

## Dynamics of a successful partnership

In the first nine months of 2024, the Belarusian economy maintained a growth rate above the forecast and average global indicators. This is explained by the fact that the republic is actively implementing specific measures to improve the competitiveness and innovativeness of the Belarusian economy, including increasing the depth of processing of traditional raw materials and implementing import-substituting projects. The traditional leader - industry - continues to operate at a high rate of more than six percent. The growth of exports of goods and services in January-August this year has increased to almost five percent. The supplies of Belarusian goods exceeded \$26 billion. The main driver of growth is food, exports of which increased by almost 16 percent. Belarus continues to increase supplies to the markets of friendly countries. For example, to Asian countries - by almost eight percent. As for Africa, exports have grown almost fourfold, amounting to almost half a billion dollars. This is the maximum volume of exports and exceeds the annual figures of all previous years. This study describes how the internal and external reserves of the national economy influence the dynamics of Belarus' successful international partnership.



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*Internal and external reserves for the forward movement of the Belarusian economy*

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the Belarusian economy**

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## **"One District - One Project" initiative: a forward-looking program for each region**

The "One District - One Project" initiative has been in place since 2022, when the head of the Belarusian state instructed the Ministry of Economy of Belarus together with regional executive committees to form a list of projects to be implemented in each Belarusian region. Among the tasks set for the implementation of this initiative are job creation, personnel retention in a particular region, as well as the preservation of competencies of the region. Also, "the tasks include the creation of new export-oriented products and the development of related industries. Any production contributes to the development of related industries - transportation, logistics, trade, energy, services"<sup>1</sup>. In addition, import substitution is an important condition in today's situation.

It should be reminded that the "One District - One Project" program is designed for the current five-year period. And already in 2026 its results will be summarized. Since the beginning of 2023, the number of projects under this initiative was 129. Then this list was increased to 156, and at the end of the year it expanded to 190 projects, the cost of which is about eight billion Belarusian rubles. And this is not the limit, as "about two dozen more projects should appear on the list. The work is going on constantly"<sup>2</sup>. And as of January 1, 2024, 28 investment projects have already been implemented, and for the first

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<sup>1</sup> Socio-economic development of regions and import substitution: tasks of the initiative "One district - one project" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sotsialno-ekonomicheskoe-razvitie-regionov-i-importozameschenie-zadachi-initsiativ-odin-rajon-odin-634027-2024>

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Economy: the program "One district - one project" will include about two dozen more initiatives [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minekonomiki-v-programmu-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-budet-vkliucheno-esche-okolo-dvuh-desiatkov-initsiativ-634147-2024/>



quarter of this year - six more. By the end of the year it is planned to complete 55. "More than 2 thousand jobs have already been created under the realized projects. Overall, more than 9 thousand jobs are to be created under the "One District - One Project" initiative"<sup>3</sup>.

Among the Belarusian regions we can single out the leaders in terms of the number of implemented initiatives. Gomel and Minsk regions have five projects each, and Vitebsk region - four. To be more precise, "in Minsk region it is Barysau, Dzerzhynski, Kopylski, Smolevichi districts. Three or more projects are created there. In general, 2 or more projects are created in each district of the country"<sup>4</sup>. Among the already realized initiatives, most of them are production-oriented projects. If we look by sectors, they include woodworking, metallurgical production, production of machinery and equipment, processing of agro-industrial products, production of medical products, and pharmaceuticals. Among the most successful projects are the enterprise on creation of technical carbon of Omsk Carbon Mogilev IOOO, furniture production with elements of digital factory of Olsa OJSC. "In the Gomel region a large production facility for the creation of cheese and dairy products was realized, in the Vitebsk region - broiler poultry farm, in the Minsk region - Slutsk cheese factory. A large woodworking complex in Grodno region was also realized this year"<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Under the initiative "One district - one project" 34 projects have already been realized [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/po-initsiative-odin-raion-odin-proekt-realizovano-uzhe-34-proekta-633766-2024/>

<sup>4</sup> Leaders among the regions: where the potential of the initiative "One district - one project" has been realized [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/lidery-sredi-oblastej-gde-realizovan-potentsial-initsiativy-odin-raion-odin-proekt-633813-2024/>

<sup>5</sup> The Ministry of Economy named the most successful initiatives "One district - one project" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minekonomiki-nazvalo-samye-uspeshnye-initsiativy-odin-raion-odin-proekt-633981-2024/>

If we talk about specific projects in the same **Minsk region**, 46 projects included in the initiative "One district - one project" were being implemented there in 2023. "Their realization provides for the creation of more than 2 thousand jobs"<sup>6</sup>. Interestingly, investors in the capital region invest most of all in the manufacturing industry, as well as in housing construction. They account for more than half of the projects. Projects in agriculture, forestry and fisheries can also be noted. "Both state-owned enterprises and private businesses invest in regional projects. Foreign investors are also attracted. There is an increase in foreign direct investment"<sup>7</sup>. Among the projects completed last year in the capital region we should note the following projects: in Krupsky district - organization of production of terraced board; in Kopyl district - creation of innovative production of milk powder with capillary-porous structure, where 32 jobs were created. And already in 2024, three more projects were implemented in the Minsk region, including in Kopyl district, where a new line for the production of sawn timber was opened, and "its annual capacity is 18 thousand cubic meters of finished timber (1.5 thousand cubic meters per month). <...> Thanks to the project, 22 new jobs with decent wages will be created in the region"<sup>8</sup>. In general, in Minsk region this year will be completed 16 investment projects in the production of vehicles, food, pharmaceutical products and preparations, electrical equipment, plastic

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<sup>6</sup> In Minsk region in 2023 46 projects were implemented under the program "One district - one project" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-minskoj-oblasti-v-2023-godu-realizovyvalos-46-proektov-po-programme-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-635036-2024>

<sup>7</sup> Investors in Minsk region invest most of all in the processing industry [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/investory-v-minskoj-oblasti-bolshe-vsego-vkladyyvajutsja-v-obrabatyvajushchiju-promyshlennost-633940-2024/>

<sup>8</sup> In Kopyl leskhoz opened a new production of sawn timber [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-kopylskom-leshoze-otkryli-novoe-proizvodstvo-po-vypusku-obreznvyh-pilomaterialov-633821-2024/>

products. And also in 2024 under the initiative "One district - one project" "it is planned to continue the realization of 47 investment projects. The volume of investments is Br1.7 billion. It is planned to create more than 2 thousand jobs as a result of the projects' implementation"<sup>9</sup>.

In **Vitebsk region**, as mentioned above, four projects of the "One District - One Project" program were completed in 2023. In particular, it is the construction of a slaughterhouse of the Vitebsk poultry farm. And it has already started a new project - the construction of a feed mill. The production and processing of dairy products in the form of a line of soft cheeses has been organized in Gorodok. Also last year "a complex for advanced processing of worn-out tires and rubber products was opened in Novopolotsk at the UE "Biomekhzavod of household secondary resources", where about 60 jobs were created. In Beshenkovichi a project for 20 jobs - production of food flavorings was implemented"<sup>10</sup>. In addition, in 2023 in this area continued the implementation of 24 projects of this program. And by the end of this year it is planned to complete the implementation of 12 projects in 10 regions. "These include production of clothing products in Dokshitsy, production of perfume products in Dokshitsy district, in Sharkovski district - production of juices"<sup>11</sup>. The modernization of the Obol

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<sup>9</sup> In Minsk region this year it is planned to complete 16 investment projects of the program "One district - one project" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-minskoj-oblasti-v-etom-godu-planiruetsia-zavershit-16-investproektov-programmy-odin-raion-odin-proekt-635314-2024>

<sup>10</sup> The Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee told what was implemented under the program "One district - one project" in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-vitebskom-oblispolkome-rasskazali-cto-realizovano-po-programme-odin-raion-odin-proekt-v-2023-godu-633972-2024/>

<sup>11</sup> In Vitebsk region 12 projects of the program "One district - one project" will be completed by the end of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-vitebskoj-oblasti-do-kontsa-goda-zavershat-12-proektov-initsiativv-odin-raion-odin-proekt-631195-2024/>

ceramics plant in Shumilinski district will also be completed, and a line of new whole-milk products will be organized on the basis of the Postavy dairy plant.

All these facts suggest that the "One District - One Project" program, which is being implemented in Belarus, will continue to develop. The Ministry of Economy is already holding a round of consideration of plans for 2025 and at the same time emphasizes that "the key thing for us is projects in the field of technological security, localization. We will literally pencil out what can be made from our raw materials, materials, more in-depth to set tasks for the construction of new enterprises"<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, any project of this program performs an import-substituting function.

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<sup>12</sup> Chebotar: the program "One district - one project" will be supplemented by new initiatives [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chebotar-programmu-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-dopolniat-novve-initsiativv-635398-2024>

## **Gomel region: economic forum as a tool for generating new ideas**

In September 2024, the annual Gomel Economic Forum was held for the 18th time, which has become a recognized and authoritative platform for discussing topical issues of international trade and economic, investment interaction, establishment of reliable long-term interregional and cooperation ties. During its history this forum has turned into the main business event of Gomel region, "which has 107 signed documents worth \$2 billion 600 million, creation of thousands of jobs. And <...> not only in large cities such as Gomel, Zhlobin, Mozyr, Rechitsa and Svetlogorsk, but also in distant from the center Lelchitsy, Zhitkovichy districts"<sup>13</sup>, as well as in the Chernobyl-affected areas. In general, pursuing a consistent policy of strengthening mutual contacts and friendly relations with foreign partners, the Belarusian southeastern region at the level of the region, cities and district centers has already concluded more than 250 international cooperation agreements with two dozen countries. "Behind this figure is the creation of joint ventures, the performance of research and development work..."<sup>14</sup>. And only since the beginning of 2024 Gomel region has already received 18 official delegations from seven countries.

This time, the economic forum in the city above Sozh brought together more than 400 participants from 16 countries, where, along with regular partners, representatives of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Vietnam, India, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, the

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<sup>13</sup> Krupko about Gomel forum: a solid basis for the creation of a smart economy [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/krupko-o-gomelskom-forume-prochnaja-osnova-dlja-sozdaniia-umnoi-ekonomiki-662391-2024/>

<sup>14</sup> Krupko: more than 250 international agreements were concluded at the level of Gomel region and district centers [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/krupko-na-urovne-gomelskoj-oblasti-i-rajsentrov-zakljucheno-bolee-250-mezhdunarodnyh-dogovorov-662333-2024/>

United Arab Emirates, and Zimbabwe took part. The business program was devoted to the key issues of the Belarusian region in the sphere of industry, export, innovation and investment, as well as the work of small and medium-sized businesses. The plenary part of the forum focused on the prospects and possible areas of cooperation between Gomel region and foreign partners. Important aspects of business relations were also discussed at the thematic sections, which were devoted to production and construction potential, tourism and social sphere, small and medium business. The theme of investments became a particularly rich section of the forum. Suffice it to say that "there are more than 80 objects for investment, mostly in the real sector of the economy. It is no coincidence: it is the industrial complex that is the locomotive of the region's economy"<sup>15</sup>.

For example, in Lelchitsy district they offer a project to develop a deposit of ultra-fresh water. This is a real opportunity to compete with world-renowned brands. Such production facilities have not yet been created either in Belarus or in neighboring countries. The water has extremely low mineralization, and it can be used in dietary and children's nutrition.

There is an explored gypsum deposit in Petrikov district, which is already prepared for commercial development. According to the results of preliminary exploration, the western and eastern sections of the mineral reserves are 120 and 125 million tons, respectively. Also noted and objectively favorable position of the deposit - 11 kilometers from the railway station and near the Pripyat River.

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<sup>15</sup> More than 80 objects for investment are offered at the Gomel Economic Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/bolee-80-objektov-dlja-investirovaniya-predlagajut-na-gomelskom-ekonomicheskom-forume-662389-2024/>

Organization of production of primary aluminum and its alloys on the basis of the Zaozerne bauxite-dawsonite ore deposit is an actual proposal for investors in the Yelsky District. "According to forecasts, the deposit contains over 182 million tons of ore. Two mining options are available to potential investors: the shaft method and through a borehole"<sup>16</sup>. Especially since the demand for aluminum is constantly growing. The range of aluminum applications is from aviation and space to construction and chemical industries.

Returning to the prospects and possible areas of cooperation between Gomel region and foreign countries, we should note that **Kazakhstan** was among the active participants of the forum from the countries of the **Commonwealth of Independent States**, whose potential for cooperation with the Belarusian southeastern region is simply enormous. This, first of all, concerns the issues of production cooperation and agriculture. For example, "in Kazakhstan, within the framework of cooperation, an assembly production of machinery has been set up jointly with Gomselmash, which is successfully developing"<sup>17</sup>. Within the framework of the economic forum, the parties agreed that the number of joint projects will increase.

The partners from **Uzbekistan** informed the forum about the development of a new project with Belarus. The prerequisite for active interaction was the memorandum on cooperation and creation of investment projects signed about six months ago between the free economic zones (FEZ) Kokand and Homel-Raton. The Uzbek FEZ was

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<sup>16</sup> "Transparent gold", gypsum, aluminum. What subsoil riches are offered in the Gomel region to investors [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/prozrachnoe-zoloto-gips-aluminij-kakie-bogatstva-nedrpredlagajut-v-gomelskoi-oblasti-investoram-662828-2024/>

<sup>17</sup> Gomel region intends to expand cooperation with partners from Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-namerenarasshiriat-sotrudnichestvo-s-partnerami-iz-kazahstana-662369-2024/>

established in 2017. And now it is interested in the experience of Gomel producers in the machine building industry, as well as milk processing. At present, negotiations on the creation of a joint project with the Belarusian company are ongoing. Apparently, "a Belarusian-Uzbek investment project on milk processing, production of milk powder, cheese, kefir... will be realized soon..."<sup>18</sup>

If we talk about partners of Homiel region in **Asian** countries, we should first of all mention **China**. Within the framework of the economic forum, in particular, the representatives of the Chinese province of Hebei defined the guidelines for new directions of strengthening cooperation with Homiel region. "There is an interest in the development of cooperation in the field of woodworking. In one of the cities of the province there is a large furniture production, accordingly, <...> there are great needs in purchasing wood..."<sup>19</sup>. In addition, there is a bearing manufacturing plant in the Chinese region. And in this respect, there may be another area for potential cooperation with Belarusian partners.

The intention to strengthen cooperation on various positions with prospective partners from **Mongolia** was outlined at the forum by the Homiel side, emphasizing that 2024 was a starting point for intensifying cooperation and raising it to a qualitatively new level, as well as this year opened a new page in the history of Belarusian-Mongolian partnership ties. Interesting prospects are seen "in agriculture, industry,

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<sup>18</sup> It will turn out to be a superproduct. The representative of FEZ "Kokand" announced a new Belarusian-Uzbek project [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/poluchitsja-superprodukt-predstavitel-sez-kokand-anonsiroval-novji-belorusko-uzbekskij-proekt-662558-2024/>

<sup>19</sup> Promsector and woodworking. Gomelshchina and the Chinese province of Hebei outlined the sphere for integration [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/promsektor-i-derevoobrabotka-gomelshchina-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-hebei-nametili-sfery-dlja-integratsij-662539-2024/>



and food production"<sup>20</sup> . We are talking about specific agreements: from supplies of Gomselmash mowers to studying the maintenance and feeding of farm animals in the best farms of Mozyr district.

As for the **United Arab Emirates** (UAE), it is the main trade partner of the Belarusian southeastern region among the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. Suffice it to say that "only exports of dairy products produced in the Gomel region increased almost ninefold at the end of last [2023] year"<sup>21</sup> . Homiel enterprises and organizations also supply the UAE with flour confectionery and carpentry products, provide computer and construction services. Speaking about the most promising areas of partnership with Homiel, the Emirati side mentioned such areas of cooperation as agricultural technologies, food products, food security, "green technologies", clean energy, as well as interregional cooperation, as the parties are planning to adopt an important document in the nearest future - "a memorandum on the establishment of twinning relations between Homiel and the Emirate of Fujairah"<sup>22</sup> .

Finally, at the XVIII Gomel Economic Forum another vector of strengthening international ties was outlined - with **African** states. In particular, it was about **Zimbabwe**. The fact is that in 2023 Gomel agricultural machinery proved itself perfectly on the fields of this South African country. After all, with the help of this machinery "last year farmers in Zimbabwe gathered a record harvest of wheat. The Ministry

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<sup>20</sup> From machinery to sweets. What are the points of contact between Gomel region and Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/ot-tehniki-do-sladostej-kakovy-tochki-soprikosnovenija-gomelskoi-oblasti-i-mongolii-662425-2024/>

<sup>21</sup> Export of dairy products of Homiel producers in the UAE increased almost nine times by the end of 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/eksport-molochnoi-produktsii-gomelskih-proizvoditelej-v-oae-vyros-pochti-v-deviat-raz-po-itogam-2023-662349-2024/>

<sup>22</sup> Homiel and Fujairah plan to establish twinning relations [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/gomel-i-fudzheira-planirujut-ustanovit-pobratimskie-otnosheniia-662476-2024/>

of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water Resources and Rural Development of Zimbabwe gave such a high assessment of the joint government program on mechanization of the agricultural sector with Belarus"<sup>23</sup> . By the end of this year, another 80 units of Gomselmash machinery will be delivered to this African country from the Belarusian southeastern region.

Summarizing the results of the 18th Gomel Economic Forum, we would like to emphasize that this annual event gives an opportunity both to the region and each enterprise of the region "to develop, to produce more products and increase exports, so that the enterprises strengthen, grow and be financially stable in this difficult period"<sup>24</sup> , as well as to find new cooperation partners and establish joint production projects, providing an additional impetus in strengthening international economic and socio-cultural ties of Gomel region.

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<sup>23</sup> "Gomselmash" intends to supply a large batch of machinery to Zimbabwe by the end of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-nameren-postavit-v-zimbabve-krupnuju-partiju-tehniki-do-kontsa-goda-662341-2024/>

<sup>24</sup> Krupko: Gomel Economic Forum gives an additional impetus to the development of international relations [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/krupko-gomelskij-ekonomicheskij-forum-daet-dopolnitelnyi-impuls-v-razvitii-mezhdunarodnyh-svjazei-662566-2024/>

## Belarus - Asia: systematic work brings results

Expanding contacts with Asian countries is an urgent task for the Republic of Belarus, as this continent is a very capacious and rapidly expanding market. For this reason, Asian partners are important for the Belarusian side in terms of prospective interaction in trade and economic, industrial and cooperative, and scientific and technological aspects. It should be recalled that back in 2021, the Belarusian-Asian Forum noted that "there are still many opportunities to promote Belarusian trade and economic interests in the Asian direction"<sup>25</sup>. But for this purpose, it is necessary to continue systematic work, initiating new formats of contacts in interaction with a number of Asian countries. **Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Oman** are among the interesting partners of Belarus on this continent.

As for **Iran**, in October 2023, Tehran hosted the 16th meeting of the mixed 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>26</sup>. In addition, the Iranian capital hosted meetings of a mixed

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<sup>25</sup> Zalessky, B. Vector of cooperation - Asia. Collection of articles / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 3.

<sup>26</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-napравlenijam-vzaimodejstviya-592926-2023/>

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>27</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 trade turnover within \$500 million in a short period of time"<sup>28</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>29</sup>.

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<sup>27</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-promyshlennye-palaty-minska-i-tegerana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-594460-2023/>

<sup>28</sup> Zalessky, B. The Route of Interaction - Asia. Intensification of Belarus' multifaceted ties with the main economic partners on the continent / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 65.

<sup>29</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>

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>30</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>31</sup>.

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

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<sup>30</sup> Enterprises of "Bellesbumprom" increased exports to Iran more than 1.6 times [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-uvlechili-eksport-produktsii-v-iran-bolee-chem-v-16-raza-594471-2023/>

<sup>31</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/>

account for 98% of all purchases from this country, and medical equipment"<sup>32</sup>.

In November 2023, the Belarusian region offered 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>33</sup>. So the parties hope not only to continue old ties, but also to find new opportunities for increasing economic partnership.

Minsk and Tehran, which signed a memorandum of cooperation back in 1995 and an agreement on establishing twinning ties in 2006, intend to intensify their partnership in the near future. At the end of 2023, during the discussion of interaction between the two capitals, the chairman of Minsk City Executive Committee V. Kukharev emphasized that "Minsk is open for dialogue on a wide range of issues - from mutually beneficial trade, supplies of equipment, exchange of delegations to projects in culture and sports"<sup>34</sup>. Cooperation in tourism,

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<sup>32</sup> Vitebsk region offered Iran to work in cooperation in pharmaceuticals [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskaja-oblast-predlozila-iranu-rabotat-v-kooperatsii-v-farmatsevtike-600855-2023/>

<sup>33</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-oblastju-600832-2023/>

<sup>34</sup> Minsk is interested in developing cooperation with Iran at the regional level [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/minsk-i-iran-aktivizirujut-sotrudnichestvo-na-regionalnom-urovne-602411-2023/>

healthcare, and joint ventures is also promising. One of the proposals is to open a trade house of Iran in the Belarusian capital.

A separate conversation is about cooperation in education. In July 2024 in Iran, Belarusian State University (BSU) signed memoranda of understanding with two higher education institutions of this country: the first - with Amir Kabir University of Technology, the second - with Malek Ashtar University of Technology to develop mutually beneficial international cooperation in a number of areas in education, science and technology. "In particular, it is envisaged to exchange students in study programs at all levels, teachers and scientists, develop and implement joint educational programs, carry out research and educational projects, exchange information, teaching materials, organize conferences, seminars, workshops and courses and prepare joint publications"<sup>35</sup>. In addition, Malek Ashtar University of Technology is interested in developing scientific cooperation in the fields of optics, materials science and metallurgy, electrophysics, physics of polymers and composite materials. For reference, it should be noted that BSU cooperates with Iranian institutions within the framework of four open-ended agreements and memorandums. For popularization of Iranian culture and language within the specialties of the Faculty of International Relations "international relations" and "linguo-country studies" since 2008 the Persian language has been studied, since 2010 the Center of Iranian Studies has been functioning. Currently, the Department of Oriental Languages employs three teachers of Farsi, and ten citizens from Iran study at BSU.

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<sup>35</sup> BSU signed memorandums of understanding with two universities of Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/memorandumv-o-vzaimoponimanii-podpisal-bgu-s-dvumja-vuzami-irana-645726-2024/>

Speaking about **Saudi Arabia**, it should be recalled that in May 2024, Riyadh hosted the third meeting of the Belarusian-Saudi Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), during which its participants identified practical steps to expand the legal framework, develop cooperation in the areas of industry, investment, standardization and certification, agriculture, science and technology, education, sports and tourism, medicine, and security. In addition, the parties noted "significant progress in reactivating the whole range of bilateral political, trade, economic and humanitarian relations between Belarus and Saudi Arabia and agreed to promote the maintenance of high dynamics of bilateral contacts"<sup>36</sup>.

