near future, a plan for the realization of flagship projects between the universities is being prepared for signing. In July 2023, this plan had 35 positions, and now there are more than 70. They are constantly being added and expanded. This plan will be signed at the next meeting of the intergovernmental commission on education within the framework of the intergovernmental committee, which will be held in China. This fact shows that the new association is really a new qualitative level of Belarusian-Chinese relations in education and scientific research. After all, as a result, the parties come out "to the creation of joint associations of universities with high-tech enterprises of our countries, on whose orders scientific research, experimental and design work and commercialization of our university scientists for the economy will be carried out"<sup>160</sup>.

Speaking in general about humanitarian cooperation between Belarus and China, this association could become a hallmark in such areas as inter-university cooperation, joint training of specialists, and joint scientific work. Besides, "such an association is of great importance for training even more Chinese and Belarusian scholars who know well the languages of our two countries, who understand Chinese and Belarusian

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<sup>160</sup> Belarus and China signed an agreement on the establishment of the association of universities [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitaj-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sozdanii-assotsiatsii-universitetov-600861-2023/>

culture"<sup>161</sup> and opens up many opportunities for further development of cooperation between Belarus and China in the field of education. Many Belarusian universities that promote joint educational structures with Chinese partners are among the active participants of the new association. In particular, "seven joint projects are already functioning: three laboratories, two centers, and two institutes. 40 joint educational programs of the first and second levels of higher education are being implemented, 10 of which have been developed over the last two years"<sup>162</sup>. In this context, we should mention three Belarusian universities: **Belarusian State University (BSU)**, **Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno (YKSU)**, **Brest State Technical University (BrSTU)**.

Let's start with **BSU**: to date, "more than 80 cooperation agreements have been signed with 55 Chinese educational institutions, 72% of the total number of foreign students at BSU are Chinese citizens"<sup>163</sup>. Since 2007, **Dalian Polytechnic University (DPU)** has become a strategic partner of the Belarusian university. The most significant project recently was the opening of joint institutes DPU-BSU and BSU-DPU. In June 2023, the parties considered the prospects of holding mirror summer schools on the basis of the two universities and opening a new specialty "photonics" on the basis of DPU-BPU in 2024/2025 academic year.

**Xi'an University of Foreign Languages** became BSU's new partner in China in April 2023. The Memorandum of Understanding considers cooperation "in the field of regional and country studies of the Eurasian continent, history and ethnic issues of the peoples of Central

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<sup>161</sup> Xie Xiaoyun: the Chinese-Belarusian association of universities will become a hallmark of humanitarian cooperation between the two countries [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/se-sjaojun-kitajsko-beloruskaja-assotsiatsija-vuzov-stanet-vizitnoj-kartochkoj-gumanitarnogo-600900-2023/>

<sup>162</sup> Zaleskii, B. Hope for the positive future. Dynamics of partnerships under conditions of economic realism / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 103.

<sup>163</sup> "Photonics" and summer schools. BSU and Dalian Polytechnic University develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/fotonika-i-letnie-shkoly-bgu-i-dalianskij-politehnicheskij-universitet-razvivajut-sotrudnichestvo-571808-2023/>

Asia, Russian-Soviet oriental studies"<sup>164</sup>. The Chinese university began in 1952 as the Northwest College of Russian Language, which was one of the first to teach foreign languages. Now it consists of 23 faculties and educational institutes, where about 20 thousand undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students from 37 countries study and where 20 foreign languages, including Belarusian, are taught.

In November 2023, BSU signed two more new documents with Chinese partners. First, it is a memorandum of understanding with **Sichuan University of Foreign Languages**, which envisages prospects for cooperation in regional studies, linguistics, and Belarusian studies. After all, this Chinese university has been running the Center for the Study of Belarus since 2019. Secondly, it is an agreement on exchange of students with the **Chinese University of Political Science and Law**, which develops "partnership within the framework of the memorandum of understanding between the universities in force since March 2023 and concerns the training in legal specialties of graduates of the Chinese university in the master's degree program of BSU, grant support for the implementation of academic mobility programs"<sup>165</sup>. At the same time the issue of joining the Chinese university to the activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Research Center, established by BSU together with Qingdao University, was also considered.

Interaction with China in the field of education is one of the strategic directions of international cooperation of another Belarusian university - **GrSU**, which signed its first agreement with Chinese partners back in 2001 - with the South Central University of Economics and Law. Today the Grodno university has 14 partners from different provinces of

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<sup>164</sup> BSU and Xi'an University of Foreign Languages signed a memorandum of understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-sianskij-universitet-inostrannyh-jazykov-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-563650-2023/>

<sup>165</sup> BSU expands partnerships with China, two new agreements signed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshiriaet-partnerskie-svjazi-s-kitaem-podpisany-dva-novyh-soglashenija-598631-2023/>

China. The cooperation is carried out in a wide range of areas: joint educational programs, academic exchanges, joint scientific projects. In October 2023 GrSU signed an agreement on international cooperation with **Shijiazhuang Engineering Professional College**, which implies long-term cooperation in the field of introduction of scientific developments in the educational process, development of scientific potential and ensuring high quality of professional training of specialists in the field of academic mobility, development of training in the network form. It only remains to add that for five years more than 500 Chinese citizens have received bachelor's and master's degrees at GrSU, and two graduate students from China have successfully defended their PhD theses. Today there are more than 100 students from China studying at Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno"<sup>166</sup>. Also, GrSU is the first of the Belarusian regional universities, where Chinese language courses with a three-year training program began. And for five years more than 600 people have been trained.

As for **BrSTU**, in November 2023, it signed a cooperation agreement with **Anhui Wenda Institute of Information Engineering**. This university, located in the Chinese city of Hefei, became the 15th Chinese educational institution to sign a document on cooperation with BrSTU. The partners outlined initial priorities for beneficial interaction. In particular, graduates of the Chinese institute will be able to continue their studies at the master's program of Brest University. In addition, Belarusian and Chinese teachers will conduct joint scientific research and develop teaching materials. A more distant prospect is the creation of joint educational programs. It should be reminded that BrSTU has already concluded 170 cooperation agreements with universities of 35 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Chinese vector of

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<sup>166</sup> SDSU and Shijiazhuang Engineering College agreed on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grgu-i-shitszjachzhuanstii-inzhenerny-kolledzh-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-595101-2023/>

cooperation is one of the priorities. For example, "for more than 15 years there is a joint training of specialists in the field of highway construction, accounting and automation with Huh-Hoto Professional Institute. Last year, a pilot program for training mechanical engineers with Xinxiang University was launched"<sup>167</sup> . And Hebei Institute of International Business and Economics plans to create a joint program with BrSTU to train students in the field of e-business. In addition, Brest University has taken up a scientific work in the field of information technologies, which is financed by the Belarusian Republican Foundation for Fundamental Research and the National Natural Science Foundation of the People's Republic of China.

All these facts show that the establishment of the Sino-Belarusian Association of Universities will be an important stage in the development of inter-university cooperation, and will also serve for the benefit of the economies of the two countries and the development of the two peoples - Belarus and China.

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<sup>167</sup> Brest Technical University will cooperate with the institute of the Chinese province of Anhui [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/regions/view/brestskij-tehnicheskij-universitet-budet-sotrudnichat-s-institutom-kitajskoj-provintsii-anhoi-602188-2023>

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