The first two meetings of the BCC were held in 2015 and 2016. At the first one - in Riyadh - the parties established the Belarusian-Saudi Business Council to "become a platform for fruitful interaction between representatives of business circles of the two countries. At the same time, a contract was concluded for the supply of soil mixtures from the Belarusian company EridGrow Production"<sup>37</sup>.<sup>38</sup> The second - in Minsk - was the Belarusian-Saudi Business Forum and Contact and Cooperation Exchange organized under the auspices of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, where representatives of 63 enterprises and organizations from Belarus and 11 companies from Saudi Arabia participated and considered prospects for expanding cooperation "in the fields of construction, chemical industry, heavy industry, energy,

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<sup>36</sup> On the third meeting of the Joint Committee for Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: [https://mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/e892dc96bef2ae42.html](https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/e892dc96bef2ae42.html)

<sup>37</sup> Zalessky, B. Horizons of the far arc. The potential of interaction of the Republic of Belarus with the countries of Asia and Africa / Boris Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 33.

<sup>38</sup> Business forum "Belarus - Saudi Arabia". [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.cci.by/o-palate/novosti/biznes-forum-belarus-saudoyskaya-araviya/#>



telecommunications, information technology, real estate, trade and investment, food production, pharmaceuticals, tourism" xml-ph-0000@dee

It should be noted that the decisions of the third meeting of the SCS focused on the expansion of the legal framework of the Belarusian-Saudi relations. For reference: since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1997, Minsk and Riyadh have adopted about ten documents that formed the legal framework for bilateral contacts. These include the General Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, signed in 2003 and "regulating issues of bilateral cooperation in trade and economic, investment, educational, scientific, technical, cultural, information, tourism, youth and sports fields"<sup>39</sup>, as well as agreements on avoidance of double taxation and mutual protection of investments signed in 2009.

In January 2024, when the Belarusian delegation led by Foreign Minister S. Aleinik visited Saudi Arabia, the parties worked out the industrial, scientific, and business clusters of cooperation between the two countries, focusing on "ways to intensify scientific cooperation, identify new promising research projects, and develop contacts between scientists"<sup>40</sup>. In particular, agreements were reached to resume joint work on a number of fundamental and applied projects, as well as to exchange visits of scientists and researchers from the two countries. The sides also discussed Belarus' involvement in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, a large-scale economic diversification program, opportunities for

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<sup>39</sup> Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: [https://export.by/saudi\\_arabia](https://export.by/saudi_arabia)

<sup>40</sup> Prospects for new projects in science and economy. Aleynik's visit to Saudi Arabia has been completed [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/perspektivy-dlja-novyh-proektov-v-nauke-i-ekonomike-zavershen-vizit-aleinika-v-saudovskuiu-araviyu-608909-2024/>

industrial cooperation, supplies of Belarusian machinery, and prospects for joint projects in third countries.

Following the January talks, the sides reached a number of practical agreements that will be implemented this year. For example, Minsk and Riyadh will create a coordinating structure to promote mutual trade. For this purpose, in January this year "a memorandum of understanding was signed between the National Center for Marketing [NCM] and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry [of Saudi Arabia]"<sup>41</sup>. And recently, the next very important step was taken: in May, Riyadh hosted a Belarusian-Saudi business forum, co-organized by NCM and the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which signed a memorandum of cooperation. At this forum the attention of Saudi companies was "drawn to the prospects of cooperation in industrial (BELAZ, "Mogilevkhimvolokno", "Polotsk-Steklovolokno") and agricultural ("Servolux", Vitebsk broiler poultry farm) sectors"<sup>42</sup>. In the same May 2024, Belarus and Saudi Arabia supplemented the contractual legal framework and signed a draft agreement on air traffic, and a memorandum of understanding was adopted between the aviation administrations of the two countries.

Another relevant topic of interaction between the parties is the role of exhibitions in the development of trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Saudi Arabia. Even during the first round of political consultations between the foreign ministries in the history of bilateral relations, held in December 2023 in the Saudi

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<sup>41</sup> Belarus and Saudi Arabia will create a coordinating structure to promote mutual trade [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-saudovskaja-aravija-sozdatut-koordinirujuschuju-strukturu-po-sodejstviju-vzaimnoj-torgovle-609070-2024/>

<sup>42</sup> Belarus and Saudi Arabia intensify interaction between trade institutions [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-saudovskaja-aravija-aktivizirujut-vzaimodejstvie-mezhdu-institutami-torgovli-633452-2024/>

capital, it was noted that by resuming the whole range of bilateral contacts on the basis of economic partnership development, the parties would "promote the intensification of direct interaction between the business circles of the two countries, exchange information, encourage participation in exhibitions in the territory of their countries"<sup>43</sup>. And already in March this year, the Belarusian side invited Saudi partners to participate in the Belagro agricultural exhibition.

As for the participation of Belarusian exporters in Saudi exhibition forums, back in September 2023, Belarus presented a collective national exposition at the Foodex Saudi International Food Industry Exhibition in Riyadh, where 40 countries and more than 600 brands participated. "The Belarusian stand featured the flagships of dairy products: Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1, Slutsk Cheese Factory, Gluboka Milk Canning Plant, Kalinkovichi Dairy Plant, a branch of OJSC Rogachev MCC"<sup>44</sup>.

And in May of this year, the Saudi capital hosted the 2nd International Exhibition of Food Industry Saudi Food Show 2024, which brought together on one exposition platform more than a thousand major companies in the food industry from 97 countries. The Belarusian stand Belarus. The Taste of Nature was presented for the first time at this exhibition forum, where domestic exporters demonstrated a wide range of dairy products, including those made of milk powder, assorted cheeses and desserts. In particular, Slutsk Cheese

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<sup>43</sup> From tourism to investments. The Belarusian delegation held rich negotiations in Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/ot-turizma-do-investitsij-belorusskaja-delegatsija-provela-nasvschennye-peregovory-v-saudovskoi-aravii-605885-2023/>

<sup>44</sup> Belarus presented its national exposition at the International Food Exhibition Foodex Saudi in Riyadh [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-natsionalnuju-ekspozitsiju-na-mezhdunarodnoi-pischevoi-vystavke-foodex-saudi-v-er-589285-2023/>

Factory presented a line of lactose-free dairy products, elite cheeses with ginger, chia seeds, safflower petals, black and white truffle, frozen cheeses of the trademark "Klets kaya Krynachka" and "Yas Belous", as well as an innovative product - A2 milk, which contains milk protein type A2 and lacks beta-casein A1. A wide range of products was shown by one of the leaders of the Belarusian dairy industry - the company "Molochny Mir", including elite hard cheeses "Parmesan", "Maasdam", "Gorodenb", cheese with black truffle, natural milk, natural cream and whipping cream, frozen cheese "Gorodenb", dry and innovative products. "The share of export supplies of the enterprise to the international market is more than 65% with the volume of raw material processing about 660 thousand tons per year"<sup>45</sup>. Milkavita, a leading industry enterprise with a product portfolio of more than 150 items, presented at the exhibition packaged liquid milk and cream with long shelf life, butter, dry dairy products with improved solubility and temperature processing characteristics. And in this respect Saudi Arabia is one of the main partners of the enterprise.

Returning to the subject of the Belarusian-Saudi Joint Committee on Cooperation, we would like to emphasize that its third meeting clearly demonstrated the parties' focus on achieving concrete results in updating the entire range of trade and economic interaction. Let us hope that these decisions of the Committee will give a significant impetus to cooperation in other areas of bilateral relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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<sup>45</sup> Enterprises of Belarus present their potential at the exhibition of food industry in Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-belarusi-prezentuiut-potentsial-na-vystavke-pischevoi-promyshlennosti-v-saudovskoi-aravii-635857-2024/>

Finally, another interesting country in the Persian Gulf region is **Oman**. In August 2024, the first Belarusian-Omani business forum was held in Muscat, the capital of this Middle Eastern country, where representatives of government agencies, specialized departments, and over 70 companies from both countries discussed topical issues of cooperation in the fields of machine building, agriculture, food security, food industry, high technology, logistics, and tourism. During the meeting, the parties stated that they were "betting on the intensification of Belarusian-Omani cooperation in the whole range of areas"<sup>46</sup> and would try to find effective tools for conducting bilateral trade, establish partnerships in information technologies, and realize the export potential of Belarusian enterprises in the dairy and machine-building industries.

It should be noted that diplomatic relations with this sultanate on the Arabian Peninsula were established in July 1992. During these thirty-odd years, the parties signed several agreements - on trade and economic cooperation, mutual protection of investments, avoidance of double taxation, as well as on the establishment of friendly ties between Minsk and Muscat. "In July 2023, the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Sultanate of Oman on air communication was signed"<sup>47</sup>. Memoranda of Understanding between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Education, Culture, and Chambers of Commerce and Industry also supplemented the legal framework.

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<sup>46</sup> Belarus is working on expanding exports to Oman [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-prorabatvvact-rasshirenie-eksporta-v-oman-657416-2024/>

<sup>47</sup> Cooperation in the political sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: [https://egypt.mfa.gov.by/ru/blr\\_oman/political/](https://egypt.mfa.gov.by/ru/blr_oman/political/)

Trade turnover between the countries is formed mainly by Belarusian exports. For example, in 2020, Belarus exported to Oman "dairy products (skimmed and whole milk powder worth USD 347.6 thousand, milk whey worth USD 18.8 thousand), potash fertilizers (USD 328.5 thousand), collectibles and antiques (USD 57.7 thousand)"<sup>48</sup>. However, over the last three years Belarusian exports have slightly decreased. Despite the low level of mutual trade turnover, Belarus calls the Sultanate of Oman the most important partner in the Middle East and focuses "its attention on the development of trade and economic relations and investment cooperation"<sup>49</sup>.

It should be noted that Oman, home to just over five million people, is recognized as the 66th largest economy in the world by the end of 2023. And today the Vision 2040 development strategy is being implemented here - "a 20-year nationwide multi-sectoral document that represents a key reference point for the development of the state. Its goal is to diversify the economy on the basis of innovations, develop the private sector, and integrate into the world economy"<sup>50</sup>, in order to double the gross domestic product per capita by 2040. Moreover, the geographical location provides Oman with significant opportunities to expand trade and economic ties with other nations of the world. And in the next few years, free economic zones will be actively expanded in this Gulf state.

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<sup>48</sup> MART Activities [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.mart.gov.by/activity/mezhdunarodnoe-sotrudnichestvo/sotrudnichestvo-s-zakreplennymi-stranami-i-regionami/sotrudnichestvo-s-sultanatom-oman/>

<sup>49</sup> Rachkov: Oman is the most important partner of Belarus in the Middle East [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/rachkov-oman-vazhnejshij-partner-belarusi-na-blizhnem-vostoke-569090-2023/>

<sup>50</sup> Barysevich, N. Belarus has a serious potential for increasing food exports to Oman / N. Barysevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://produkt.by/news/novosti-belarusi/u-belarusi-est-sereznyy-potencial-dlya-naraschivaniva-eksporta>

Belarusian interests in this country are now linked to trade interests in a number of items. "Today Belarus mainly supplies Oman with dairy products (milk and condensed cream, milk whey), elevator equipment, flat rolled products made of iron or non-alloy steel, polymer threads, paper and cardboard products, jams, fruit puree, radiators, valves for pipelines, measuring and control devices, and grooming cosmetics"<sup>51</sup>. But at the first Belarusian-Omani business forum, serious potential was noted for other export items as well.

For example, the two countries plan to develop mutual trade through the stock exchange. The sale of agro-industrial products is seen as a priority. In particular, "it is planned to use the platform of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange [BUTB] to supply milk products produced in Belarus to the Omani market. For this purpose, the first Omani company has already been accredited at the BUTB and intends to take part in exchange trading in the near future"<sup>52</sup>. And for the Omani side the greatest interest is milk powder, which is widely used in the food industry of the country. Therefore, it is advisable to start exchange trade with Oman with this commodity position. In the future, in addition to dairy products, the range of Belarusian goods supplied to Oman through the BUTB can be expanded to include such items as rapeseed oil, beet pulp and molasses, sugar, amino acids, and feed additives.

The Belarusian Hi-Tech Park (HTP) is also establishing interaction with Oman and has outlined areas of mutual interest for the

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<sup>51</sup> Barysevich, N. Promising Middle East. We review the horizons of cooperation between Belarus and Oman / N. Borisevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/comments/view/mnogoobeschajuschij-blizhnij-vostok-obozrevaem-gorizonty-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-s-omanom-9338//>

<sup>52</sup> Belarus and Oman plan to develop mutual trade through the exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-oman-planirujut-razvivat-vzaimnuju-torgovlju-cherez-birzhu-657057-2024>

development of joint initiatives with ITHCA Group. This Omani group of companies was established in 2019. It comprises Oman Broadband, Oman Technology Fund, Oman Towers and Space Communications Technology. ITHCA Group's main functions are to actively work on building Oman's IT infrastructure, expanding the sultanate's networks and digital capabilities. It "scales data centers/cloud storage, builds cybersecurity infrastructure, and works with national and international organizations and foreign partners to implement strategic ICT initiatives"<sup>53</sup>. In addition, HTP signed a memorandum of understanding with the Oman National Engineering and Investment Company, which provides services to the country's utility and engineering sector. This document expresses practical interest in cooperating with HTP residents on projects related to the development of foodtech and VR technologies.

As for other outcomes of the first Belarusian-Omani Business Forum, the National Center for Marketing and Price Study of Belarus signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The intention to cooperate between Minsk and Omani dairy plants was also outlined. In addition, the Belarusian delegation visited the free economic zone and the port of Sohar in the province of North el-Batinah, where they discussed possible ways of cooperation and areas for its expansion, emphasizing the prospects for cooperation in transport and logistics and the creation of joint production enterprises both in the province and in Oman.

In general, these August meetings in Muscat and Sohar showed that "the parties have considerable potential for the development of

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<sup>53</sup> Hi-Tech Park establishes cooperation with Oman in the IT sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/tech/view/park-vysokih-tehnologii-nalazhivaet-vzaimodeistvie-s-omanom-v-sfere-it-657529-2024/>



business cooperation, which today needs to be capitalized into concrete projects"<sup>54</sup> . Both in terms of trade and economic and investment cooperation, and in terms of expanding partnerships in the scientific, technical and educational spheres.

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<sup>54</sup> Zalesky, B. Perimeter of the far arc. The potential of sustainable partnership in addressing multi-vector interaction. / Boris Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 20.

## **Belarus-China: Forum of university rectors as a joint platform for innovative approaches**

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, the Agreement on the Establishment of the Sino-Belarusian Association of Universities was signed, which included more than 80 higher education institutions of Belarus and China. At that time there were more than 560 direct university agreements between the two countries. And a plan of realization of flagship projects between the universities was 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 fact suggests that the new association is really a new qualitative level of Belarusian-Chinese relations in education and research. After all, as a result, the parties come "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>55</sup>.

Speaking in general about humanitarian cooperation between Belarus and China, this association has already 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

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<sup>55</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/>

Chinese and Belarusian culture"<sup>56</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 became active participants of the new association. In particular, at that time "seven joint projects were 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>57</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: as of November 2023 there were "more than 80 cooperation agreements signed with 55 Chinese educational institutions, 72% of the total number of foreign students at BSU are Chinese citizens"<sup>58</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.

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<sup>56</sup> Xie Xiaoyun: 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-siaoiun-kitaisko-belorusskaja-assotsiatsija-vuzov-stanet-vizitnoi-kartochkoi-gumanitarnogo-600900-2023/>

<sup>57</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>58</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-dalianskii-politehnicheskii-universitet-razvivajut-sotrudnichestvo-571808-2023/>

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 Asia, Russian-Soviet oriental studies"<sup>59</sup>. The Chinese university began operating 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, providing grant support for the implementation of academic mobility programs"<sup>60</sup>. At the same time the issue of joining the Chinese university to the activities

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<sup>59</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>60</sup> BSU expands partnerships with China, two new agreements signed [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshirjaet-partnerskie-svjazi-s-kitaem-podpisany-dva-novyh-soglashenija-598631-2023/>

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 China. The cooperation is carried out in a wide range of areas: joint educational programs, academic exchanges, joint scientific projects. And 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 Grodno State University"<sup>61</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 Brest State Technical University, in November 2023, it signed a cooperation agreement with Anhui Wenda Institute of

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<sup>61</sup> SDSU and Shijiazhuang Engineering College agreed on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grgu-i-shitszjachzhuanskij-inzhenernyi-kolledzh-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-595101-2023/>

Information Engineering. This university, located in the Chinese city of Hefei, became the 15th Chinese educational institution to sign a document on cooperation with Brest State Technical University. 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 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>62</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 scientific work in the field of information technologies, which is financed by the Belarusian Republican Fundamental Research Fund and the National Natural Science Fund of the People's Republic of China. All these facts have shown that the establishment of the China-Belarus Association of Universities has become an important stage in the development of inter-university cooperation, as well as serves for the benefit of the

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<sup>62</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-sotrudnicat-s-institutom-kitajskoi-provintsii-anhoi-602188-2023>

economies of the two countries and the development of the two peoples  
- Belarus and China.

In June 2024, Minsk hosted the second Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of Belarus and China, which was attended by more than 40 heads of universities of the two countries, 18 of whom were rectors of Chinese universities. They discussed the prospects of inter-university cooperation, first of all, inter-university ties. This includes not only training of personnel in innovative specialties, but also a wide range of scientific and technical cooperation and youth exchanges.

For reference, we would like to point out that there are currently more than 700 bilateral agreements between the universities of Belarus and China. More than 200 of them were signed in the last two years alone. Currently, "40 joint educational programs of higher education are being implemented, 12 of which have been launched in the current academic year. Another 20 joint educational programs are under development, including training of personnel of higher scientific qualification"<sup>63</sup>. Also, 13 joint educational and scientific structures - six laboratories, five biological centers and two institutes - are already functioning on the basis of higher education institutions of the two countries.

Speaking about the Second Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of Belarus and China, it should be noted that the discussion of topical issues in the field of conducting promising scientific research and introducing innovative teaching methods to train competitive and professional specialists in the current globalization

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<sup>63</sup> International Innovation Youth Forum will be held in Minsk in 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mezhdunarodnyj-innovatsionnyj-molodezhnyj-forum-projdet-v-minske-v-2025-godu-643825-2024/>

conditions took place within the framework of two sections - "Innovative Models of Cooperation between Universities of China and Belarus" and "Sino-Belarusian Cooperation in Basic Sciences". Also at the forum eight documents were signed, which "provide for assistance in organizing the exchange of scientific information and students, work on joint educational and research projects, as well as informing about training programs, holding scientific and educational events..."<sup>64</sup> . These include: agreements on academic and scientific cooperation between the Belarusian State Medical University and Peking University, on cooperation between the Minsk State Linguistic University and the Shanghai Foreign Languages University; memoranda of understanding between the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and Chongqing Polytechnic University, the Belarusian State Technological University and Liaoning University, the Belarusian State University of Science and Technology, the Belarusian State University of Economics and Technology, the Belarusian State University of Science and Technology, the Belarusian State University of Economics and Technology, and the Belarusian State University of Economics and Technology.

New opportunities for cooperation have also been reached between the Belarusian State University (BSU) and Peking University (PKU). By the way, this Chinese university was founded in 1898 and is a leader among universities in the Celestial Empire. It ranks 12th in the world according to the international rating QS. "The structure of PKU includes faculties - Natural Sciences, Information and Engineering,

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<sup>64</sup> Eight documents on cooperation between universities of Belarus and China signed at the Rectors' Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/vosem-dokumentov-o-sotrudnichestve-mezhdu-vuzami-belarusi-i-kitaia-podpisano-na-forume-rektorov-643857-2024/>



Humanities, Social Sciences, Economics and Management, as well as the Center for Medical Sciences, Interdisciplinary Units and Shenzhen Graduate School<sup>65</sup>. A memorandum of understanding was signed between BSU and PKU in 2019, and a cooperation agreement on a joint education program was signed in May 2022.

As for BSU, it is already implementing 112 contracts and agreements with 73 Chinese partners - universities and research centers. More than three and a half thousand undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students from China are currently studying at BSU. This is about 70 percent of all BSU foreigners. Over the last year and a half the Belarusian university has done a lot in terms of strengthening partnership ties with this country. Several interesting examples can be cited. First, in 2023, the Research Center of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization - a platform for research in the field of international activities, history, law, trade, economics, culture - was opened on the basis of the BSU Faculty of International Relations. Secondly, in November last year within the framework of the first International Congress on Scientific and Technical Exchanges "One Belt, One Road" BSU became one of the founders of the new University Network for Research Cooperation (iUNRC). Thirdly, a joint training program in biotechnology is being successfully implemented with PKU.

Fourth, in March 2024, BSU signed an agreement with the Hainan Center of Excellence in International Education on the implementation of the Belarusian-Chinese project "Institute of Innovative Education" under the auspices of BSU in Sanya. There on its basis it is planned to train citizens of the countries neighboring China

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<sup>65</sup> Interuniversity holiday established in Belarusian and Chinese universities [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mezhuniversitetskij-prazdnik-uchrezhden-v-belorusskom-i-kitaiskom-vuzah-643681-2024/>

and the states-participants of the "One Belt, One Road" project. "This is a kind of ecosystem that involves not only the education of students and training of specialists, but also the development of business initiatives within the framework of Belarusian-Chinese economic and industrial relations through the creation of high-tech products"<sup>66</sup>. This initiative has already been supported by 14 leading universities in China. The new project will be developed in several directions: development of educational and methodical documentation, preparation of Chinese citizens for admission to BSU, career guidance activities, organization of joint teaching of Russian as a foreign language and English with the use of information and communication technologies. At the same time in Sanya BSU signed a memorandum of international cooperation with Sanya Yazhou Bei Scientific and Technical City of Development and Construction Ltd. This agreement was one of the first in the implementation of the project "Institute of Innovative Education" under the auspices of BSU and involves scientific and scientific-technical interaction between the parties in modern areas, including space.

Fifth, in March of this year BSU expanded its cooperation with China in the field of language training of students by signing two agreements with the Second Beijing Institute of Foreign Languages. The first one regulates the opening of joint educational programs, implementation of joint research and educational projects, exchange of information, teaching materials, organization of conferences, seminars, workshops, courses and preparation of joint publications. The second

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<sup>66</sup> Innovations, high-tech cooperation and export of services. BSU on new projects with China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/innovatsii-vysokotekhnologichnoe-sotrudnichestvo-i-eksport-uslug-bgu-o-novyh-proektah-s-kitaem-622125-2024/>

agreement provides for academic exchange of undergraduate, master's and postgraduate students. It is clear that these agreements will contribute to the development of partnerships in education and science, deepening and expanding existing cooperation. Especially since the Second Beijing Foreign Studies University has a vast potential for international cooperation. Suffice it to say that this university offers 14 faculties with 48 undergraduate specialties. There is also a master's program, a postgraduate program and 15 scientific institutes"<sup>67</sup> . So BSU approached the 2nd Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of Belarus and China in full readiness to develop new multi-format ties with Chinese partners.

And already at this forum BSU and PKU established a joint initiative - "Days of Friendship and Unity", which will be celebrated annually on June 25 and 26 and "will be a demonstration of effective and reliable cooperation in various vectors, including the involvement of students and teachers in various scientific, educational, cultural exchange processes"<sup>68</sup> . One of the central events of these "Days" will be the International Innovation Youth Forum, which will be held in 2025. Also within the framework of this forum, the universities of Belarus and China put forward an initiative to establish the Belarusian-Chinese Center for Fundamental Research, which is a fundamentally new step in scientific cooperation, since it is fundamental research in the field of transformation of production that will allow Belarus and China to reach a qualitatively new level.

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<sup>67</sup> BSU will expand cooperation with China in language training of students [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitajem-v-jazykovo-podgotovke-studentov-622894-2024/>

<sup>68</sup> The Forum of Rectors of Leading Universities of Belarus and China started its work in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/rukovoditelei-bolee-40-vuzov-belarusi-i-kitaja-obiedinili-forum-rectorov-veduschih-universitetov-643761-2024/>

Summarizing the results of this forum, it should be noted that the new stage of technological innovation development based on the in-depth development of industrial transformation, development and technology of artificial intelligence requires the implementation of specific measures to strengthen scientific and technological cooperation between Belarus and China. And in this respect, the Rectors' Forum of the two countries becomes an effective platform for multilateral and bilateral interaction to direct efforts towards further development of joint Belarusian-Chinese platforms for creating innovative developments, searching for new opportunities to increase the efficiency of educational and scientific-technical approaches.

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## Belarus-China: from in-depth plans to project implementation

In August 2024, Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (PRC), paid an official visit to Belarus, during which a number of documents were signed, revealing the potential of Sino-Belarusian cooperation in trade, investment, development and deepening of industrial cooperation, scientific and technical cooperation, as well as in-depth plans for the joint development of the provinces of China and the regions of Belarus.

Among the participants of this interregional cooperation we can mention, first of all, the **Minsk region** and the **city of Chongqing**. This city is one of the four largest Chinese centralized cities with more than thirty million people. The in-depth plan includes such projects as "production of reagents and diagnostic equipment, unmanned aerial vehicles, car seats, traditional Chinese medicine products, assembly of industrial robots, and integrated logistics"<sup>69</sup>.

Recall that the capital region of Belarus signed a cooperation agreement with this Chinese city back in 2002. In March 2017, twinning relations were established between the regions. In June last year at the site of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" during the opening of the exhibition of Chinese goods and services, where the thematic exposition of the Chongqing Export Pavilion was shown and where "more than 20 city enterprises on an area of about 300 square meters placed the products of mechanical engineering, including cars,

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<sup>69</sup> From trade and investment to science and cinema. Belarus and China signed a weighty package of documents on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/ot-torgovli-i-investitsij-do-nauki-i-kino-belarus-i-kitaj-podpisali-vesomvi-paket-dokumentov-o-656104-2024>

motorcycles and components"<sup>70</sup> , the parties reached an agreement to intensify cooperation in various areas.

A month later, Minsk Region and the city of Chongqing signed a roadmap for 2023-2024 to develop cooperation in the production of reagents, education, tourism, and logistics. "Another promising direction is the creation of a JV for the production of electric cars with any degree of localization"<sup>71</sup> . Especially since Chongqing's powerful industrial base in the field of mechanical engineering is of interest to Belarusian companies in the context of modernization of production facilities using modern Chinese technologies, creation of new joint automotive assembly plants, import of components and auto parts. "As an equally promising direction, the parties identified cooperation in the field of healthcare development, including the elaboration of the establishment of a research center and production facilities in the field of traditional Chinese medicine on the site of the Great Stone Industrial Park"<sup>72</sup> , interaction at the level of medical institutions.

The development of twinning contacts between the Belarusian capital region and the Chinese city continued in May 2024 in Chongqing, where several important events took place:

- 1) VI West China International Trade and Investment Fair;
- 2) Chongqing Twin Cities Economic Cooperation Forum;
- 3) Belarus-Chongqing Business Forum.

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<sup>70</sup> Zaleskii, B. Potential for the realization of the agreements reached / Boris Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 36.

<sup>71</sup> From medicine to economy and twinning ties. Minsk region and Chongqing signed a road map of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/ot-meditsiny-do-ekonomiki-i-pobratimskih-svjazei-minskaja-oblast-i-chuntsin-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-581301-2023/>

<sup>72</sup> Brantsevich stated about the positive dynamics in trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Chongqing [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/special/economics/view/brantsevich-zajavila-o-pozitivnoj-dinamike-v-torgovo-ekonomicheskom-sotrudnicestve-belarusi-i-581186-2023/>

As for the trade and investment fair, the central platform was given to the guests of honor - Minsk Region and the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", which is located in the Belarusian capital region. Minsk region enterprises producing meat and dairy, bakery, confectionery, alcoholic beverages, cosmetic products were specially invited to participate in the fair. In addition, this pavilion was created to reveal the multifaceted tourist potential and modern educational opportunities of Minsk region and the Republic of Belarus as a whole.

Speaking of the Chongqing Sister Cities Economic Cooperation Forum, it was attended by representatives of 48 cities from 31 countries with which this Chinese city has established sister city relations. The motto of this year's forum was "Deepening regional cooperation and promoting common development". Its participants discussed investment opportunities and new points of contact for economic and technological interregional cooperation, as well as green policy.

Finally, at the business forum "Belarus - Chongqing" 13 agreements on cooperation and commercial contracts for the supply of meat and dairy products, confectionery products totaling about \$31 million were "signed"<sup>73</sup>, and mutual projects on investment cooperation in the spheres of production of robotics, auto components and medical equipment were outlined.

If we talk more specifically about these investment projects, we can name, for example, the company Chongqing Qiteng Robot, which produces wheeled and suspended inspection robots, machines for working in extreme conditions - at high temperatures, in toxic and

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<sup>73</sup> Belarus and Chongqing signed contracts for the supply of meat and dairy products worth about \$31 million [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-chuntsin-podpisali-kontraktv-na-postavku-miasno-molochnoi-produktsii-na-summu-okolo-31-mln-637082-2024/>

flammable industries, and in underground mining. It was founded in 2010 by students from Chongqing Engineering University, and now it has become a leader in emergency safety in China. And today the company "is ready to invest in the opening of its own subsidiary in Belarus in Velikiy Kamen with local assembly and the creation of a server of electronic data storage for specific projects. The company is also ready to establish a joint production with a Belarusian partner"<sup>74</sup> .

Another example: Chengju Chenghua Seating, which produces car seats. This Chinese factory "is considering the establishment of a joint production in Belarus to meet the requirements of our country [Belarus]"<sup>75</sup> . It is possible that this manufacturer will enter into cooperation with the BELJI plant. In May 2024, in Chongqing, the Belarusian side got acquainted with medical equipment from another Chinese manufacturer, Zybio, which "specializes in research and development of reagents and equipment for in vitro diagnostics, immunoanalysis and molecular diagnostics, hematology and microbiology"<sup>76</sup> . As a result, Minsk region will send specialists to Chongqing to thoroughly study the Zybio technique and its operation in hospital conditions. And if the results are positive, new Chinese medical equipment will appear in the hospitals of Minsk region.

Returning to the plan of in-depth cooperation between Minsk Region and Chongqing, it should be noted that the Belarusian region

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<sup>74</sup> In the "Great Stone" may appear the enterprise for the production of robots [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-mozhet-pojavitsja-predpriatie-po-proizvodstvu-robotov-636330-2024/>

<sup>75</sup> Turchin familiarized with the production of automotive components in Chongqing [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/special/society/view/turchin-poznakomilsja-s-proizvodstvom-avtokomponentov-v-chuntsine-636362-2024/>

<sup>76</sup> Minsk region medics are planned to be sent to Chongqing to study new equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/medikov-minskoj-oblasti-planirujut-napravit-v-chuntsin-dlja-izuchenija-novogo-oborudovanija-636079-2024/>



has been actively increasing trade turnover with the PRC in recent years. In particular, at the end of the first half of 2023, the parties' trade turnover exceeded \$1.25 billion. "Minsk region exports to China poultry meat, dairy products, frozen beef, wood products, flax fiber <...>. Automatic information processing machines and their units, auto parts, telephone sets, television receivers are imported from China"<sup>77</sup> . With the appearance of the new plan, it seems that interregional cooperation between Minsk region and Chongqing will soon be filled with new concrete projects to develop production cooperation and attract high-tech competencies for the realization of investment projects at the enterprises of Minsk region, establishing direct interaction with Chinese partners.

This summer, Minsk Region took a new step in cooperation with another region of China - **Guangdong Province** - by signing a roadmap for cooperation, which marks a new period in the relations between the two regions. The parties, which have been closely cooperating for more than ten years, believe that "the signing of the roadmap is an important signal for the business of our two countries"<sup>78</sup> . After all, today it is necessary to look for new points of contact. In particular, in the field of agriculture, automotive industry, medicine.

For example, interesting projects in this regard may be realized in the Belarusian capital region with the Chinese agroholding Guangdong Agribusiness Group Corporation, which is engaged in large-scale trade, rubber and sugar cane production. The holding's

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<sup>77</sup> Minsk region and Chinese Chongqing will determine the road map of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-i-kitajskij-chuntsin-opredeljat-dorozhnuju-kartu-sotrudnichestva-580980-2023/>

<sup>78</sup> Turchin and the governor of the Chinese province of Guangdong signed a road map [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/turchin-i-gubernator-kitajskoj-provintsii-guandun-podpisali-dorozhnuju-kartu-651136-2024/>

enterprises also specialize in meat and dairy cattle breeding, grain cultivation, and oil production. "The corporation has a vocational college where students are trained in construction specialties, technologies. Also agroholding has 38 hospitals, where, among others, the company's employees are served"<sup>79</sup>. So all these areas can become promising in terms of cooperation with Belarusian partners.

Among the possible partners of Minshchina enterprises from Guangdong Province are also the electric car manufacturing plant GAC Aion and Guangzhou Baiyunshan Zhongyi Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. In the first case, production is carried out on a full cycle and includes research and development, as well as the sale of products and after-sales service. In the second case, this manufacturer produces drugs to improve eyesight, diabetes drugs, recovery pills used for brain ischemia and consequences of this disease. Representatives of Minsk region have already discussed the prospects and options of cooperation with these Chinese partners. So let's hope that these negotiations will soon be followed by concrete actions.

The People's Republic of China is a strategic partner of another Belarusian region - **Mogilev**, with which the development of cooperation, thanks to systematic work, continues to only deepen, reaching a new level of interaction. Suffice it to say that over the past ten years, exports of goods from this Belarusian region to China have grown 18 times. "Beef and poultry meat, dairy products, woodworking products, carbon black, flax, chocolate, various waters, strong alcoholic beverages remain the main export items from Mogilev region to

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<sup>79</sup> From electric cars to endocrine raw materials: the delegation of Minsk region visits Guangdong province [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/ot-elektrokarov-do-endokrinnogo-svrija-delegatsija-minskoj-oblasti-poseschaet-provintsiyu-guandun-651244-2024/>

China"<sup>80</sup>. In addition, today three enterprises of Mogilev region have permission to supply products to the Celestial Empire: open joint-stock companies "Babushkina Krynka", Mogilev and Bobruisk meat processing plants. The basis of Chinese imports this year are acrylic polymers, complex synthetic yarns, glue and adhesives, opoks and pallets for metal foundry production, electric transformers, household appliances, cars. "In January - April 2024, trade turnover between Mogilev region and China amounted to \$57.4 million - growth rate of 102.2% to the same period of 2023. Export of services in January - April 2024 amounted to \$867.5 thousand (growth rate of over 193%) The basis of exports was education services, the specific weight of which is almost 81%"<sup>81</sup>.

At the interregional level, the Belarusian eastern region is currently actively cooperating with such Chinese provinces as Henan, Jiangsu, Hunan, Shaanxi and the city of Tianjin. Besides, at the level of cities and districts of the Mogilev region more than ten documents of international character have been concluded with the regions of China. The youngest partner of Mogilev region in the Celestial Empire was **Tianjin** - one of the four cities of central subordination in 2019. It is a major port hub in the north of China, which has established communication and transportation routes with more than 500 ports of other countries. It is a city with an integrated production chain in many industries and extensive educational and scientific resources, with more than 50 universities.

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<sup>80</sup> Export of goods from the Mogilev region to China has grown 18 times in the last ten years [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/eksport-tovarov-iz-mogilevskoj-oblasti-v-kitaj-za-poslednie-desjat-let-vyros-v-18-raz-575841-2023>

<sup>81</sup> A platform for entering the realization of common projects: Belarusian-Chinese business forum was held in Mogilev [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/ploschadka-dlja-vyhoda-na-realizatsiju-obschih-proektov-belorusko-kitaiskij-biznes-forum-proshel-v-643622-2024/>

In March 2023, the parties signed the Action Plan for the development of cooperation for 2023-2025. And in May last year, Tianjin hosted the Mogilev Region Week. Then, participating in the forum "Tianjin - Gateway to China", more than twenty enterprises of Mogilev region showed their export potential. As a result of these negotiations, agreements were reached for the supply of dairy and meat products, commercial offers were received for the export of Belarusian lumber, and contacts were established for further cooperation in importing goods from China to the trade networks of Mogilev region. At the same time the documents on cooperation between Mogilev and the new Binhai district of Tianjin, FEZ "Mogilev" and TEDA economic zone, Mogilev branch of the BelCCI and the Chinese Council for the Promotion of International Trade of Tianjin were signed. Agreements were also reached on the establishment of a joint production facility for milk powder processing in Tianjin"<sup>82</sup>.

A year and a bit later, in June 2024, a response action - Tianjin City Week in the Mogilev region - took place:

- 1) exhibition of Chinese products of the organizations of this city;
- 2) Regional Belarusian-Chinese Business Forum "Mogilev Region and the City of Tianjin: 5 Years of Cooperation";
- 3) Mogilev-Tianjin Education Cooperation Forum.

In addition, the parties signed a "road map for the development of cooperation between Mogilev and the new Binhai district in the fields of economy, trade, culture, education, tourism for 2024-2025; an agreement between the administrative committee of the port free trade

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<sup>82</sup> Mogilev region will present construction and industrial investment projects at the exhibition in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-predstavit-stroitelnye-i-promyshlennye-investproekty-na-vystavke-v-shanhae-595292-2023/>

zone Tianjin PRC and the administration of the free economic zone "Mogilev"; an agreement on cooperation between the Tianjin Museum and the Mogilev Regional Art Museum named after P.V. Maslennikov. P.V. Maslennikov"<sup>83</sup>.

During these events, the parties outlined their proposals for joint cooperation in various sectors. For example, Mogilev region believes that at this stage of relations it is advisable to move from simple trade to deeper interaction and the creation of joint projects. If we take cattle breeding, Chinese partners can create new complexes of meat direction in Mogilev region for further processing of beef and supply to the Chinese market. "The second direction is minerals: The [Mogilev] region is rich in deposits of peat, sapropel, trepel, the use of which in combination with mineral and organic fertilizers is an effective means of stimulating plant development and increasing crop yields"<sup>84</sup>. After all, this natural mineral supplement is used to enrich the diet of cattle to replenish the missing macro- and microelements in feed. Taking into account this potential, Mogilev residents are ready to propose a project for the production of fodder additives, organic soils and fertilizers.

Another interesting proposal was voiced at the business forum "Mahiliou Region and the City of Tianjin: 5 Years of Cooperation". The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) will assist the enterprises of the parties in organizing interregional trade in industrial and agricultural goods. "To this end, it is planned to use the relevant elements of the electronic ecosystem of the BUTB, which will allow

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<sup>83</sup> Business forum, exhibitions and competitions. Tianjin City Week starts in Mogilev region [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/biznes-forum-vystavki-i-sorevnovanija-nedelja-goroda-tjantszin-startuet-v-mogilevskoj-oblasti-643224-2024/>

<sup>84</sup> "Find ways of interaction". Tianjin City Week takes place in Mogilev [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/najti-puti-vzaimodejstvia-v-mogileve-prohodit-nedelja-goroda-tjantszin-643563-2024/>

Belarusian and Chinese companies, taking into account the peculiarities of their sales and procurement policies, to conclude transactions either in the course of classical in-session trading or use the exchange's B2B platform, operating on the principle of a marketplace with an integrated exchange mechanism"<sup>85</sup> . Based on the profile of Chinese partners, priority will be given to exports of Belarusian meat and dairy products and vegetable oils to Tianjin and, in the future, to other cities within the Bohai Economic Zone. The Belarusian market will be supplied with polymer packaging materials, diesel generators, industrial paints, sheet metal, veterinary drugs and other products in demand in the industrial and agricultural sectors of the country. To all appearances, cooperation in these areas will be very fruitful.

Another of the main regions of Belarus in terms of developing cooperation with China, both in the economic and social spheres, is **Gomel Region**. Suffice it to say that over the past five years, the trade turnover of this southeastern Belarusian region with China has almost quadrupled. "The basis of exports to the Celestial Empire is wood pulp, timber, meat, dairy and confectionery products. Transportation, educational and tourist services are developing. According to the results of the past [2023] year, 44 enterprises of Gomel region supplied their products to China"<sup>86</sup> . And in the future there are good prospects for cooperation in industrial production, transportation and logistics, agriculture. For example, twenty enterprises of Gomel region have already been accredited to supply food products to the Chinese market,

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<sup>85</sup> BUTB will help to simplify trade between Mogilev region and Chinese Tianjin [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/butb-pomozhet-uprostit-torgovlju-mezhdu-mogilevskoj-oblastiju-i-kitajskim-tianszinem-643724-2024/>

<sup>86</sup> For five years the trade turnover of the Gomel region with China has grown four times [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/za-piat-let-tovarooborot-gomelskoj-oblasti-s-kitaem-vyros-v-chetyre-raza-640488-2024/>

"including 9 milk processing, 7 meat processing enterprises and 4 food processing enterprises"<sup>87</sup>. And they are ready to increase the supply of beef, meat and edible by-products of poultry, whole-milk products, condensed milk and cream, whey powder.

In addition, Homiel enterprises are ready to supply lumber and finished woodworking products to China. Other areas of cooperation are also opening up. In particular, on complex mineral fertilizers, as well as on other projects for possible joint implementation. Among them are a logistics hub on the basis of Gomel airport, production of plywood furniture and other products on the basis of Gomeldrev, creation of new production facilities on the premises of the free economic zone (FEZ) Gomel-Raton. Moreover, there is an interesting example in the FEZ - production unitary enterprise "Alkopak", which produces medical products and which "has been cooperating with Chinese manufacturers of equipment, spare parts, technological equipment for more than 20 years. At the moment 80-90% of injection molding machines are Chinese-made. <...> The number of contacts, orders, purchased equipment is increasing. We have built up friendly relations with Chinese manufacturing companies"<sup>88</sup>. So the time is coming for the first residents to appear in the FEZ from the Celestial Empire, for whom attractive conditions have already been created.

The southeastern region of Belarus is actively building relations with Chinese partners in the humanitarian sphere. For example, "more than 500 Chinese students study at universities in Homiel Region. They

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<sup>87</sup> Accreditation for the supply of food products to China has 20 enterprises of Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/akkreditatsiju-na-postavki-pischevoj-produktsii-v-kitaj-imejut-20-predpriyatij-gomelskoi-oblasti-640508-2024/>

<sup>88</sup> Xie Xiaoyun: FEZ "Gomel-Raton" has created attractive conditions for residents [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/se-sjaojun-v-sez-gomel-raton-sozdany-privilekatelnye-uslovija-dlja-rezidentov-640651-2024/>

choose different specialties for themselves here and have already gained a lot"<sup>89</sup>. Gomel State University named after F. Skaryna (GSU) cooperates with 17 Chinese universities. In addition, the Confucius Institute has been established and is successfully functioning at GSU and joint educational programs are being implemented. In general, 332 students from China are currently studying at Gomel State University. An experimental project has also been implemented - students from China study in English in four specialties"<sup>90</sup>.

As for the cooperation of Gomel region with specific partners from the Celestial Empire, at the beginning of 2024 it "signed documents on bilateral cooperation with four Chinese regions - the autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia (2011) and Xinjiang Uygur (2016), Sichuan (2015) and Jiangsu (2016) provinces"<sup>91</sup>, and ten agreements were adopted - at the level of cities.

In June 2024, another new partner of the Belarusian **southeastern** region - **Hebei Province** - became apparent. During the visit of the official delegation of Homiel Region to this province, contracts, memoranda and agreements with Chinese partners were signed, including the plan of events and exchanges for 2024-2025 between the region and the province. The Belarusian side, interested in the development of this interaction, outlined three steps on the way to increasing trade, economic and investment cooperation. "These are

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<sup>89</sup> Trade, education, tourism. Xie Xiaoyun on the potential of cooperation between Gomel region and regions of China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/torgovlja-obrazovanie-turizm-se-sjaoiun-o-potentsiale-sotrudnichestva-gomelskoj-oblasti-i-regionov-640506-2024/>

<sup>90</sup> Xie Xiaoyun on cooperation between Belarus and China in education: it is an intellectual base for all spheres [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/se-sjaoiun-o-sotrudnichestve-belarusi-i-knr-v-obrazovanii-eto-intellektualnaja-baza-dlja-vseh-sfer-640698-2024/>

<sup>91</sup> Zalessky, B. Belarus - China: new opportunities. Strategic interaction in the era of exemplary partnership relations / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 12.



deliveries to Hebei of quality food products of Homel producers, realization of joint industrial projects with the preferences of the free economic zone "Homel-Raton", as well as joint investment projects in agriculture"<sup>92</sup>. In turn, the Chinese region is interested to cooperate in machine building, logistics, supply of raw materials of traditional Chinese medicine, as well as to purchase Homiel agricultural products, chemical fertilizers, goods of meat and dairy industry.

Within the framework of the Langfang International Trade and Economic Fair, which was held in Hebei Province in these June days, a number of enterprises of Homiel Region were represented at the Belarusian stand. As a result of meetings and negotiations at this forum in Langfang, domestic exporters - Comintern, Gomel Chemical Plant, Rogachev Milk Canning Plant (MKK) - replenished their portfolios of deals. In particular, "Rogachev MCC signed a memorandum for the supply of products worth about 1 million yuan and an agreement for more than 7 million yuan. Gomel Chemical Plant's memorandum was concluded for nearly RMB 12.5 million and Comintern's deal for RMB 14.7 million."<sup>93</sup>. In addition, the headquarters of Great Wall Haval - the factory for the production of Haval brand cars - discussed the possibility of assembling these cars on the premises of FEZ Gomel-Raton.

Continuing the theme of participation of Gomel region representatives at exhibitions in the Celestial Empire, we would like to remind that in November 2023, at the 6th China International Import

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<sup>92</sup> Trade, joint industrial projects, agro-industrial complex. Krupko on cooperation between Gomel region and Hebei province [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/torgovlja-sovmestnye-promproektv-apk-krupko-o-sotrudnichestve-gomelskoj-oblasti-i-provintsii-hebej-641393-2024/>

<sup>93</sup> Gomel enterprises signed new contracts and agreements with Chinese partners [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskie-predprijatija-podpisali-novye-dogovory-i-soglashenija-s-kitajskimi-partnerami-641709-2024/>

Expo in Shanghai during the Day of Gomel region, documents on export supplies worth \$85 million dollars were signed. In addition, an agreement on cooperation to attract investments between the FEZ "Homiel-Raton" and the Sichuan Association for Promotion of Economic and Trade Cooperation "One Belt - One Road" was adopted at that time, as well as "a document of intent was signed to establish twinning ties between Zhlobin district of Homiel region and the city of Baotou of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region"<sup>94</sup>.

All these facts show that the variety of partnership and twinning ties of Minsk, Mogilev and Gomel regions in China is only gaining momentum, developing intensively and fruitfully, emphasizing huge prospects for the whole Belarusian-Chinese interregional all-weather strategic partnership.

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<sup>94</sup> Documents for \$85 million signed by representatives of the Gomel region at the exhibition of imports in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dokumenty-na-85-mln-podpisali-predstaviteli-gomelskoj-oblasti-na-vystavke-importa-v-shanhae-598283-2023/>

## **Belarus-Pakistan: Potential for Sustainable Partnership Growth**

Pakistan is one of Belarus's most important partners in Asia, which fits into Belarus's strategy of diversifying exports and developing interaction with the countries of the far arc. Pakistan is a friendly state that has a good industrial potential and market. The population of this country is over 200 million people. Pakistan has a well-developed agriculture, which makes it possible to organize cooperation in the supply of engineering and processing products.

In 2024, Belarus and Pakistan celebrated the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Over the years, this multilateral partnership has shown that the Belarusian side is committed to developing relations of full-fledged strategic partnership, thanks to numerous initiatives and cooperation between Minsk and Islamabad. Suffice it to say that to date, the two sides have already adopted about 90 bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding in such areas as trade, agriculture, science and technology, and education. The interaction between Belarus and Pakistan has been developing especially intensively in the last ten years, when the two countries adopted the main bilateral documents - the Islamabad Declaration on Pakistan-Belarus Partnership (May 29, 2015), the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Belarus (August 10, 2015), the Joint Statement of the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the President of the Republic of Belarus (October 5, 2016).

As for the Belarusian-Pakistani trade and economic relations, "over the past few years, the volume of trade between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has fluctuated between 50

and 65 million dollars"<sup>95</sup> . But already in 2021 the trade turnover between them increased by more than 77 percent and exceeded \$92 million with a positive balance of \$63.6 million for the Belarusian side. Belarusian exports were based on "tractors and spare parts, potash fertilizers, specific goods, synthetic yarns, cellulose, dairy products, medicines, diesel engines"<sup>96</sup> .

In the coming years, Minsk and Islamabad intend to make the necessary efforts to bring their partnership to an even higher level. As for the Belarusian side, it intends to promote its goods and services in the Pakistani market in two ways. The first is to increase trade in traditional goods - automobiles, quarry and construction equipment, instrumentation, woodworking, meat and dairy, chemical, pharmaceutical and pulp and paper industries. The second way - supplies of new commodity items - metal products, flax fiber and yarn, as well as "including consumer goods, such as soft cheeses, perfumes and cosmetics, household appliances, children's goods and watches"<sup>97</sup> .

We would like to add that over the past nine years, the parties have already held seven meetings of the joint Belarusian-Pakistani commission for trade and economic cooperation. And in general, there are already "many mechanisms of bilateral contacts between the two states, including joint working groups (JWGs) on cooperation in industry, agriculture, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, as well as science

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<sup>95</sup> Trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade\\_and\\_economic\\_bilateral\\_relations/](https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade_and_economic_bilateral_relations/)

<sup>96</sup> Ambassador of Pakistan: agriculture and industry are our key points of interest in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-pakistana-selskoe-hozjajstvo-i-promyshlennost-nashi-kljuchevye-tochki-interesa-v-belarusi-494952-2022/>

<sup>97</sup> National Marketing Center on the peculiarities of promotion of Belarusian goods in the market of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/natsionalnyi-tsentr-marketinga-ob-osobennostjah-prodvizhenija-belorusskih-tovarov-na-rynok-pakistana-8188/>

and technology"<sup>98</sup> . In addition, Minsk and Islamabad maintain close interaction between business communities in the form of joint platforms, including business council, business and investment, textile and agricultural forums.

Speaking about trade and economic cooperation, we would like to emphasize that the economies of Belarus and Pakistan are mutually complementary. For example, in 2023, "the main items of Belarusian exports to Pakistan are tractors, potash fertilizers, synthetic fibers, tires, tourniquets of synthetic threads, baby food (dry mixes)"<sup>99</sup> . As for Pakistani supplies to Belarus, they are rice, food products, leather goods, fabrics, and sports equipment.

In January 2023, Minsk hosted the sixth meeting of the joint Belarusian-Pakistani commission on trade and economic cooperation, at which the parties proposed to intensify bilateral interaction, both in terms of increasing trade turnover and investment cooperation, as "the two countries have good prospects for transition from simple trade to industrial cooperation and the creation of joint productions in areas of mutual interest"<sup>100</sup> . In particular, the two countries reached an agreement to expand cooperation in a number of areas - machine building, agriculture, science, education, health care. Thus, Belarus is interested in increasing supplies of industrial products - Belarusian passenger, municipal, agricultural, quarry machinery, textile products -

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<sup>98</sup> Khan, S.H. Diversity of Pakistan / S.H. Khan // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/interview/view/mnogoobrazie-pakistana-posol-o-nezavisimosti-i-sotrudnichestve-islamabada-s-minskom-8853/>

<sup>99</sup> Belarus and Pakistan celebrate the 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-otmechajut-30-letie-ustanovlenija-dipotnoshenij-613420-2024/>

<sup>100</sup> Belarus is interested in supplying Pakistan with agro-industrial complex products and agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-v-pakistan-produktsii-apk-i-selhoztehniki-544338-2023>

to this South Asian country. "Partnership in agriculture is among the priorities. This is not only the readiness to expand supplies of Belarusian food products, but also products for livestock breeding: mixed fodder, protein supplements, veterinary drugs. The establishment of a permanent exhibition center of Belarus in Pakistan will help promote agro-industrial products more actively..."<sup>101</sup> . Another mutually beneficial area is pharmaceuticals, as Belarus is interested in exporting medicines to Pakistan and is already ready to consider the possibility of establishing joint pharmaceutical production facilities.

At the 6th meeting of the joint commission, the parties specifically also discussed opportunities for cooperation in the field of science and high technologies. These include nano- and biotechnologies, laser optoelectronics, information and communication technologies, aerospace and geoinformation systems. In this regard, in March 2023, the national exposition of Belarus at the International Trade and Industry Fair was organized in the Pakistani city of Karachi. It should be recalled that at a similar exhibition in November 2021 in Karachi at the collective stand of the State Committee for Science and Technology "about 60 scientific, technical and innovative developments were presented. The exhibits in the field of surface treatment and modification, chemical technologies and materials, physical materials science and new materials were shown by the institutions of the Ministry of Education, as well as in a distance format

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<sup>101</sup> Belarus and Pakistan agreed to expand cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-dogovorilis-o-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-544373-2023>

by the organizations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus"<sup>102</sup> .

Finally, regional cooperation is gradually becoming another promising area of Belarusian-Pakistani partnership. A number of agreements and memorandums between cities, provinces, and regions of the two countries have already been signed. For example, Hrodna Region has a great potential for cooperation with Pakistan among Belarusian regions. "The province of Sindh and the city of Karachi, which is the industrial center of Pakistan, are very important strategic partners. A cooperation agreement was signed between the city of Karachi and Grodno Region in 2015"<sup>103</sup> . And the parties today are ready to renew the work of the agreement and resume relations in all sectors: economy, business, culture, education. For example, baby food produced by Bellakt has already proven itself in Pakistan, and these supplies can be increased. And during the existence of Grodno Medical University 122 Pakistani students have already received education here. So the parties will actively continue their work to develop points of contact. After all, this is only the beginning.

Another interesting idea that relates to Belarusian-Pakistani regional interaction is that nine special economic zones are planned to be built in Pakistan in the near future, four of which are in a high degree of readiness. All of them are located in the Pakistan-China economic corridor and can be used to implement joint Pakistan-Belarus projects.

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<sup>102</sup> Zalesky, B.L. To promote domestic technologies / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XX Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2023", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 24.

<sup>103</sup> Ambassador: Hrodna region has a huge potential for cooperation with Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/posol-grodnenskaja-oblast-imeet-ogromnyj-potentsial-dlia-sotrudnichestva-s-pakistanom-515738-2022>

Thus, it can be predicted that partnership ties between the regions of Belarus and Pakistan may soon turn into new promising projects.

And in 2024, the two sides are already discussing a new roadmap for Belarus-Pakistan cooperation for 2025-2027, which will provide a comprehensive framework for strengthening bilateral ties and which focuses on providing "assistance in trade and investment, developing joint research and development, and expanding educational and cultural exchanges. The roadmap emphasizes the importance of cooperation in sectors such as agriculture, e-commerce, science and technology, and education"<sup>104</sup>.

Among the planned activities of the new roadmap, emphasis will be placed, among other things, on the development of industrial cooperation between the two countries with a view to its further intensification. In this context, we would like to remind that the interaction with the Pakistani side in this area is being developed within the framework of the memorandum of understanding signed in 2015 between the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Industry and Production of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. And now "based on the results of January-June 2024, there is a positive dynamics of trade turnover of the enterprises of the Ministry of Industry [of Belarus] with Pakistan. The growth rate of exports to this region exceeded 180% compared to the same period last year"<sup>105</sup>. Belarusian exporters are ready to continue supplying a wide range of machinery - agricultural, cargo, municipal, and road vehicles.

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<sup>104</sup> Khan, S.H. The rapprochement of Minsk and Islamabad / S.H. Khan // [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/interview/view/sblizhenie-minska-i-islamabada-sadzhad-hajder-han-rasskazal-o-novyh-initsiativah-i-vizitah-9357/>

<sup>105</sup> The Ministry of Industry is ready to provide all possible assistance in the development of cooperation between Belarus and Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/minprom-gotov-okazat-vsemernoje-sodejstvie-v-razvitijsotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-pakistana-655788-2024/>



For example, Minsk Tractor Plant (MTZ) plans to increase sales of its machines to the Pakistani market. It should be reminded that "the average annual volume of sales to Pakistan is about 2-2.5 thousand tractors"<sup>106</sup>. But recently, the tractor manufacturers, by agreement with partners from Pakistan, have begun to modernize the technical part exclusively according to the requirements of the end user. For this purpose back in August this year MTW signed agreements on strategic cooperation with Pakistani companies Shahzad Trade Link and HBL Zarai Services, which secured "agreements on organization of promotion, sales and service of BELARUS tractors with power over 100 horsepower in the market of Pakistan"<sup>107</sup>. They will also create platforms for demonstration of Belarusian tractors and mobile service of agricultural machinery in various provinces of Pakistan through the existing dealer network with the involvement of new companies. In addition, MTZ is working on the issue of setting up an assembly plant in this South Asian country, as "joint and assembly plants are a global trend. Local legislative acts are being developed for this, which stimulate this process"<sup>108</sup>. And in the near future, to all appearances, the parties, having completed the relevant formal procedures, will come to a final decision on this issue.

As for other topical aspects of Belarusian-Pakistani interaction, it can be noted that scientists of the two countries also plan to develop

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<sup>106</sup> Minsk Tractor Plant plans to increase the volume of machinery supplies to Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/minskii-traktornii-zavod-planiruet-narastit-objemy-postavok-tehniki-v-pakistan-655685-2024/>

<sup>107</sup> MTZ signed agreements on strategic cooperation with companies from Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/mtz-podpisal-soglasenija-o-strategicheskom-sotrudnichestve-s-kompanijami-iz-pakistana-653533-2024/>

<sup>108</sup> MTZ is considering the issue of creating an assembly plant in Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/mtz-prorabatvvaet-vopros-sozdaniia-sborochnogo-proizvodstva-v-pakistane-655686-2024/>

cooperation in priority areas. In August 2024, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Academy of Sciences of Pakistan stated the need to update the agreement on scientific and technical cooperation, which was signed in May 2015, to include the most relevant and priority areas for both countries. Especially since "Pakistan is interested in developing cooperation with scientists from Belarus in such areas as artificial intelligence, laser technologies and technologies for agriculture"<sup>109</sup>. The goal of these changes is the same: to present concrete results of joint innovation activities of representatives of the scientific and technological sphere of Belarus and Pakistan in the near future.

At the 7th meeting of the Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation held in Islamabad in September this year, the two sides reaffirmed their intentions to develop and intensify cooperation in various areas of economy. The areas in question were industry, agriculture, education, pharmaceuticals, trade and investment, as well as transportation and communications. "A memorandum on cooperation in the field of textile industry was signed. At the intergovernmental level, the foundation has been laid for cooperation in a number of areas - in standardization, environmental protection, light industry, transport and communications, and disaster management. The relevant bilateral documents will be signed in the near future"<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>109</sup> Academies of Sciences of Belarus and Pakistan will cooperate in the spheres of technologies for agro-industrial complex, lasers and AI [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/societv/view/akademii-nauk-belarusi-i-pakistana-budut-sotrudnicat-v-sferah-tehnologii-dlja-apk-lazerov-i-ii-655196-2024/>

<sup>110</sup> Education, pharmaceuticals, industry. Belarus and Pakistan have outlined the spheres of interaction [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/societv/view/obrazovanie-farmatsevtika-promyshlennost-belarus-i-pakistan-nametili-sfery-vzaimodeistviia-663606-2024/>

Another area that will be continued in the partnership between Belarus and Pakistan is exhibition activities. We have already mentioned above that in March 2023, the national exposition of Belarus at the International Trade and Industry Fair was organized in the Pakistani city of Karachi. More than 350 companies from different countries and more than 50 thousand visitors annually take part in this specialized exhibition forum in South Asia. The main sections of the exhibition are agriculture, automobile industry, machine-tool construction, power engineering, metallurgical and mining industry, construction, petrochemistry. 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>111</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>112</sup>. In addition, the Materials Research Center

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<sup>111</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>112</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-mezhdunarodnoy-vystavke-inter/>

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 starters for balancing feed additive regulate microbiological processes in cows' stomachs. The biopreservative consists of a mixture of specially selected and lyophilically dried strains of lactic acid bacteria - lactococci. It is intended for silage of plant raw materials - annual and perennial cereals and legumes.

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

The Belarusian State University (BSU) was among the active participants of this exposition and presented 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>113</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 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>114</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

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<sup>113</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-bgu-na-mezhdunarodnoy-vystavke-international-trade-and-industry-fair--d/>

<sup>114</sup> Belarus will present developments in the field of electronic ceramics and nanotechnology [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/news/569/107455/>

the Pakistani audience. Negotiations were also held to sign contracts on supplies of Belarusian goods and services to Pakistan.

And another interesting fact: at the end of October 2024 in the same Pakistani city of Karachi will be held the fifth International Textile and Leather Exhibition TEXPO-2024, dedicated to the demonstration of textile and leather products from environmentally friendly materials, where "more than 300 local manufacturers will present their textile and leather products, and about 50 participants from around the world - the latest technological advances and environmentally friendly products. The largest Pakistani companies that supply fabrics and leather for world-famous brands are also participating"<sup>115</sup>. The Pakistani side invited Belarusian companies interested in establishing contacts with top local manufacturers to take part in the event and will assist in visiting Pakistani textile and leather industrial enterprises.

All this suggests that this South Asian country is an important trade partner for 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, and cellulose. Overall, the two countries have good potential for further sustainable growth and continue to work hard to maintain the active dynamics of bilateral interaction in order to more fully utilize the available opportunities for cooperation.

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<sup>115</sup> Ecologically clean textiles and leather. Belarusian companies were invited to the specialized exhibition in Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/ekologichieski-chistvi-tekstil-i-kozha-na-profilnuju-vystavku-v-pakistane-priglasili-belorusskie-656923-2024/>

## **Belarus-Azerbaijan: Specifics of New Frontiers of Cooperation**

In 2023, Belarus and Azerbaijan celebrated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Despite new geopolitical challenges, the dynamics of Belarusian-Azerbaijani interaction continues to develop today at all levels - state, governmental, sectoral, and regional. After all, over these decades the parties "remained committed to such values as goodness, dignity and honesty, and were aimed at achieving concrete results"<sup>116</sup>. These qualities have been especially evident in recent years, when the strategic partnership between the two republics has become even more powerful to achieve new frontiers of cooperation. Let us cite specific facts.

In May 2023, Baku hosted the 13th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Azerbaijani Commission (IGC) on Trade and Economic Cooperation, during which the parties outlined the prospects for bilateral interaction, and mutually beneficial economic ties were named the flagship of further development between Belarus and Azerbaijan. It should be noted that Minsk and Baku, noting the high dynamics of trade turnover in 2023, confirmed that "at the end of the first quarter of this year, this indicator increased by almost 55% and exceeded \$8 million"<sup>117</sup>. In particular, Belarus has significantly increased exports to Azerbaijan of transformers, cables, other electrical products, woodworking products, as well as food products. At the same

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<sup>116</sup> Aliyev: Azerbaijan and Belarus agreed to increase trade and economic cooperation and industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aliev-azerbajdzhan-i-belarus-dogovorilis-naraschivat-torgovo-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-i-634667-2024/>

<sup>117</sup> Efimov: the visit of the Belarusian delegation to Azerbaijan will contribute to the intensification of industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/efimov-vizit-delegatsii-belarusi-v-azerbajdzhan-posposobstvuet-intensifikatsii-promyshlennogo-566760-2023/>

time, the Belarusian side sees prospects in organizing supplies of construction, municipal, railway, emergency and rescue and various types of special equipment, as well as elevators to this South Caucasus country and setting up their assembly production for the corresponding consumption volumes.

And at the 13th IGC meeting the parties adopted a number of documents on the development of cooperation, including in the field of industry. For example, a road map for the establishment of an assembly plant in Azerbaijan was signed in the field of elevator equipment for 2023-2024 between OJSC "Mogilevliftmash" and Ulu Geycha (Baku). A dealer agreement was also signed between MAZ OJSC and TURAN (Baku), providing for the promotion of MAZ products in the Azerbaijani market and their service. Another document is an agreement on supply of electrical products between V.I. Kozlov MEETZ OJSC (Minsk) and AZMETZLLC LLC (Baku)"<sup>118</sup>.

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

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<sup>118</sup> Industry and sport. Belarus and Azerbaijan signed documents on the development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/promyshlennost-i-sport-belarus-i-azerbajdzhan-podpisali-dokumenty-o-razvitii-sotrudnichestva-566641-2023>



produced machinery, including grain harvesters and modern passenger vehicles (electric buses) meeting high environmental standards"<sup>119</sup> .

The 13th meeting of the IGC outlined key tasks in this context in order to develop the assembly of Belarusian machinery at this Azerbaijani enterprise. In particular, "it is necessary to expand the range of machinery assembled at PA Ganja Automobile Plant, including the resumption of joint production of special machinery on MAZ chassis and joint production of electric passenger vehicles. For this purpose, it is necessary to determine the models and quantities based on the existing full catalog of Belarusian vehicles and to form an appropriate order for the Azerbaijani enterprise"<sup>120</sup> . Another task is to continue work on systematically increasing the production of tractors from Belarusian tractor kits at the Ganja plant, including for third-country markets.

Within the framework of the 13th IGC meeting, the parties also paid much attention to such a promising area of bilateral cooperation as agriculture and food. It should be recalled that in September 2021, "the first meeting of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani Working Group on Agriculture and Food Security was held, where the issues of cooperation in the field of crop and livestock breeding, food security, agrarian education, expansion of trade and economic ties in the field of agriculture... were discussed..."<sup>121</sup> . In May 2023, the parties

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<sup>119</sup> Mutual trade and industrial cooperation. Petrishenko on the prospects of cooperation with Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vzaimnaja-torgovlja-i-promkooperatsija-petrishenko-o-perspektivah-sotrudnichestva-s-azerbajdzhanom-566632-2023>

<sup>120</sup> Petrishenko: it is necessary to expand the nomenclature of Belarusian machinery assembly in Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/petrishenko-nuzhno-rasshirit-nomenklaturu-sborki-belorusskoj-tehniki-v-azerbajdzhane-566633-2023>

<sup>121</sup> Zaleski, B. International Cooperation and Media. Part IV. Collection of articles / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 110.

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

The decisions of the 13th IPC meeting also reflected other topical areas of Belarusian-Azerbaijani interaction. Thus, the Ministry of Sport and Tourism of Belarus and the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan signed a program of cooperation in the field of physical culture and sport for 2023-2025. In order to further expand interregional ties, new interregional cooperation agreements will be elaborated and the number of twin cities between the two countries will be expanded.

A year later, in June 2024, the Roadmap for the Development of Cooperation between Belarus and Azerbaijan until 2025 was signed at the 14th IGC meeting in Minsk. This document covered almost all spheres of trade in order to steadily increase the trade turnover between Minsk and Baku to one billion dollars by 2030, while balancing export

and import flows. Recall that in 2023 the volume of trade between them "exceeded \$400 million, with Belarusian exports amounting to \$370 million, increasing by 77% by the level of 2022"<sup>122</sup>. In particular, the Belarusian side sold to the Azerbaijani market the entire range of woodworking products: from longitudinally sawn timber to wallpaper and toilet paper. Belarus supplied Azerbaijan with significant volumes and a wide range of meat and dairy products, including as raw materials for the food processing industry. Cooperation in machine building, oil refining, and pharmaceuticals is developing steadily. Thanks to the road map, by the end of 2025, the parties expect "an economic effect of about \$200 million in equivalent plus the already existing <...> quite serious figures"<sup>123</sup>. So there are good reserves for the growth of trade turnover. Let us list them.

First, it is the **intensification of mutual trade**. For example, exports of organizations of Belgospisheprom Concern to this South Caucasus country increased by almost ten percent in 2023. Last year, supplies of Belarusian sugar were resumed. Belsolod OJSC gained a foothold in the brewing market of Azerbaijan. Belarusian liquor products, alcohol, salt, bottled sunflower and rapeseed oil, ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, potato products, chips, snacks, grain flakes, mixed and food concentrate seasonings were exported. A total of 18 enterprises shipped the products of Belgospisheprom Concern to the Azerbaijani market in 2023. And for two months of this year, the

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<sup>122</sup> Ravkov: the effectiveness of interaction between Belarus and Azerbaijan is really impressive [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ravkov-rezultativnost-vzaimodejstviya-belarusi-i-azerbajdzhana-dejstvitelno-vnechatliaet-634465-2024/>

<sup>123</sup> Foreign Ministry: Belarus and Azerbaijan are actively developing industrial cooperation and technology transfer [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mid-belarus-i-azerbajdzhan-aktivno-razvivajut-promkooperatsiju-i-transfer-tehnologii-639523-2024/>

structure of foreign trade turnover of the concern with Azerbaijan "looks as follows: alcohol - 30.7%, spirits - 20.8%, confectionery - 18.9%, sugar - 18.3%, malt - 6.3%, salt - 2.2%, other products - 2.8%"<sup>124</sup>. Another example of such a plan: the growth rate of supplies of enterprises of the concern "Bellesbumprom" in 2023 to Azerbaijan increased by 20 percent. "The nomenclature of commodity items exported there includes board products, plywood, doors, wooden windows, furniture, sawn timber, paper, cardboard and products made of them"<sup>125</sup>.

**Exchange trade** is also among the measures that contribute to the increase in Belarusian-Azerbaijani export-import supplies. For reference: as of June 1, 2024, 109 residents from this country were accredited at the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB). For five months of the current year, the total amount of transactions concluded by Azerbaijani importers on the BUTB amounted to more than \$47 million, which is almost four and a half times more than in the same period last year. It is noteworthy that "the entire volume of exchange exports to Azerbaijan fell on wood products, mainly sawn timber of coniferous species. At the same time, in physical terms, supplies increased 4.6 times to 265 thousand cubic meters"<sup>126</sup>. As for the expansion of the nomenclature of goods involved in mutual trade, the most promising in this regard is the products of the agro-industrial

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<sup>124</sup> "Belgospisheprom" told what products the enterprises of the concern supply to the Azerbaijani market [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospisheprom-rasskazal-kakuju-produktsiiu-predpriyatija-kontserna-postavljajut-na-azerbajdzhanskij-634405-2024/>

<sup>125</sup> Export of woodworking products to Azerbaijan increased by 20% [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-produktsii-derevoobrabotki-v-azerbajdzhan-v-2023-godu-vyros-na-20-639640-2024/>

<sup>126</sup> Azerbaijan more than 4 times increased imports through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/azerbajdzhan-bolee-chem-v-4-raza-uvlechil-import-cherez-butb-639795-2024/>

complex. In particular, the issue of using the opportunities of BUTB to sell Belarusian dairy products to Azerbaijan is currently being worked out. As for imports, bidders from Belarus are ready to buy food raw materials and groceries, including nuts and dried fruits, from this country.

The development of **transport ties** between Belarus and Azerbaijan is also related to the intensification of mutual trade. In May this year, Baku hosted a meeting of the heads of transport departments of the two countries, where it was noted that all the necessary conditions for the development of rail, air, and road transportation of cargo and passengers have been created. "Belavia Airlines performs flights on the route Minsk - Baku with a frequency of five times a week. The load of flights is 75%, which shows that the direction is in demand"<sup>127</sup>. In the sphere of road transportation of goods, the parties exchange a sufficient number of permits, which actually corresponds to the permitless system. As for railway export-import transportation, "according to the results of work in 2023, the volume of loaded cargo to Azerbaijan increased 1.8 times compared to 2022, for five months of 2024, more than 270 thousand tons have already been loaded"<sup>128</sup>. The most attractive for shippers is the land route through the border crossing "Astara" on the Azerbaijan-Iran border, where for five months of 2024, the volume of transportation amounted to about 34 thousand tons, which is 1.2 times more than in the same period last year. As part of the development of the North-South international transport corridor,

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<sup>127</sup> Belarus offers Azerbaijan to cooperate in the design of roads and railroads [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlagaet-azerbajdzhanu-sotrudnichestvo-v-proektirovanii-avtomobilnyh-i-zheleznyh-dorog-634486-2024/>

<sup>128</sup> BZhd develops container service in communication Belarus-Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bzhd-razvivayet-konteinernyi-servis-v-soobshchenii-belarus-azerbajdzhan-638753-2024/>

Belarusian Railways in cooperation with Azerbaijan Railways has created conditions for the organization of container service, which makes it possible to ensure the delivery of Belarusian products to Azerbaijan by rail in the shortest possible time, namely seven days.

The second reserve for the growth of trade turnover is the **expansion of industrial cooperation**. Back in May 2024, during the state visit of the Belarusian delegation to Baku, an agreement was reached to expand the production line at the Ganja Automobile Plant, where Belarusian machinery has been assembled for a long time. By the end of this year, Minsk Tractor Plant (MTZ) will supply 725 Belarus machines to Azerbaijan, and the total amount of the contract will be about \$16 million. The tractors will be delivered unassembled. Today the capacity of Ganja Automobile Plant is about two thousand tractors a year, and the range of varieties of these machines is very solid - 16 models. MTZ delivered to Azerbaijan "in January-April 2024 - about 200 units for the amount exceeding \$3 million"<sup>129</sup>. If in 2022 in Ganja produced 700 tractors, last year - 777 units. By the end of 2024, it is planned to reach a thousand machines. In general, "the share of Belarusian tractors in the Azerbaijani market has already reached 80%"<sup>130</sup>.

In addition, Azerbaijan intends to assemble Belarusian fire and municipal vehicles, including garbage trucks and Belarusian elevators. In this regard, a trilateral agreement has been signed to assemble fire-fighting equipment based on the chassis of Minsk Automobile Plant at

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<sup>129</sup> MTZ will supply more than 720 tractors to Azerbaijan by the end of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-do-kontsa-goda-postavit-bolee-720-traktorov-v-azerbajdzhan-634350-2024/>

<sup>130</sup> The share of Belarusian tractors in the Azerbaijani market reached 80% [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dolja-belorusskih-traktorov-na-azerbajdzhanskom-rynke-dostigla-80-634341-2024/>

the site of Ganja Automobile Plant. "The planned volumes are about 400 units"<sup>131</sup>. A multi-brand service center will be built to service this equipment together with partners from Azerbaijan. Plus, joint production of medicinal and veterinary preparations, as well as mixed fertilizers made of Azerbaijani nitrogen and Belarusian potash will be established.

Another interesting project "will be the creation of a complex modern agro-town in Aghdam district, including production and processing of agricultural products, as well as housing and social facilities for workers and their families"<sup>132</sup>. The settlement will be designed for 420 families. To support local farmers, Azerbaijan plans to buy cattle from Belarus to implement self-employment programs. The fact is that 80 percent of agriculture in this South Caucasus country is based on small farms. And rural residents keep several heads of livestock. And the state is trying to support them. "At the first stage it is planned to bring in 500 heads"<sup>133</sup>.

The third reserve for the growth of trade turnover is the **development of scientific and technical cooperation**. The basis for bilateral cooperation in this area is the agreement between the governments of Belarus and Azerbaijan on cooperation in science and technology, which was signed on June 3, 2010. A joint Belarusian-Azerbaijani working group on scientific and technical cooperation has been set up to coordinate cooperation between the countries. Three

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<sup>131</sup> Belarusian fire and municipal equipment is planned to be assembled in Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorussskuiu-pozharnuju-i-kommunalnuju-tehniku-planiruiut-sobirat-v-azerbaidzhane-639559-2024/>

<sup>132</sup> Petrishenko told what joint productions Belarus and Azerbaijan will create [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/petrishenko-rasskazal-kakie-sovmestnye-proizvodstva-sozhdut-belarus-i-azerbaidzhan-639430-2024/>

<sup>133</sup> Azerbaijan plans to buy Belarusian cattle to support local farmers [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/azerbaidzhan-planiruet-zakupit-beloruskij-krs-dlia-podderzhki-mestnyh-fermerov-634752-2024/>

meetings of the working group have already been held, and two contests of joint scientific and technical projects have been held. In particular, "based on the results of the contest of joint scientific and technical projects held in 2022 jointly with the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, 4 projects are being implemented in the field of new materials, petrochemistry, plant protection"<sup>134</sup>. The Belarusian University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and the Institute of Physics of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan are developing new thin-layer composite materials for the production of memory elements. The United Institute of Mechanical Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Institute of Catalysis and Inorganic Chemistry of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan are developing innovative lubricants for heavily loaded and high-temperature friction units. The Institute of Biophysics and Cell Engineering of NAS of Belarus and the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology of NAS of Azerbaijan are developing new plant protection technologies based on silver nanoparticles. The National Research Center for Materials Science of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus together with the Institute of Physics of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan are developing innovative magneto-soft composite materials for the production of high-efficiency electric motors and other electrical devices. Realization of these projects in accordance with the calendar plan will be completed in 2024. And now the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus together with the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan

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<sup>134</sup> Belarus is interested in the development of scientific and technical cooperation with Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-razviti-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-azerbajdzhanom-639498-2024/>



is working on the preparation and holding of the fourth meeting of the working group, which is scheduled for the second half of this year, as well as on the next competition of joint scientific and technical projects for 2025-2026.

The fourth reserve for strengthening Belarusian-Azerbaijani relations is the **expansion of interregional interaction**. In May 2024, as part of the state visit of the Belarusian delegation to Azerbaijan, three documents were signed to establish twinning ties between the cities of the two countries: Minsk-Baku, Hrodna-Gabala, and Homel-Ganja. They added to the package of 11 similar documents that existed earlier. It should be noted that the cooperation of these twin cities will allow a wider use of regional potential to activate multifaceted interaction. "Special attention will be paid to the implementation of joint projects in the field of economy, urban planning, local government, transportation and road infrastructure, housing, science, education, culture, preservation of historical and cultural heritage, urban planning, health care, environmental protection, sports and tourism"<sup>135</sup>. It is also envisaged to establish closer cooperation and develop direct contacts between industrial enterprises and companies, educational and scientific institutions, youth associations and creative unions. In general, the parties believe that "in the future, we will organize a forum of the regions of Belarus and Azerbaijan. This is a form that has proved itself well <...> with other countries"<sup>136</sup>.

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<sup>135</sup> Minsk, Homel and Hrodna established twinning ties with Azerbaijani cities [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minsk-gomel-i-grodno-ustanovili-pobratimskie-svjazi-s-azerbajdzhanskimi-gorodami-634656-2024/>

<sup>136</sup> Aleinik believes that Belarus and Azerbaijan may hold a forum of regions in the future [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/aleinik-schitaet-cto-belarus-i-azerbajdzhan-v-perspektive-mogut-provesti-forum-regionov-635093-2024/>

The fifth reserve is the **organization of joint exhibitions** both in Belarus and Azerbaijan. <sup>137</sup>In June this year in Minsk within the framework of the Belarusian-Azerbaijani business forum, which was attended by about 200 representatives of business circles, including more than 40 Azerbaijani companies interested in cooperation in the spheres of agriculture, industry, construction, furniture production, light industry, pharmaceuticals, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the exhibition enterprise Belinterexpo and the Association of Exhibition Organizers of Azerbaijan, which will help to develop cooperation in exhibition activities and to "promote the development of cooperation in the field of agriculture, industry, construction, furniture production, light industry and pharmaceuticals".

Speaking about regular Belarusian expositions in this country, we can name exhibitions in Baku of agriculture, food industry, and petrochemicals, as well as in other areas. For example, in May 2024, the Azerbaijani capital hosted the international exhibitions Caspian Agro and Interfood Azerbaijan - the largest agricultural forums in the Caucasus, which brought together about 500 companies from 38 countries. Belarus presented its products for the fifth consecutive year. Over the past four years, more than two hundred Belarusian companies presented their products at these exhibitions. This time the pavilion of Belarus occupied almost three hundred square meters - the largest of 15 national stands. In total, over 40 Belarusian companies came to Baku to present "meat, dairy, confectionery, fish, alcoholic beverages and other food products, as well as fertilizers, chemicals for plant treatment,

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<sup>137</sup> Belarus and Azerbaijan will start organizing joint exhibitions of different profiles [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sovmestnye-vystavki-raznyh-profilej-nachnut-organizovyvat-belarus-i-azerbajdzhan-639771-2024/>

veterinary products"<sup>138</sup> . Among the participants of the Belarusian pavilion are Slutsk Sugar Refinery, Lidskie Food Concentrates, Neman, Kommunarka, Spartak, Krasny Eszvezvik, Slodych Confectionery, Minsk Margarine Plant. And the enterprises of the Ministry of Industry of Belarus - OJSC "Minsk Automobile Plant", OJSC "Gomselmash", OJSC "Minsk Tractor Plant", OJSC "Bobruisk Plant of Tractor Parts and Units", OJSC "Bobruiskagromash" - showed "improved samples of machinery, including innovative ones (complex for forage harvesting, grass harvester, grain dump truck, modernized tractors, as well as attached and trailed equipment)"<sup>139</sup> . Participation in these exhibitions resulted in two dozen contracts, memorandums and agreements of Belarusian producers worth 54 million dollars. More precisely, "Belarusian enterprises will supply Azerbaijan with \$43 million worth of products and import \$11 million worth of raw materials and other goods"<sup>140</sup> .

The sixth reserve for strengthening interaction between the two countries is the **development of cooperation in education**, where 87 inter-university agreements are already in force. For example, Belarusian State University (BSU) cooperates with a number of Azerbaijani scientific and educational institutions. In particular, since September 2022 BSU has been developing partnership ties with Baku

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<sup>138</sup> . The National Pavilion of Belarus opened at the international exhibitions Caspian Agro and Interfood in Baku [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyi-pavilion-belarusi-otkrylsja-na-mezhdunarodnyh-vystavkah-caspian-agro-i-interfood-v-baku-634333-2024/>

<sup>139</sup> Enterprises of the Ministry of Industry presented innovative samples of machinery at the Caspian Agro exhibition in Baku [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-minprom-a-predstavili-innovatsionnye-obraztzy-tehniki-na-vystavke-caspian-agro-v-baku-634340-2024/>

<sup>140</sup> Belarusian producers at the Caspian Agro exhibition in Baku signed agreements for \$54 million [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskie-proizvoditeli-na-vystavke-caspian-agro-v-baku-podpisali-soglasheniya-na-54-mln-634356-2024/>

State University, which "is the oldest and leading higher education institution in this country of the South Caucasus and includes 16 faculties of different profiles, two scientific institutes and the Confucius Institute"<sup>141</sup>. In addition, there are two centers of Azerbaijani culture and language in Belarus - on the basis of the Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after M. Tank and Minsk State Linguistic University (MSLU). In May 2024, MSLU opened the Center of Belarusian Language and Culture at the Azerbaijan University of Languages, which "will contribute to the development of cultural ties, introducing young people to culture, education, enlightenment and science"<sup>142</sup>.

Finally, the seventh reserve of partnership ties between Belarus and Azerbaijan is an **increase in the legal framework of the bilateral relations**. In May this year, during the state visit of the Belarusian delegation to Baku, the parties agreed to make an inventory of the base to see which documents need to be updated and improved. After all, at the beginning of 2024, this database had more than 100 agreements. In May, nine documents were also signed, which affect various spheres, ranging from the creation of more favorable conditions for trade, investment activity and tourism. In particular, they are the Action Plan on the development of cooperation in tourism for 2024-2025, as well as memoranda of understanding: between the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade of Belarus and the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan - in the field of competition policy, public procurement,

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<sup>141</sup> Zalessky, B. Systemic partnerships. Specifics of economic interaction between Belarus and the post-Soviet republics / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 11.

<sup>142</sup> MSLU opened the Center of Belarusian Language and Culture in the Azerbaijan University of Languages [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/mglu-otkryl-tsentr-belorusskogo-jazyka-i-kultury-v-azerbajdzhanskom-universitete-jazykov-634743-2024/>

consumer protection and advertising activities; between the National Agency for Investment and Privatization of Belarus and the Small and Medium Business Development Agency of Azerbaijan. And at the 14th meeting of the IGC in June 2024 in Minsk, in addition to the roadmap for the development of cooperation until 2025 between the two countries, new documents were signed. Among them are memoranda of cooperation: between the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Small and Medium Business Development Agency of Azerbaijan; between the Belarusian Republican Institute of Vocational Education and the State Agency for Vocational Education of the Ministry of Science and Education of Azerbaijan. And also "technical rules for organization of information interaction in the performance of control activities using information systems in the field of phytosanitary control between the Main State Inspectorate for Seed Production, Plant Quarantine and Protection of Plants of Belarus and the Food Safety Agency of Azerbaijan" were approved.<sup>143</sup>

In general, speaking about the results of the 14th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, we would like to note that Belarus and Azerbaijan demonstrate positive dynamics in the development of bilateral relations, intensively accelerating their efforts to further expand and diversify trade and economic cooperation on mutually beneficial terms. Moreover, the parties have all the necessary resources to bring the partnership between Minsk and Baku to a qualitatively new level.

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<sup>143</sup> Belarus and Azerbaijan signed a road map for the development of cooperation until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-azerbajdzhan-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-po-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-do-2025-goda-639511-2024/>

## **Belarus - Tajikistan: new steps on the course of cooperation**

Belarus and Tajikistan plan to intensify trade and economic cooperation to increase trade turnover and reach the level of at least 100 million dollars of bilateral trade in 2024. Minsk and Dushanbe see positive dynamics and untapped potential to emphasize not only "simple supply of products, but also the expansion of cooperation ties, the creation of long-term joint projects, assembly plants in the field of agricultural machinery and attachments, elevators, dairy products, electrical transformers and other promising areas"<sup>144</sup>.

Recall that in 2022, the Belarusian-Tajik trade turnover amounted to more than \$78 million. As of the end of 11 months of 2023, this indicator amounted to about 75 million dollars. There are 9 registered enterprises with Tajik capital in Belarus, including 2 joint ventures and 7 foreign ones. In Tajikistan, there are more than 20 entities of the commodity distribution network of Belarusian enterprises and one joint venture. In addition, interesting joint cooperation projects have emerged over the past five years. First, since 2017, an assembly plant for Belarusian agricultural machinery has been operating in the Tajik city of Hissar. In 2024, it is planned to organize the assembly of combine harvesters there as well. Second, in 2022, an assembly plant for elevators of OJSC Mogilevliftmash was opened in the Tajik city of Khujand. Thirdly, a joint venture based on Belarusian technologies - LLC JV "Production of Dairy Products "Vatan" - was established in the capital Dushanbe, which has been producing products under the

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<sup>144</sup> Cooperative ties and joint projects. Ambassador of Belarus on cooperation with Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/koopratsionnye-svjazi-i-sovmestnye-proekty-posol-belarusi-o-sotrudnichestve-s-tadzhikistanom-607001-2023/>

trademark "ALMIR" since June 2023. Fourth, in November 2023, V.I. Kozlov Minsk Electrotechnical Plant and JSC Transformer from Bokhtar signed a Memorandum on the organization of assembly production of Belarusian transformers in Tajikistan. Fifth, commercial agreements were signed to supply cotton, yarn and cotton fabrics from this Central Asian country up to 2025 for the needs of light industry enterprises of Belarus for a total amount of over \$40 million. Sixth, BELAZ OJSC worked out the issue of setting up an enterprise for the production of quarry machinery in Tajikistan in the near future.

In September 2023, the 16th meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Dushanbe to review trends of interaction in industrial cooperation, light industry, supplies of woodworking products, food products, and pharmaceutical products. The parties also discussed cooperation in agriculture, food and personnel training for the agro-industrial complex, transportation, education and science, health care and social protection, culture and sports, tourism and interregional cooperation. On the same day, a meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Business Council was also held, attended by heads and representatives of 24 Belarusian enterprises and organizations, as well as small and medium-sized businesses. As a result of this event, its participants signed "13 bilateral documents - cooperation agreements and contracts for the supply of products totaling more than \$16 million"<sup>145</sup>.

In particular, within the framework of the 16th IGC meeting, Gomselmash OJSC signed a memorandum of bilateral cooperation with

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<sup>145</sup> Enterprises of Belarus and Tajikistan signed contracts for \$16 million during the business council [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriiatija-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-vo-vremja-delovogo-soveta-podpisali-kontrakty-na-16-mln-590816-2023/>

Agrotekhservis CJSC. This document provides for the delivery of five GS5A combine harvesters to the Tajik market in 2024. The fact is that "Gomselmash" has been closely cooperating with "Agrotekhservis" for many years already to provide Tajikistan's agrarians with grain and forage harvesters, as well as timely service maintenance"<sup>146</sup> . We would like to add that now in this Central Asian country the most popular are economical and simple combines and self-propelled mowers GOMSELMASH. It is also planned to supply machine kits and other machinery to Tajik partners. In addition, "Belarus will supply seeds, livestock, canned meat, dairy and fish products to Tajikistan"<sup>147</sup> .

In 2023, the Belarusian-Tajik cooperation in the woodworking and pulp and paper industries also shone with new colors, with supplies from Belarus growing 1.7 times in seven months. And if we talk about the figures of the last five years, the exports of the enterprises of Bellesbumprom Concern grew 2.2 times. "Now practically the whole range of products of the timber industry complex of the republic is sold in Tajikistan: lumber, wood boards, paper, cardboard and products made of them, wallpaper, furniture, plywood"<sup>148</sup> . The Belarusian concern already has clear prospects for further cooperation with Tajik partners.

Investment cooperation between the two countries also featured prominently in the decisions of the 16th IGC meeting. Earlier, in

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<sup>146</sup> "Gomselmash" will supply a batch of combine harvesters to Tajikistan in 2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-postavit-partiju-zemouborochnyh-kombajnov-v-tadzhikistan-v-2024-godu-591373-2023/>

<sup>147</sup> Belarus and Tajikistan agreed on cooperation in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-tadzhikistan-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-v-selskom-hoziaistve-592218-2023/>

<sup>148</sup> Enterprises of "Bellesbumprom" for the last 5 years increased exports to Tajikistan by 2.2 times [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriiatija-bellesbumproma-za-poslednie-5-let-narastili-eksport-v-tadzhikistan-v-22-raza-590869-2023/>



February 2023, at the first meeting of the working group on these issues between the Ministry of Economy of Belarus and the State Committee for Investment and State Property Management of Tajikistan, the parties outlined the key objective in this topic - "to give impetus to investment cooperation, to identify points of contact up to the list of specific projects to attract business"<sup>149</sup>. And now the most promising areas and the formation of a list of investment projects, including import-substituting ones, are already being discussed. These are mining, machine building, IT-sector, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and tourism. The plan is to study the possibility of creating a Belarusian-Tajik investment fund. In addition, among the new investment projects Tajikistan wants to create in Minsk "a multifunctional trade complex to serve as a coordination center for representatives of both countries"<sup>150</sup>.

One of the priorities of Belarusian-Tajik cooperation is also the education sector, which will reach a new level in 2024. After all, today various educational projects are already being implemented between educational institutions of the two countries, "within the framework of which joint faculties have been created and unified educational programs have been adopted. The issue of opening branches of Belarusian universities in Tajikistan is being worked out"<sup>151</sup>. For reference, we would like to note that there are four joint Belarusian-Tajik faculties in higher education institutions in Dushanbe, whose

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<sup>149</sup> Cherviakov: it is necessary to identify priority areas of investment cooperation between Belarus and Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherviakov-nuzhno-opredelit-prioritetnye-napravlenija-investsotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-552755-2023/>

<sup>150</sup> Tajikistan wants to create its trading house in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tadzhikistan-hochet-sozdat-v-minske-svoji-torgovyi-dom-609906-2024>

<sup>151</sup> Safarzoda, B. Water for life, melting glaciers, Nowruz and Kupalye / B. Safarzoda // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/voda-dlja-zhizni-tajanie-lednikov-navruz-i-kupalie-posol-o-tadzhikistane-i-druzhbe-s-belarusiju-8874/>

graduates receive state diplomas of the Republic of Belarus. First, it is a joint faculty of the Tajik National University with higher educational institutions of Belarus: Belarusian State University (BSU), International State Ecological Institute named after A.D. Sakharov BSU, Belarusian State Technological University, Polotsk State University. Secondly, it is the Faculty of Civil Aviation of the Belarusian State Academy of Aviation and the Tajik Technical University named after Academician M.S. Osimi. Thirdly, it is the Faculty of Engineering and Technology of the Belarusian National Technical University and the Tajik Technical University named after Academician M.S. Osimi. Fourth, it is a joint faculty of the Polotsk State University on the basis of the Technological University of Tajikistan. And there are more than 500 Tajik students studying in Belarusian universities.

In October 2023, the Ministry of Education of Belarus and the Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan signed a joint action plan for 2023-2026 in Minsk. At the same time, the Belarusian capital hosted the second forum of rectors of the two countries, where representatives of more than 50 higher education institutions of Belarus and Tajikistan participated and where more than 10 bilateral agreements at the university level were signed. In particular, within the framework of this interaction, "the Belarusian State Pedagogical University carries out close cooperation with the Pedagogical University of Tajikistan precisely on the exchange of teaching staff and best practices in training future teachers"<sup>152</sup>. And Baranovich State University and Tajik State

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<sup>152</sup> The Ministries of Education of Belarus and Tajikistan signed a plan of joint action for 2023-2026 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ministerstva-obrazovaniya-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-deystvij-2023-2026-gody-592165-2023/>

University of Law, Business and Politics signed a cooperation agreement, which "defines the key directions of joint educational and research activities, as well as in the sphere of realization of joint youth initiatives"<sup>153</sup>. And now the universities are preparing a roadmap for international cooperation to facilitate the implementation of educational modules, participation in scientific and educational tracking, and academic exchange.

Finally, in June 2024, Minsk hosted the 17th meeting of the IGC on Cooperation, where the parties discussed the state and prospects of trade and economic and investment cooperation in the areas of transportation and logistics, industrial cooperation, education and medicine, as well as interregional partnerships to make a new step in terms of deepening trade and economic cooperation and set a clear objective - to improve joint Belarusian-Tajik production. Moreover, there are already interesting examples. It was mentioned above that a joint venture that processes Belarusian milk and produces dairy products is already operating in Tajikistan. Another area of cooperation is the assembly of Belarusian machinery in Tajikistan.

At the 17th meeting of the IGC it was emphasized that today it is necessary to expand the area, the line of manufactured equipment and assortment. The Tajik side is also interested in the assembly production of processing machinery, as well as motor vehicles and transport of housing and communal services. It should be recalled that the Belarusian-Tajik enterprise Agrotekhservis has been opened in Tajikistan, where machines of the Minsk Tractor Plant are assembled.

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<sup>153</sup> BarSU develops a roadmap for cooperation with a new partner university from Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bargu-razrabatyvaet-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-s-novym-vuzom-partnerom-iz-tadzhikistana-592689-2023/>

The demand for this equipment is very high. Tajik agricultural producers are interested not only in Belarusian tractors, but also in combines. And there is already an agreement to buy machinery from Gomselmash. There are plans to expand cooperation with the Bobruisk Plant of Tractor Parts and Units.

Speaking about the sphere of Tajikistan's interests in Belarus, first, Tajikistan has been buying Belarusian pedigree cattle for the development of farms for several years. Last year alone, about two thousand cattle were purchased. And one of the enterprises in this Central Asian country is engaged in growing breeding stock for its further sale. Second, Tajik partners buy potatoes in Belarus. In 2023, their purchases amounted to 800 tons. This year, these figures will be increased. Third, another position of Belarusian exports to Tajikistan is flax seeds, which will be developed. Fourth, in turn, the Tajik side has already supplied Belarus with a trial version of safflower seeds, an oilseed crop, and can also provide tomato and cucumber seeds for growing in greenhouses. Finally, fresh apples, cherries and apricots are already being harvested in Tajikistan from late April - early May. By setting up a logistics scheme, the parties could supply all these products in solid volumes.

Continuing this topic, we note that supplies of food products and agricultural raw materials from Belarus to Tajikistan last year amounted to more than 160 percent. "The basis of agricultural exports was formed by sugar (2.1 times growth), milk and milk products (growth rate of 140.9%), cattle (151.2%), meat and meat products (61.8%) <...>. Imports from Tajikistan in 2023 amounted to 103.8%. The basis of imports was supplies of dried fruits. Export of food products and agricultural raw materials for January - March 2024 increased by 2.4

times"<sup>154</sup>. In addition, within the framework of the 17th IGC meeting, the parties agreed to establish an exchange for the training of specialists in the field of agriculture, as well as students for internships.

Touching upon the topic of Belarusian-Tajik interregional partnership within the framework of the 17th IPC meeting, interesting examples of this interaction can be cited. In particular, Minsk and Dushanbe. In June this year, the two capitals discussed the possibility of supplying Dushanbe with snowplowing and passenger vehicles, spare parts, sugar, vegetable oil, as well as the construction of the Tajikistan Trade House in Minsk, the site of which is located in the vicinity of Pritytski and Leshchinski Streets. The necessary documents for the realization of this project are already being drawn up. In Dushanbe, Belarusian specialists are planned to assist in the implementation of a joint project with South Korea on the construction of a light subway. There are other areas of cooperation that are only developing. This is evidenced by the fact that "trade turnover [between Minsk and Tajikistan] exceeded the volume of the previous year only in the first quarter"<sup>155</sup>.

The development of cooperation with Tajikistan is a promising direction for Gomel region as well. Suffice it to say that this year the trade turnover between the parties has already quadrupled. This Central Asian country supplies ferrous metal products, woodworking, dairy and confectionery products from the southeastern Belarusian region. And

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<sup>154</sup> Bartosz: deepening cooperation with Tajikistan is facilitated by the improvement of joint productions [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bartosh-uglubleniiu-sotrudnichestva-s-tadzhikistanom-sposobstvuet-sovershenstvovanie-sovmestnyh-639287-2024>

<sup>155</sup> Supplies of machinery, construction of a trading house. Minsk and Dushanbe discussed areas of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/postavki-tehniki-stroitelstvo-torgovogo-doma-minsk-i-dushanbe-obsudili-napravleniia-sotrudnichestva-638915-2024/>

Tajikistan buys cotton yarn for the enterprises of Gomel region. As for the prospects of cooperation between the parties, they have already been practically defined in all directions. For example, batches of Gomel combine harvesters will be delivered to Tajikistan this year, and there are plans to purchase for the next year. In turn, Tajikistan is ready to supply lemons, grapes, cherries, apricots, dried fruits. The parties also have an opportunity to create trade houses, "which would allow to present goods from Tajikistan on Homel land, and in Tajikistan - what can please Homel producers"<sup>156</sup>. The partners also have their own plans for cooperation in the sphere of agro-tourism and ecotourism, in health care institutions, in the educational sphere - especially in terms of personnel training for the agricultural sector.

Returning to the 17th meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission, we would like to note that the participants of this meeting placed the main emphasis on the issues of intensification of trade and economic cooperation, development of industrial cooperation and humanitarian interaction, emphasizing the importance of further fruitful progress in the most pressing areas of partnership between Belarus and Tajikistan.

Last. In October 2022, Belarus and Tajikistan signed a roadmap of bilateral cooperation for 2022-2026, which contains 39 items. To date, 6 have already been implemented, and 33 are under implementation, including 21 that are being implemented on a permanent basis. Today, the parties continue to look for new opportunities to intensify cooperation in order to fully implement this

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<sup>156</sup> From mechanical engineering to agrotourism. Gomel region and Tajikistan will develop partnership in agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ot-mashinostroenija-do-agroturizma-gomelskaja-oblast-i-tadzhikistan-budut-razvivat-partnerstvo-v-apk-639537-2024>

strategic document and make a new contribution to the development of Belarusian-Tajik relations.

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## **Belarus - Cuba: New Partnership Instruments and Approaches**

In June 2024, Minsk hosted the 11th meeting of the Belarusian-Cuban joint commission on trade and economic cooperation, during which the parties discussed the main issues of the development of relations, including the expansion of mutual trade in goods, interaction in the financial and banking sector, implementation of projects in agriculture, food, industry, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, science and tourism, updated plans and identified the most promising projects that could be implemented as quickly as possible.

It should be recalled that the 10th meeting of the Commission was held a little over two years ago in Havana. Considering then complex and problematic issues, including the breakdown of logistic chains and financial schemes of Belarusian exports, rising prices for agricultural and industrial products, energy resources, which negatively affect the Belarusian-Cuban trade turnover, the parties firmly stated that "Belarus and Cuba should maintain the positive dynamics of economic cooperation"<sup>157</sup>. And already in 2023 Minsk and Havana jointly increased bilateral trade by more than two times. Increasing trade turnover was also the main topic of the 11th meeting of the commission.

One of the outcomes of this Belarusian-Cuban meeting in Minsk was the establishment of a new target for mutual trade volumes - "up to \$15 million for each party within 5 years"<sup>158</sup>. To achieve this goal, the parties adopted new tools and approaches. In particular, they created

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<sup>157</sup> Shestakov: Belarus and Cuba should maintain the positive dynamics of economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shestakov-belarus-i-kuba-dolzhen-sohranit-polozhitelnuiu-dinamiku-razvitiia-ekonomicheskogo-640232-2024/>

<sup>158</sup> Belarus and Cuba expect to increase the volume of mutual supplies [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kuba-rasschityvajut-narastit-obiemy-vzaimnyh-postavok-640626-2024/>



four temporary working groups, which will include technical experts from both sides. The first group is dedicated to interaction in the field of agriculture. The second group will oversee health care, the medical and pharmaceutical industry, and biotechnology. The third group will deal with partnerships in banking and finance and will assist the business community. Finally, "the fourth working group will be dedicated to industrial cooperation. It will consider not only cooperation on agricultural machinery, but also on the food industry"<sup>159</sup>

As part of these new approaches, for example, the Minsk Tractor Plant is preparing to deliver the first batch - 12 sets of tractors - to Cuba to organize assembly production. "The delivery is expected to take place in the third quarter of this [2024] year"<sup>160</sup>. In addition, the possibility of participation of Belarusian specialists in the restoration of dairy production - joint production of whole-milk products from Belarusian raw materials on the basis of a dairy complex near Havana - is being considered. Moreover, within the framework of the 11th meeting of the commission, the parties "agreed to take all necessary measures to increase exports <...> of fixed volumes (8 thousand tons) of milk powder"<sup>161</sup>.

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<sup>159</sup> Deputy Prime Minister of Cuba: our countries have a great potential and the groundwork for further development of relations [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/vitse-premier-kuby-u-nashih-stran-est-bolshoj-potentsial-i-zadel-dlja-dalnejego-razvitiia-otnoshenii-640769-2024/>

<sup>160</sup> MTZ is preparing to deliver to Cuba the first batch of tractor kits for the organization of production [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-gotovitsja-postavit-na-kubu-pervuiu-partiju-traktorokomplektov-dlja-organizatsii-proizvodstva-640644-2024/>

<sup>161</sup> From registration of drugs to joint products. Belarus and Cuba will expand ties in healthcare [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ot-registratsii-preparatov-do-vypuska-sovmestnoj-produktsii-belarus-i-kuba-rasshirjat-sviasi-v-640655-2024/>

Speaking about cooperation in the healthcare sector, the participants in the 11th meeting of the Commission agreed that successful cooperation in this area - from drug registration to joint products - could accelerate the penetration of Belarusian medicines into the markets of Latin American countries and facilitate the consolidation of Cuban medicines in the markets of the Eurasian Economic Union. For reference, it should be noted that "in November 2022, the first Belarusian medicines were registered in this Latin American country"<sup>162</sup>. In addition, the parties then signed an agreement on interlaboratory comparisons to increase the level of trust between the testing laboratories of the two countries, as well as the degree of effectiveness and safety of medicines for Belarusian and Cuban patients. And in June 2024, already within the framework of the 11th Commission, "the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Cuban state organization of biotechnological and pharmaceutical industry "BioCubaPharma" signed an agreement of intent to establish a joint venture"<sup>163</sup>.

Let us summarize the results. At the 11th meeting of the joint commission on trade and economic cooperation in June this year, Belarus and Cuba showed that the bilateral dialog between Minsk and Havana has recently intensified at all levels. And the sides outlined concrete steps to boost interaction, highlighting two areas they will primarily focus on. "The first is the expansion of volumes and mechanisms of counter trade, and the second is projects concerning

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<sup>162</sup> Zalessky, B. With a focus on results. Perspectives of an integrated approach to new partnership opportunities / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 18.

<sup>163</sup> Belarus and Cuba signed an agreement of intent to create a joint pharmaceutical enterprise [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kuba-podpisali-soglashenie-o-namerenijah-po-sozdaniyu-sovmestnogo-farmpredpriyatija-640638-2024/>

joint investments in the production sphere"<sup>164</sup> . And then there will be new areas of partnership, which will become the foundation of future relations between Belarus and Cuba.

And in July 2024, during the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to Liberty Island, it was stated that the two countries had already established a strategic partnership based on equality and respect for each other's interests. Speaking of the economy, Belarus and Cuba, as mentioned above, more than doubled their trade turnover in 2023. "And in the first five months of this year <...> they increased the volume of bilateral trade by another 20%"<sup>165</sup> . In Havana, the two sides concluded two further individual credit agreements worth more than two million euros to settle the supply of milk powder. "In total, more than 1 thousand tons of this product will be supplied to Cuba in 2024"<sup>166</sup> . And the next contracts were signed for the supply of products of the Belarusian industry. For example, under the contract with CES Co. LTD "Minsk Tractor Plant will supply 15 units of BELARUS machinery to Cuba by the end of 2024"<sup>167</sup> .

In addition, the meeting of the Prime Ministers of Belarus and Cuba resulted in the adoption of a number of agreements, including on mutual protection of classified information, cooperation and mutual

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<sup>164</sup> Counter trade and investment in production. Golovchenko about the prospects of cooperation between Belarus and Cuba [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vstrechnaja-torgovlja-i-investitsii-v-proizvodstvo-golovchenko-o-perspektivah-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-640502-2024/>

<sup>165</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus and Cuba doubled their trade turnover in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-i-kuba-v-2023-godu-uvelichili-tovarooborot-v-dva-raza-648415-2024/>

<sup>166</sup> Belarus and Cuba concluded credit agreements for settlements for the supply of milk powder [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kuba-zakljuchili-kreditnye-soglasheniia-dlja-raschetov-za-postavku-suhogo-moloka-648606-2024/>

<sup>167</sup> Agro-industrial complex, pharmaceuticals, industry. Prime Minister of Cuba named the key areas of cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/apk-farmatsevtika-promyshlennost-premier-ministr-kubv-nazval-kljuchevye-sfery-sotrudnichestva-s-648501-2024/>

assistance in customs affairs. "Also signed was the program of bilateral trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation between the governments of Belarus and Cuba for the period of 2024-2030"<sup>168</sup>. And the Ministries of Health of the two countries adopted an updated agreement on interaction, which will promote cooperation between the agencies. In particular, it is about expanding partnerships in the field of medical science, between organizations of this sphere on training medical personnel. "An important interest for both sides is registration of medicines and medical devices, supplies of pharmaceutical products, joint production of medicines"<sup>169</sup>. By the way, the establishment of a pharmaceutical joint venture between Belarusian Academpharm and a Cuban company is almost at the finishing line. The registration of one of the innovative Cuban oncological drugs was recently finalized in Belarus.

All these facts show that cooperation between Belarus and Cuba in the sphere of scientific activity plays an important role in the interaction between Belarus and Cuba at the present stage. Especially since Minsk and Havana today are already finding opportunities for the gradual realization of a common Belarusian-Cuban scientific space without barriers. For this purpose, back in August 2023, the Belarusian National Academy of Sciences (NAS) adopted memorandums of understanding with the Cuban Ministries of Agriculture and Food Industry. Also "an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation was signed between the Scientific and Technical Cooperation Center of

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<sup>168</sup> Agro-industrial complex, pharmaceuticals, industry. Prime Minister of Cuba named the key areas of cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/apk-farmatsevtika-promyshlennost-premier-ministr-kuby-nazval-kljucheveve-sfery-sotrudnichestva-s-648501-2024/>

<sup>169</sup> Ministries of Health of Belarus and Cuba actualize cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/minzdravy-belarusi-i-kuby-aktualizirujut-sotrudnichestvo-648831-2024/>

the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on animal breeding and the company Cuba Ron S.A. in the field of utilization of Roma waste in the technology of feeding farm animals"<sup>170</sup>. In addition, the following cooperation agreements were concluded: between the Belarusian Institute of Meat and Dairy Industry and the Cuban company Labiofam; between the Cuban Research Institute of Food Industry and the Institute of Meat and Dairy Industry of the National Academy of Sciences and the NPC NAS of Belarus on Food. And at the international conference in Havana "Macro Program on Science, Technology and Innovation of the National Plan for Socio-Economic Development of Cuba until 2030: Its Role in Science, Technology and Innovation Management" a representative of the NAS of Belarus made a presentation "Strategy for the Development of the Agro-Industrial Complex of the Republic of Belarus: Scientific Support and Mechanisms of Implementation" to the heads of organizations and officials of the agrarian and food sector of Cuba.

In the context of this topic, it should be recalled that the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus "currently has 20 joint projects under consideration in various fields"<sup>171</sup>, including physics, chemistry, and computer science. In addition, Cuban scientists have recently developed and implemented a large number of biotechnological products in the interests of medicine and agriculture. In 2023 alone, "as a result of bilateral visits <...> delegations signed 66 agreements, the work on

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<sup>170</sup> Organizations of NAS of Belarus signed cooperation agreements with Cuban partners [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - ULR: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/organizatsii-nan-belarusi-podpisali-soglasheniia-o-sotrudnichestve-s-kubinskimi-partnerami-579830-2023/>

<sup>171</sup> Belarus offered Cuba to create a joint pharmaceutical enterprise on the basis of "Academpharm" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - ULR: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-predlozila-kube-sozdat-sovmestnoe-farmatsevticheskoe-predpriatie-na-baze-akademfarm-599036-2023/>

which is currently being actively implemented [in Belarus and Cuba]"<sup>172</sup> . Also, two drugs were handed over to the Cuban side for registration and two more are being considered for registration in Belarus. And ten such drugs have been prepared for mutual exchange. And the parties are already ready to cooperate in other areas of scientific research - space, microelectronics, mechanical engineering, agrarian, bio- and medical technologies.

Finally, in December 2023, it was officially announced that joint Belarusian-Cuban projects selected within the framework of the competition between the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba, which is being held for the first time. As a result, 18 joint scientific projects will be implemented in 2024-2025, which have a high level of novelty and which will solve important issues of science development in different fields. For example, in materials science, these include obtaining materials with improved physical and mechanical properties, development of biodegradable lubricants and coatings with increased wear and corrosion resistance. If we talk about biotechnology, it is "research and development of nanovaccines, search for multi-targeted compounds for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease"<sup>173</sup> . And in economic research it is about the development of methodological approaches to identifying unrealized export potential and assessing the economic benefits and risks of Belarusian-Cuban cooperation and their testing, as well as the study of an additional list of commodity items of

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<sup>172</sup> Gusakov: Belarus is open for cooperation with Cuba in all spheres of scientific activity [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/gusakov-belarus-otkryta-dlja-sotrudnichestva-s-kuboi-vo-vseh-sferah-nauchnoi-dejatelnosti-599022-2023/>

<sup>173</sup> Belarus and Cuba will realize 18 joint scientific projects [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kuba-budut-realizovyvat-18-sovmestnyh-nauchnyh-proektov-603581-2023/>

interstate trade. Thus, new opportunities for cooperation in the scientific sphere between Belarus and Cuba are quite broad, both in fundamental and theoretical areas and in practical terms.

Another topical area of Belarusian-Cuban partnership ties is education. It should be recalled that in September 2023, Minsk hosted the first Forum of Belarusian and Cuban rectors of higher education institutions, where they discussed ways to deepen bilateral cooperation in education, expand partnership ties between the educational community of Belarus and Cuba, inter-university contacts in the interests of training faculty, student exchanges, as well as in the implementation of specific scientific projects and joint research. "The Cuban side is particularly interested in the potential of Belarusian universities in the field of high technologies, cybersecurity and personal data protection, as well as development in the field of artificial intelligence"<sup>174</sup>. The participants of the event emphasized that today one should focus on a concrete result, which should yield economic returns. The first Forum of Belarusian and Cuban rectors resulted in the signing of bilateral cooperation agreements between the universities of the two countries.

The Belarusian State University (BSU) was among the active participants of this forum. It should be reminded that back in April 2023, BSU intensified cooperation with Cuban partners in the field of education, science and innovation. In particular, a cooperation program was signed with the leading and oldest higher education institution of the country - the University of Havana, regulating joint work "in the

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<sup>174</sup> Deputy Minister of Education of Cuba expressed interest in the realization of scientific projects with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/zamministra-obrazovanija-kuby-zajavil-o-zainteresovanosti-v-realizatsii-nauchnyh-proektov-s-belarusiju-589322-2023/>

field of biology, geography, chemistry, mathematics, tourism, study of Spanish and Russian languages"<sup>175</sup> , as well as a memorandum on the development of a joint master's degree program. In the nearest plans - academic mobility, organization of internships, guest lectures, scientific research, as well as joint training of specialists. And with the Pedagogical University of Enrique Jose Varona BSU intends to develop cooperation in the field of pedagogy with the introduction of innovative methods in the educational process. In the signed agreement on cooperation the parties fixed the exchange of students, master students, invitation of teachers and researchers for joint work on research and educational projects, as well as the exchange of information, educational materials, joint scientific and educational events. In addition, "the universities plan to develop joint educational programs in the field of humanities with the issuance of two diplomas"<sup>176</sup> .

In September 2023, BSU got several more partners: the University of Guantanamo, the José Antonio Echeverría Technological University of Havana, and the University of Camagüey. It should be noted that "BSU, taking into account the signed agreements, is developing educational and scientific contacts with eight Cuban institutions"<sup>177</sup> , with which it is promising to cooperate in the spheres of pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, to develop joint educational projects. For example, after the April (2023) negotiations BSU and the

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<sup>175</sup> Mathematics, Spanish and tourism. BSU activates cooperation with universities of Cuba [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/matematika-ispanskij-jazyk-i-turizm-bgu-aktiviziruetsotrudnichestvo-s-vuzami-kuby-562131-2023/>

<sup>176</sup> BSU and Pedagogical University of Cuba will develop cooperation in the field of pedagogy [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-peduniversitet-kuby-budut-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-oblasti-pedagogiki-562339-2023/>

<sup>177</sup> Exchange of students and joint research. Cooperation agreements signed by BSU and universities of Cuba [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/obmen-studentami-i-sovmestnye-issledovaniya-soglasheniya-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisali-bgu-i-vuzy-kuby-589103-2023/>



Raúl Roa García Higher Institute of International Relations drew up a detailed program of cooperation and have already worked out the project of the virtual platform "Russian for Cubans / Spanish for Belarusians".

The Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU) signed cooperation agreements with its partners from Cuba - the University of Guantanamo and the Antonio Niez Jimenez Mao University - as part of the first Forum of Belarusian and Cuban rectors of higher education institutions. These documents "provide for the exchange of experience in educational and methodical work of higher education institutions, exchange of textbooks and teaching materials (training programs, teaching aids), joint scientific research in various areas of science and technology, as well as the exchange of scientific and technical information, experience of scientific work, search for various forms of scientific cooperation"<sup>178</sup>.

It should be noted that the signing of the agreement was the result of the meeting of the heads of universities, which was held in the Science and Technology Park of BNTU "Polytechnik". The event was also attended by representatives of Baranovichi State University, Belarusian State Agrarian Technical University, Brest State Technical University, Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies, Belarusian-Russian University, Gomel State Technical University named after P.O. Sukhoi, and Polotsk State University named after Euphrosyne Polotska. The Cuban side expressed interest in cooperation in such areas as geology, ecology, mining and

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<sup>178</sup> BNTU signed a cooperation agreement with two Cuban universities [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bntu-podpisal-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-s-dvumia-kubinskimi-universitetami-589060-2023/>

electromechanics. Colleagues from other Belarusian universities also signed a number of cooperation agreements with Cuban universities.

In September 2023, Gomel State Medical University (GomHMU) and the University of Medical Sciences of Havana signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of higher medical education and science. It should be reminded that this is not the first experience of cooperation with the Cuban side for Gomel university. After all, "as a result of Belarusian-Cuban cooperation and with the active participation of GomHMU specialists in the field of vaccinology, in 2022 the vaccine "Soberana Plus" was approved and authorized by the Ministry of Health of Belarus for booster vaccination in our country"<sup>179</sup>. Today, clinical trials of the Cuban vaccine are already underway on the basis of the research laboratory of the State Medical University of Belarus. So the partner universities will do a lot more on this research topic.

Speaking about the results of the first Forum of Belarusian and Cuban Rectors, we would like to emphasize that back in "November 2022, an intergovernmental agreement on mutual recognition of educational documents..."<sup>180</sup> was added to the contractual legal base of Belarusian-Cuban relations. Today, the participants of this forum are already starting the practical implementation of this document so that the universities of Belarus and Cuba could achieve concrete results and receive economic returns in many areas of cooperation.

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<sup>179</sup> Gomel State Medical University concluded a cooperation agreement with the University of Medical Sciences of Havana [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskij-gmu-zakliuchil-dogovor-o-sotrudnichestve-s-universitetom-meditsinskih-nauk-gavan-y-589137-2023/>

<sup>180</sup> Zalesky, B. Priority - export growth. New opportunities in the conditions of multi-vector foreign economic activity of Belarus / Boris Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 106.

In short, the implementation of joint Belarusian-Cuban initiatives has made concrete progress over the past year or two. The parties are confident that the development of mutually beneficial ties between Minsk and Havana will continue to grow for the benefit of the Belarusian and Cuban peoples.

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## Belarus - Nicaragua: first serious results

In July 2024, a Belarusian government delegation headed by Prime Minister of Belarus R. Golovčanka visited Nicaragua, where breakthrough documents were signed in the Belarusian-Nicaraguan bilateral relations. Recall that Nicaragua is a dynamically developing country with a favorable economic and geographical location, where "a number of infrastructure projects are being implemented, which are important not only for the Central American region, but also for the whole planet. In particular, the country is about to dig a new canal"<sup>181</sup> . For this reason, the Nicaraguan government is carrying out projects to build a port, an airstrip, and roads that would connect the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. The Belarusian side believes that this Central American state is a promising partner for the reason that "Belarus shares Nicaragua's ideals and values aimed at caring for the common man and building a just society"<sup>182</sup> . So Minsk is ready to contribute to the development and prosperity of this country.

For reference, it should be noted that active cooperation between the two countries started a couple of years ago. In mid-2023, the foreign ministries of Belarus and Nicaragua signed a general intergovernmental agreement on export credits, which provided additional opportunities for cooperation, including in the supply of machinery. Last October, at the third meeting of the Belarusian-Nicaraguan joint commission on trade and economic cooperation, it was noted that "the products of

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<sup>181</sup> Foreign Ministry: Nicaragua is a promising partner for Belarus, we have something to offer this country [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/mid-nikaragua-perspektivnyi-partner-dlja-belarusi-nam-est-chto-predlozhit-etoj-strane-648934-2024/>

<sup>182</sup> Golovchenko announced the delivery of more than 700 units of Belarusian equipment to Nicaragua [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-anonsiroval-postavku-bolee-700-edinit-belorusskoi-tehniki-v-nikaragua-648959-2024/>

Minsk Automobile Plant, Amkodor, Minsk Tractor Plant and other giants of the domestic industry will be in demand in the Latin American country when implementing ambitious infrastructure projects planned by the current government"<sup>183</sup> . And already in January 2024 "the first delivery to Nicaragua of dump trucks produced by Minsk Automobile Plant was made: 9 units of MAZ-5551 and 6 units of MAZ-6501"<sup>184</sup> . In May of this year, setting the dynamics of cooperation for all Belarusian and Nicaraguan regions, Minsk City Executive Committee and Managua City Hall signed an agreement on trade and economic cooperation, which referred to "the creation of joint assembly plants, service centers, supplies of machinery, cooperation in education and health care"<sup>185</sup> . And at the same time, in May, the Ministry of Industry of Belarus stated its interest in building up the potential of the industrial dialog between the two countries and assistance "in the implementation of projects to supply equipment for the needs of the cities of the republic, including the capital city of Managua. We are talking about deliveries of trucks, buses, electric buses and road-building equipment"<sup>186</sup> . Finally, in June 2024 AMKODOR signed significant contracts for the supply of modern road-building machinery to Nicaragua - "for the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, as well as

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<sup>183</sup> Zalessky, B. Priorities of multidirectionality. Chronicle of international economic cooperation of Belarus with interested partners on different continents / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. - C. 376.

<sup>184</sup> MAZ is ready to start expansion of trade cooperation with Nicaragua [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/maz-gotov-pristupit-k-rasshireniju-torgovogo-sotrudnichestva-s-nikaragua-627749-2024/>

<sup>185</sup> Minsk and Managua have identified areas of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-managua-opredelili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-637016-2024/>

<sup>186</sup> Belarus and Nicaragua discussed practical aspects of cooperation in the supply of equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-i-nikaragua-obsudili-prakticheskie-aspekty-sotrudnichestva-po-postavkam-tehniki-637745-2024/>

for the Institute for the Development of Municipalities of Nicaragua"<sup>187</sup>, which will contribute to the modernization of the transport network of this country and create a basis for closer economic cooperation between Belarus and Nicaragua.

Returning to the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to Nicaragua in July this year, it should be noted that as a result of these high-level talks in Managua, contracts worth \$85 million were signed. For example, only with the Ministry of Finance of this country - four new loan agreements totaling more than \$79 million "for the supply of over 700 units of Belarusian machinery to be used in various sectors of the Nicaraguan economy"<sup>188</sup>. At the moment, we are talking about two main directions of supplies of Belarusian machinery to this Central American country: machines of the Minsk Automobile Plant and AMKODOR machinery, so that Nicaragua could create a platform for the transfer of Belarusian technologies in the machine-building and agro-industrial sectors. So, "by the end of [2024] about 370 units of trucks worth \$38 million will be delivered. These are dump trucks, tractors, tankers for the transportation of drinking water and <...> utility vehicles that will work in municipal districts of Nicaragua"<sup>189</sup>. All the more so because the Nicaraguan truck market consists mainly of used vehicles, while the purchase of new ones is constrained by the organization of financial instruments.

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<sup>187</sup> "AMKODOR" will supply road-building machinery in Nicaragua [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amkodor-postavit-dorozhno-stroitelnuju-tehniku-v-nikaragua-641599-2024/>

<sup>188</sup> Contracts for \$85 mln signed during Roman Golovchenko's visit to Nicaragua [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.government.by/ru/content/10955>

<sup>189</sup> Minsk Automobile Plant will supply \$38 million worth of trucks to Nicaragua [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtomobilnyi-zavod-postavit-v-nikaragua-gruzovuju-tehniku-na-38-mln-649162-2024/>

As for the AMKODOR enterprise, it has signed a large export contract for a wide range of road construction equipment. And the first deliveries are planned before the end of this year. "Within the framework of the contract, frontal mini loaders, graders, bulldozers, excavators, rollers - that is, the full list of equipment that is necessary for construction and maintenance of roads in a workable condition will be supplied to Nicaragua"<sup>190</sup>.

The Minsk Tractor Plant also has its own plans for Nicaragua, which will supply 36 machines to Nicaragua. And there are plans for "delivery of 120-200 units per month, if a financial instrument is created"<sup>191</sup>. It is believed that this Central American country is almost completely self-sufficient in food, but without mechanization and automation it is impossible to export and create new capacities for fruit, coffee and other areas. So the capacity range of Belarusian tractors can be increased. And the possibility of setting up assembly plants is even being considered.

The most promising areas of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries were outlined at the Belarusian-Nicaraguan business forum held in Managua in July 2024, where special emphasis was placed on cooperation in the provision of machinery from Belarus, "including electric transport, on the supply of agricultural machinery and technology transfer in agriculture, pharmaceuticals and the use of domestic developments in the construction of residential and industrial

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<sup>190</sup> "An unprecedented step". "AMKODOR" on the big contract for the supply of machinery in Nicaragua [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/bespretsedennyi-shag-amkodor-o-bolshom-kontrakte-na-postavku-tehniki-v-nikaragua-649135-2024/>

<sup>191</sup> Minsk Tractor Plant will supply 36 tractors to Nicaragua [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-traktornyj-zavod-postavit-v-nikaragua-36-traktorov-649128-2024/>

facilities in Nicaragua"<sup>192</sup>. As a result, the forum signed a memorandum of cooperation between the National Center for Marketing and Price Conjuncture and the Secretariat for Investment and Export Promotion of Nicaragua to ensure the establishment of direct contacts in the line of core business and their support up to the conclusion of transactions.

Summarizing the results of this visit of the Belarusian government delegation to Managua, it can be noted that in July 2024, the first real step was made towards greater economic cooperation between Belarus and Nicaragua, not only to implement major projects in this Central American country, but also to implement a well-thought-out policy of re-exporting joint products to Latin American markets. There are considerable prospects in this respect.

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<sup>192</sup> Electric transport, agricultural machinery and pharmacy. How business relations between Belarus and Nicaragua will be promoted [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/elektrotransport-selhoztehnika-i-farmatsija-kak-budut-prodvigatsja-biznes-otnoshenija-belarusi-i-649101-2024/>



## **Belarus-Hungary: a promising algorithm of interaction has been defined**

In May 2024, Minsk hosted the 12th meeting of the Belarusian-Hungarian Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) on Economic Cooperation, where the participants jointly defined the algorithm of interaction for the near and medium term. The parties identified energy, agriculture, industry, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, construction, sports, tourism, education and science among the most important areas of bilateral cooperation that will be further developed within the framework of the Belarusian-Hungarian partnership. "There are plans to fill these areas with even more practical content"<sup>193</sup>.

It should be recalled that the 11th meeting of the IGC, held in April 2023 in Budapest, addressed the issues of interaction in the economic and investment spheres, scientific research, education, as well as the development of the legal framework for bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Hungary. It was noted at the time that "this framework already includes about 20 international treaties"<sup>194</sup>. Within the framework of the 12th IGC meeting the parties signed a new package of documents, including the Program of Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary for 2024-2025, as well as a "memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Energy of

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<sup>193</sup> Transcript of the approach to the press of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus S. Aleinik following the meeting of the Belarusian-Hungarian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation (May 29, 2024, Minsk). Aleinik on the results of the meeting of the Belarusian-Hungarian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation (May 29, 2024, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/dceb9287fe611c94.html](https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/dceb9287fe611c94.html)

<sup>194</sup> Zalessky, B. New Realities for Partnership. Chronicle of international cooperation under conditions of economic mobilization / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 34.

Belarus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary on deepening cooperation in the field of nuclear energy"<sup>195</sup> .

In addition, the two countries signed a roadmap of cooperation between the nuclear power plants of the two countries, which defines the main areas of joint work of Belarusian and Hungarian nuclear workers for 2024-2025, including personnel training, scheduled maintenance work, and radioactive waste management. All the more so because the Hungarian CJSC "MVM Paks NPP" "as a nuclear power plant under construction, is interested in attracting Belarusian builders to work at the site. Relevant opportunities are being worked out now"<sup>196</sup> . Recall that the Paks NPP is the only operating nuclear power plant in Hungary, built under the Soviet design in the 1980s. It is located 100 kilometers from Budapest. The construction of "Paks-II" is planned to start in 2024 to strengthen the energy security of this European country, and it "will be an important step in the development of Hungary's industry, will create new jobs, will contribute to the solution of social issues. It is planned that the construction of additional units will not only solve the problem of the republic's power shortage, but will also enable exports to neighboring regions"<sup>197</sup> .

Another interesting topic that was discussed at the 12th meeting of the IGC was Belarusian-Hungarian interaction in joint scientific and technical projects. In this context, it should be noted that "at the end of 2023, Belarusian exports of high-tech goods to Hungary amounted to

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<sup>195</sup> Belarus and Hungary signed a memorandum on deepening cooperation in nuclear energy [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-vengrija-uglubljajut-sotrudnichestvo-v-jadernoj-energetike-637572-2024>

<sup>196</sup> The road map of cooperation between NPPs of Belarus and Hungary was signed [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/podpisana-dorozhnaia-karta-sotrudnichestva-aes-belarusi-i-vengrii-637535-2024>

<sup>197</sup> Paks II NPP [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://ioes.ru/ru/portfolio/item/21-aes-paksh>

more than half of all supplies from Belarus to this country. The largest volume is industrial equipment"<sup>198</sup>. For reference: the basis of bilateral cooperation in science, technology and innovation is a memorandum of understanding signed in 2013 between the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus (SCST) and the National Office for Research, Development and Innovation of Hungary, which provides for joint project activities in priority areas of scientific research for both sides, as well as joint scientific and technical events. Three years later, in 2016, a working group with representatives of the SCST and Hungarian partners was established to coordinate cooperation, with the last meeting held in March 2021. In addition, there are a number of cooperation agreements between Belarusian and Hungarian scientific organizations. These are the agreement between the academies of sciences (2003), the agreement between the Belarusian State University and the Institute of Geography of the Research Center for Astronomy and Earth Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (2014), as well as a number of others. To intensify bilateral cooperation at the 12th IGC meeting, the Belarusian side proposed to hold a Belarusian-Hungarian working group on scientific and technical cooperation in 2024 to consider in detail the options for interaction in promising areas of cooperation: energy research, medicine, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, chemical technologies, and new materials. As an effective mechanism for such cooperation, it was proposed to hold a contest of Belarusian-Hungarian scientific and technical projects in promising areas, with the details to be discussed at the working group meeting.

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<sup>198</sup> Belarus is interested in joint scientific and technical projects with Hungary [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-sovmestnyh-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-proektah-s-vengrijei-637555-2024/>

In addition to the 12th IGC meeting, the Belarusian-Hungarian Business Forum was held in Minsk with the support of the Belarusian National Center for Marketing and Price Study and the Hungarian Export Development Agency. More than 20 Hungarian and 80 Belarusian companies "in such areas as agriculture and food industry, tourism, construction, public utilities, medicine and pharmaceuticals"<sup>199</sup>, as well as in e-commerce, took part in the forum. In particular, taking into account the specialization of the forum participants, industrial goods and agricultural products were considered as priority areas of Belarusian-Hungarian exchange trade. In particular, the issue of supplies of Belarusian rapeseed oil, beet pulp and molasses, as well as milk powder and whey to Hungary was discussed. These products are successfully sold through the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) to a number of European countries, with demand remaining at a high level, which ensures regularity of transactions. "In January-April 2024, exchange exports of the above commodity items reached \$28.5 million, exceeding the same indicator of the previous year by 5.4 times. As for imports from Hungary, Hungarian companies participating in the forum expressed their willingness to supply Belarus with agricultural seeds, as well as lighting fixtures and equipment for the energy sector, using the BUTB industrial and consumer goods platform"<sup>200</sup>. Besides, BUTB discussed with the Hungarian Export Promotion Agency the prospects of cooperation in organizing joint information events on the subject of exchange trade for

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<sup>199</sup> Agriculture, tourism, medicine. More than 100 companies united Belarusian-Hungarian business forum [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/selskoe-hozjaistvo-turizm-meditsina-bolee-100-kompanij-obiedinil-belorussko-vengerskij-biznes-forum-637709-2024>

<sup>200</sup> Belarus and Hungary intend to intensify exchange trade [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vengrija-namereny-aktivizirovat-birzhevuiu-torgovlju-637694-2024>

Hungarian commodity producers. It should be noted that as of May 1, 2024, only 25 Hungarian resident companies have been accredited at BUTB.

Let us summarize the results. As we can see, both the 12th meeting of the Belarusian-Hungarian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation and the regular Belarusian-Hungarian Business Forum have shown that Minsk and Budapest, sharing the conviction that they have common economic interests, maintain a good pace in bilateral relations, strengthen trade, economic and investment interaction in order to more fully realize the potential of joint projects in industrial cooperation and agriculture.

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## Free economic zones: investments as prerequisites for further growth

In 2024, free economic zones (FEZs) of Belarus continue to successfully implement investment projects, which are related to the increase in exports, development of import substitution and profit growth. For example, **FEZ "Brest"** has the necessary potential for the implementation of regionally significant investment projects. In the first quarter of this year, its residents increased the volume of investment in fixed assets by 2.3 times, as well as "increased production (by 17%), added to the export of goods..."<sup>201</sup>. In particular, in February, **OJSC "Barkhim"** - a resident of the FEZ since 2011 - implemented an investment project of about three million Belarusian rubles under the program "One district - one project". It is a workshop for the production of liquid detergents. As a result, "a second filling line was built and the existing production was modernized. This makes it possible to significantly increase the output of products, including laundry gels, liquid soap, conditioners and bleaches for laundry"<sup>202</sup>.

Other FEZ residents will also ensure the pace of development of investment projects in key areas this year. In Pinsk, the establishment of an enterprise for the production of batteries will be finalized. A complex for extruded aluminum profile production will be built in Brest district by the end of the year. New projects will also be launched: in Pinsk - the creation of the production of plastic components for car

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<sup>201</sup> FEZ "Brest" residents in the first quarter increased 2.3 times the volume of investment in fixed assets [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-sez-brest-v-i-kvartale-narastili-v-23-raza-objem-investitsij-v-osnovnoi-kapital-630171-2024/>

<sup>202</sup> A resident of FEZ "Brest" implemented an investment project under the program "One district - one project". [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/rezident-sez-brest%C2%BB-oao-%C2%ABbarxim%C2%BB-realizoval-investproekt-v-ramkax-programmyi-%C2%ABodin-rajon-%E2%80%93-odin-proekt%C2%BB>

batteries, in Kobrin - the creation of the production of chrome-plated blanks for hydraulic cylinder rods. In addition, FEZ residents will continue to expand the geography of sales of their products with the development of new directions in the Asian and African regions. All this will be done in order to solve priority tasks of FEZ for the current year, including "to provide growth of investments in fixed assets by 25%, export of goods - by 8%, production of goods - by 5%, wages of employees - by 11.6%"<sup>203</sup> , as well as to attract at least three new residents.

Recall that now 78 residents are registered in FEZ "Brest". Four of them appeared in 2023. First, it is **SanSpectr LLC**, which is engaged in the implementation of an investment project to create a transport and logistics complex "West-East" on a section of railway tracks in the area of Brest-Severnoy station, where warehousing and storage of goods will be carried out, related forwarding and customs services will be provided. The project realization period is five years. The FEZ resident intends to "invest more than seven and a half million Belarusian rubles and create about 20 new jobs"<sup>204</sup> . This complex will contribute to solving bottlenecks in the handling of container trains within the Brest railroad hub running in the East-West-East directions.

Secondly, it is the **Private Enterprise "EViYAR"**, which implements an investment project on the vacant premises of Brest Electromechanical Plant, associated with the organization of production of LED lighting fixtures and lighting systems for industrial and

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<sup>203</sup> Abramenko: FEZ "Brest" has the necessary potential for the realization of regionally significant investment projects [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-sez-brest-obladaet-neobhodimymi-potentsialom-dlja-realizatsii-regionalno-znachimyh-630919-2024/>

<sup>204</sup> Zalessky, B. Hope for the positive future. Dynamics of partnerships under conditions of economic realism / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 48.

consumer use - for poultry farms and greenhouse complexes, for street lighting. As consumers of these products are considered the subjects of "agro-industrial complex, farms, housing and communal services and homeowners' associations. At the same time, a significant part of the enterprise's products is expected to be exported..."<sup>205</sup> . At least 500 thousand euros will be invested in the new production for three years and 20 additional jobs will be created.

Thirdly, it is **Sifaniya-Ekotechnika**, which plans to implement a project of export-oriented production of special machines and equipment for sorting and deep processing of waste, as well as grain drying equipment on a six-hectare plot of land. This resident produces full-cycle equipment that helps to solve problems in the field of ecology and environmental protection. "The production of new products will be set up in the production buildings, previously belonging to the Brestselmash plant, after reconstruction. Within the framework of the investment project it is planned to develop the production of technological equipment for processing rubber and plastics, which will be further used in the manufacture of various products"<sup>206</sup> . In addition, the production of equipment for processing solid municipal and industrial waste using the latest technologies will be mastered.

Fourth, it is **"1 AK-Plastic" LLC**, which was registered in the FEZ on the eve of the new year with an investment project to create production of plastic components for car batteries in Pinsk. We are talking, first of all, about the production of plastic casings, which are

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<sup>205</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Brest" will establish the production of LED lamps [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyi-rezident-sez-brest-naladit-proizvodstvo-svetodiodnyh-svetilnikov-565824-2023/>

<sup>206</sup> New resident of FEZ "Brest" plans to develop export-oriented production [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/novij-rezident-sez-C2%ABrest%C2%BB-planiruet-razvivat-eksportoorientirovannoe-proizvodstvo>



still purchased on foreign markets. "The project envisages investment in fixed capital in the amount equivalent to \$9.3 million. It is planned to employ about 90 workers at the additionally introduced workplaces"<sup>207</sup>. Production, warehouse and administrative premises will be built.

And in 2024, two more new residents appeared in the FEZ "Brest". The first one is a specialized enterprise **Kobrin Tool Plant SITOMO OJSC**, which is the only one in Belarus that manufactures locksmith and assembly tools used in machine building, repair service, technological equipment and as household tools. In cooperation with OJSC "BMZ - managing company of the holding company "BMZ", the new resident will establish "production of import-substituting, innovative for Belarus products, which will be used in the manufacture of hydraulic cylinders and shock absorbers. For this purpose it is planned to demolish the old production building and build a new shop where modern high-tech equipment will be installed"<sup>208</sup> and where chrome-plated blanks of hydraulic cylinder rods will be produced. This project will be implemented with the support of the Innovation Fund of the Brest Regional Executive Committee with the inclusion of "SITOMO" in the State Program of Innovative Development for 2021-2025. The total investment for five years will exceed 28 million euros, and the number of new jobs will exceed 40.

In the second case, a new FEZ resident - **Industrial Vostok Engineering-Bel LLC** - will organize in Baranovichi the production of

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<sup>207</sup> 1 AK-Plastic Ltd. is a new resident of FEZ "Brest" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/ooo-%C2%AB1-ak-plastik%C2%BB-%E2%80%93-novvii-rezident-sez-%C2%ABrest%C2%BB>

<sup>208</sup> A new resident creates import-substituting production on the territory of FEZ "Brest" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/novvii-rezident-sozdaet-na-territorii-sez-%C2%ABrest%C2%BB-importozameshchavushhee-proizvodstvo>

non-standard equipment for mining, chemical and oil refining industries, metallurgy, energy and construction industry. "The nomenclature of products planned for production includes: gas cleaning and dust collecting equipment and its parts for various types of production; non-standard metal structures and non-standard equipment (valves, membranes, fans, pumps)"<sup>209</sup> . At the first stage the vacant production facilities of another enterprise-resident of FEZ "Brest" - **OJSC "Baranovich Automatic Lines Plant"** - with the area of about two and a half thousand square meters will be used.

And the potential of new participants of this free economic zone is not exhausted by these residents. For example, only this year the representatives of FEZ "Brest" have already participated in such major business events as the Third Belarusian-Latin American Forum, business contacts forum "Brest-China, Strategic Partnership", the 53rd Chinese International Furniture Exhibition GIFF Guangzhou 2024, a meeting with representatives of Italian business circles from the association "Veneto-Belarus", where specific negotiations with business entities from a number of countries interested in cooperation took place. And in February 2024 in Uzbekistan FEZ "Brest" Administration signed a Cooperation Agreement with FEZ "Angren" Directorate "with the purpose of direct contacts on trade and economic interaction and elaboration of perspective projects on the basis of production cooperation"<sup>210</sup> . The parties agreed to develop business cooperation, maintain bilateral contacts on issues of mutual interest.

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<sup>209</sup> "Industrial East Engineering-Bel" - a new resident of FEZ "Brest". [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/%C2%ABindustrial-vostok-inzhiniring-bel%C2%BB-%E2%80%93-novyj-rezident-sez-%C2%ABbrest%C2%BB>

<sup>210</sup> Business meeting with Uzbek partners [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/361959-delovaya-vstrecha-s-uzbekskimi-partnerami>

And such facts show that FEZ "Brest" continues to strengthen the work to improve and create conditions for attracting new investors.

Now let us turn to the experience of the **FEZ Grodnoinvest**, which became the leader among other Belarusian FEZs by the results of 2023 in terms of the volume of accumulated foreign investments by its resident enterprises - 880 million dollars. And this year the investment sites of this FEZ, having all the infrastructure for successful work, have all the prerequisites for further growth. Suffice it to say that "over the last 5 years foreign direct investment (FDI) on a net basis has grown 2.6 times, production output - 1.9 times, revenue - 1.7 times <...>, export of products - 1.6 times"<sup>211</sup>. Residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" account for up to 85 percent of FDI on a net basis, up to 25 percent of industrial output and up to 43 percent of exports in the regional indicators.

And in 2024 among the priority tasks of this FEZ should be named - "growth of investments in fixed capital by 5.7%, export of goods by 7.8%, wages of employees by 12.4%, registration of 4 new residents, development of engineering and transport infrastructure of FEZ with construction of 4 new facilities"<sup>212</sup>. Fulfillment of these indicators will be ensured by increasing production volumes by existing residents, including at the expense of new enterprises in Grodno and Svisloch districts, as well as the implementation of construction of a railway terminal in Svisloch district, a production building for the

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<sup>211</sup> Abramenko: investment sites of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" have all the infrastructure for successful work [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-investploschadki-sez-grodnoinvest-obladajut-vsej-infrastrukturoidlja-uspeshnoi-raboty-577583-2023/>

<sup>212</sup> Abramenko: FEZ administrations need to keep under control the implementation of investment projects of residents [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/abramenko-administratsijam-sez-nuzhno-derzhat-na-kontrole-hod-realizatsii-investproektov-rezidentov-631354-2024/>

organization of tare and packaging production in Slonim and expansion of a number of existing production facilities.

For reference, we would like to remind you that in the first quarter of 2023 alone, residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest commissioned nine production and engineering facilities worth over eight million Belarusian rubles as part of the implementation of investment projects in Grodno Region. Among them is Aquapack Industrial LLC, which installed an automatic line for the assembly of grids as part of the project to create the production of packaging and flexible labeling. "Optik Plant" OJSC commissioned a glass furnace in the course of modernization of fiber production. Slonimmebel" enterprise installed new equipment during the modernization of production, Slonim cardboard and paper plant "Albertin" reconstructed local treatment facilities. JLLC "BelGreenline" launched a new line for production and packaging of wet wipes"<sup>213</sup> . As for PT "Typhoon" LLC, the company reconstructed storage areas in the course of expanding the production of construction mixtures. Konus RUE completed the construction of the building of the administrative and household complex. Grodno Glass Plant within the framework of the project on creation of glass container production using innovative energy-efficient and resource-saving technologies organized the first ignition of the furnace and started the process of equipment debugging and industrial testing of production lines. "Smorgon Aggregate Plant" at this stage is carrying out technical armament to automate production processes, increase output and introduce new models of agricultural machinery.

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<sup>213</sup> FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents put into operation 9 new objects in the first quarter of 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-v-pervom-kvartale-2023-goda-vveli-v-ekspluatatsiju-9-novyh-objektov-559606-2023/>

Another important detail: in 2023, six new residents were registered in the FEZ Hrodnainvest. First, it is **ZapadTransGranitsa LLC**, which is building an international trade and logistics complex near Grodno airport - in the area of the agro-town of Obukhovo. "This complex will make it possible to use the logistic potential of Grodno region, to attract investments in the creation of a multimodal center that has no analogues in the region, to involve in economic activity the building of the air terminal that has not been completed, to attract tourists and foreign trading companies..."<sup>214</sup>

Secondly, it is the **Novogrudok Construction and Installation Department OJSC**, which implements in Novogrudok the production of construction materials, including reinforced concrete and joinery products, metal structures, with the reconstruction of shops and maximum utilization of existing capacities, as well as the purchase of new equipment. This project will "create new jobs with decent wages, expand the range of products and increase production volumes, and establish export deliveries..."<sup>215</sup>

Thirdly, it is **JSC "Grodno Lathe Chuck Plant "BelTAPAZ"**, which produces lathe chucks and spare parts for machine-tool and tool industries. "The investment project involves the purchase and installation of new technological equipment to expand the existing and master the production of a new product line. The realization of the project will allow the plant to increase export deliveries, to provide an increase in revenues to the budget and extra-budgetary funds, to

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<sup>214</sup> Zaleski, B. International Cooperation and Media. Part IV. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 359.

<sup>215</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Grodnainvest" will expand the production of construction materials in Novogrudok [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novy-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-organizuet-proizvodstvo-stroitelnykh-materialov-v-novogrudke/>

increase its own financial potential"<sup>216</sup> . It should be noted that more than ten projects in the FEZ "Grodnoinvest" are already being implemented in the sphere of production of machinery and auto components, industrial equipment and construction machinery, optics and electronics, the annual output of which exceeds two hundred million dollars.

In November, the FEZ registered the fourth resident of 2023 - **LuckyPat LLC**, which intends to organize the production of dry and wet food, as well as various accessories and natural fillers for pets in Hrodna, in the Kolbasino district. It is expected that these products "will contribute to the substitution of similar goods imported to the market of the Republic of Belarus, as well as will be exported to the EAEU countries and neighboring countries. The launch of finished products is planned for the second quarter of 2024"<sup>217</sup> .

In the same November last year, another resident of FEZ Grodnoinvest appeared - **ErNex Adaptive Technologies CJSC**, which creates innovative production of sodium and LED lighting fixtures for the needs of agriculture and medicine. The point is that these products are able to adjust to the state of a living organism taking into account its personal living conditions, growth phases, climatic components, time of day, as this is in demand for both the greenhouse industry and the animal world. "The construction of a modern production and storage complex and a research center is planned. The total investment costs will amount to more than \$9 million. 82 new jobs are planned to be

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<sup>216</sup> A new resident with export-oriented production is registered in FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyi-rezident-s-eksportno-orientirovannym-proizvodstvom-zaregistrirovann-v-sez-grodnoinvest-596436-2023/>

<sup>217</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" organizes the production of products for pets [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyi-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-organizuet-proizvodstvo-produkcii-dlya-domashnix-zhivotnyx/>

created during the whole period of the project realization"<sup>218</sup>. In the course of the project realization the initiators intend to participate in scientific developments and interaction with major regional and foreign industry educational institutions. It is planned that the main part of manufactured products will be exported. The project will also be aimed at import substitution, as it will significantly reduce imports of similar products to Belarus.

The sixth FEZ resident in 2023 was **KOM-UNION LLC** with a project to expand the production of tools for the construction and agricultural sectors in Grodno district - in Novaya Goza. For this purpose, "it is planned to reconstruct the existing production facility, build an administrative and utility building and warehouses, as well as modernize and purchase additional equipment to expand the range of products"<sup>219</sup>. Interestingly, this project also has an export and import-substitution orientation. On the one hand, deliveries of finished products of the new resident will be made to the markets of the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union. On the other hand, they will make it possible to systematically reduce imports of similar products to Belarus.

And finally, in early January 2024, the 81st resident of FEZ Grodnoinvest was registered. This is **AgroFertCom LLC**, which is creating a multi-profile production of liquid fertilizers in the Aulsa district. The liquid fertilizers planned for production have high

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<sup>218</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" organizes innovative production of adaptive lighting systems [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-organizuet-innovatsionnoe-proizvodstvo-adaptivnyh-sistem-osveschenija-600747-2023/>

<sup>219</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" will expand the production of construction and agrotechnical tools [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-rasshirit-proizvodstvo-instrumentov-dlya-stroitelnyx-rabot/>

biological activity, provide better availability of nutrition elements for plants in comparison with the corresponding inorganic fertilizers. The products will be characterized by low toxicity and high manufacturability. "In order to implement the investment project, it is planned to acquire and reconstruct production areas, as well as modern technological equipment. It is planned to create more than 10 new jobs during the project realization period"<sup>220</sup> . The products of the new resident will be focused on the development of export supplies to near and far abroad countries.

All these facts suggest that the FEZ Grodnoinvest, where in 2023 six enterprises in the fields of logistics, mechanical engineering and metalworking, production of construction materials in Grodno, Grodno and Novogrudok districts with total investments of more than 50 million dollars became residents, will show even more impressive results in 2024, based on a well-thought-out strategy that can give a significant boost to the socio-economic development of the Grodno region.

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<sup>220</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" will create a modern multi-profile production of liquid fertilizers [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyi-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-sozdast-sovremennoe-mnogoprofilnoe-proizvodstvo-zhidkix-udobrenii/>



## **Free economic zones: aiming to increase the pace of development**

Free Economic Zones (FEZs) of Belarus have been drivers of economic development of the regions of our republic for many years. Statistics show that 440 residents of six Belarusian FEZs account for more than five percent of the gross domestic product, one fifth of foreign direct investment, exports of goods and industrial production. Only "in the last three years, 100 new FEZ residents with plans to create 6 thousand jobs have become new participants"<sup>221</sup>. And in 2024, the Belarusian FEZs are already implementing new projects in metal and wood processing, machine building, integrated logistics, chemical and polymer industry, production of charging infrastructure of electric transport, biotechnology. "These include a number of large investment projects: organization in Kobrin of the production of chrome-plated blanks of hydraulic cylinder rods, construction in Vitebsk of a plant for the production of chipboard and laminated boards, organization in FEZ "Minsk" and FEZ "Mogilev" of the production of metal pipes and packaging materials"<sup>222</sup>. In terms of export development, FEZ residents of Belarus are actively working on reorienting the supply of their products from the European direction to the countries of Asia, Africa and the Pacific region, diversifying logistics chains and expanding the range of products supplied. For example, "woodworking manufacturers have increased shipments to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, China, Mexico, Russia, Turkey and Uzbekistan. As a result,

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<sup>221</sup> Naumovich: FEZs are drivers of economic development of regions [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/naumovich-sez-javljaiutsia-draiverami-ekonomicheskogo-razvitiia-regionov-664109-2024/>

<sup>222</sup> 36 new residents have been registered in the economic zones of Belarus since the beginning of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/v-ekonomicheskikh-zonah-belarusi-s-nachala-goda-zaregistrirovany-36-novyh-rezidentov-648189-2024/>

it was possible to compensate for the reduction in shipments to the European market."<sup>223</sup> . And already in the first quarter of 2024, exports exceeded two billion dollars. This is a record for three months of this year for the entire period of operation of Belarusian FEZs. At the same time, resident enterprises "significantly increased the volume of supplies of their products to Asian countries: to Kazakhstan - 1.1 times, to India - 1.2 times, to Tajikistan - 1.3 times, to China - 1.5 times, to Turkey - 1.6 times, to Turkmenistan - 2.1 times, to Iraq - 4.5 times"<sup>224</sup> . Domestic FEZs continue to have a significant impact on regional indicators, accounting for up to half of the export volumes of a number of Belarusian regions.

Among the leaders in this indicator is **FEZ "Gomel-Raton"**, where in 2022 almost 105 million dollars of foreign direct investment was attracted for the implementation of investment projects, or more than half of the volume of foreign investment in Gomel region. At the same time, at the beginning of 2023, 67 residents worked in the FEZ, including 24 companies with foreign capital from 15 countries. "In total, 3 new resident enterprises with the volume of declared investments of \$2.3 million were registered in 2022. Foreign trade turnover of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents according to the results of work in 2022 increased by 7.8% compared to the same period of 2021 and amounted to \$2.6 billion"<sup>225</sup> . The residents sold most of their products outside Belarus. Exports of FEZ participants' goods account

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<sup>223</sup> Abramenko: export supplies of FEZ residents exceeded \$2 billion - it is a record [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-eksportnye-postavki-rezidentov-sez-prevvsili-2-mld-eto-rekord-644544-2024/>

<sup>224</sup> Export of goods of FEZ residents in the first quarter exceeded \$2 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-tovarov-rezidentov-sez-v-i-kvartale-prevvsil-2-mld-635605-2024>

<sup>225</sup> Foreign trade turnover of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" increased by 7.8% last year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vneshnetorgovyi-oborot-sez-gomel-raton-uvlechilsja-za-proshlyi-god-na-78-552223-2023>

for almost forty percent of the region's exports. In 2023, exports of FEZ residents amounted to almost one and a half billion dollars.

Now 63 investment projects are being implemented here at various stages. There are 25 enterprises with foreign capital from 13 countries operating in the FEZ. Residents' enterprises employ nearly 30 thousand people. In 2023, 545 people will be hired for additional jobs"<sup>226</sup>. At the same time, the growth of investments of residents of this FEZ last year amounted to 163 percent or 315.5 million Belarusian rubles. If we talk about the growth of foreign direct investment on a net basis, it grew by 150 percent or \$38.2 million. "Among the new objects introduced by FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents in 2023 are the workshop for the production of sterile medical products at the enterprise "Alcopack", metalworking shop "Veza-G", reconstructed administrative and laboratory buildings of "Mirtek-engineering" and "TM BELAR", mineral fertilizer warehouse of Gomel Chemical Plant"<sup>227</sup>. In addition, FEZ resident - SvetlogorskKhimvolokno OJSC - has mastered the production of latex and nitrile gloves. For this purpose about 10 million dollars of investments were directed. And "the project on production of three-layer polyethylene film is at the stage of completion - now the equipment is being installed. Capacity - 4 thousand tons per year..."<sup>228</sup>. Already in 2024, another FEZ resident - JSC "Milkavita" - began to produce fast-soluble milk powder, which

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<sup>226</sup> FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents exported goods worth \$1.4 billion in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-eksportirovali-tovarov-na-14-mlrd-v-2023-godu-618590-2024>

<sup>227</sup> Over Br315 million invested in production by residents of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/svvshe-br315-mln-investirovali-v-proizvodstvo-rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-v-2023-godu-618608-2024>

<sup>228</sup> FEZ resident "Gomel-Raton" has established the production of import-substituting products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://gomelraton.com/press-center/news/rezident-sez-gomel-raton-naladil-vypusk-importozameshchayushchey-produktsii/>

has no analogues in Belarus. The thing is that milk in this case is subjected to low-temperature drying, while not losing its useful properties. "The innovative product can be subsequently used to produce cheese, sour cream, cottage cheese and other dairy products. The payback period of the project is about 8 years"<sup>229</sup> .

Another indicative fact: last year five enterprises were registered in this FEZ: two new residents - in Gomel, two - in Mozyr, one - in Svetlogorsk district. For example, LLC "Geflis" implements an investment project on development in the field of reconstruction, modernization and repair of sewage treatment facilities, LLC "GOSNIP" - on the organization of production of cable and wire products, LLC "Ameta-Electrod" implements "a project to organize the production of a full cycle of welding rutile electrodes for manual arc welding. <...> The project provides for the creation of 197 additional jobs"<sup>230</sup> . In June 2023 CJSC "BELPLASTKHIM" was registered in the FEZ with an investment project on modernization and development of wallpaper production with the purpose of "development of a fundamentally new type of products - profile embossed wallpaper <...>. The number of employees hired for the additionally introduced workplaces will amount to 73 persons"<sup>231</sup> .

And in the third quarter of last year, another new FEZ resident - ProfitPlastMetal LLC - started implementing an investment project to

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<sup>229</sup> The enterprise-resident of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" OJSC "Milkavita" plans to switch to the production of quick-soluble milk powder, which has no analogues in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <http://gomelraton.com/press-center/news/predpriyatie-rezident-sez-gomel-raton-oao-milkavita-planiruet-pereyti-k-vypusku-sukhogo-bystrorastvo/>

<sup>230</sup> Registration of a new resident of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" took place [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://gomelraton.com/press-center/residents/sostoyalas-registratsiya-novogo-rezidenta-sez-gomel-raton/>

<sup>231</sup> In FEZ "Gomel-Raton" a new resident CJSC "BELPLASTKHIM" is registered [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://gomelraton.by/press-center/residents/v-sez-gomel-raton-zaregistrovan-novyy-rezident-zao-belplastkhim/>

create a production facility for cast iron products to meet the needs of domestic and foreign enterprises on the premises formerly owned by Mozyr Distillery. "The nomenclature of manufactured products will include both finished cast iron products (heating radiators, various fasteners, hatches, ladders, ladders, consoles, plinths, grates, cast iron utensils) and cast iron blanks"<sup>232</sup>. At this enterprise it is planned to increase the number of employees to 105 people.

As for 2024, the FEZ is already negotiating "with potential domestic investors to organize export-oriented and import-substituting production of local treatment facilities, polyethylene and polypropylene products, metal structures of various complexity, reinforced concrete structures and reinforcement products"<sup>233</sup>. And in general, if we talk about the prospects of FEZ "Gomel-Raton", it should be noted: they plan to actively develop engineering and transport infrastructure, to provide resident enterprises with trained personnel in order to significantly expand opportunities and fulfill the key objectives of 2024 - "growth of investment in fixed capital by 25%, exports of goods by 5% and wages of employees by 11.8%, registration of 4 new residents"<sup>234</sup>, as well as to introduce new formats of interaction with FEZ participants, investors and foreign partners.

**FEZ Vitebsk**, established in August 1999, is one of the other FEZs contributing to the development of the Belarusian economy. The

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<sup>232</sup> A new resident of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" will launch the production of cast iron products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyi-rezident-sez-gomel-raton-zapustit-proizvodstvo-izdelij-iz-chuguna-579381-2023/>

<sup>233</sup> Five enterprises received the resident status of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/piat-predpriyatij-poluchili-status-rezidenta-sez-gomel-raton-v-2023-godu-618615-2024/>

<sup>234</sup> Abramenko: FEZ "Gomel-Raton" actively participates in personnel training for its residents [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/abramenko-sez-gomel-raton-aktivno-uchastvuet-v-podgotovke-kadrov-dlja-svoih-rezidentov-632039-2024/>

first resident was registered in this FEZ in 2000. This is the German company Vitella, which is still operating today. In 2018, a presidential decree expanded the area in this FEZ and defined "16 sectors located not only in the area of Vitebsk, but also in other cities and urban settlements of the region - Postavy, Orsha, Barani, Bolbasovo, Novopolotsk, Polotsk district, as well as near the villages of Kosachi and Kopti of Vitebsk district"<sup>235</sup>. And in August 2024 the FEZ celebrated its 25th anniversary. And today it has already registered 57 residents with capital from 14 countries of the world, where about 16 thousand people work. FEZ administration gives priority to investors with innovative and high-tech projects, constantly developing engineering and transport infrastructure and creating the most favorable conditions for residents. As a result, "since 2000 the free economic zone has attracted \$1.2 billion of investments, including \$900 million in fixed capital. The volume of accumulated foreign investments in FEZ "Vitebsk" as of April 1 of the current [2024] year amounted to \$104.4 million. Almost all of them, namely 99%, are foreign direct investments"<sup>236</sup>. At the same time, investments continue to come from investors from Poland, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Sweden, Great Britain, Lithuania, Spain, Romania, Latvia, and Iran. In general, FEZ residents today cooperate with more than 50 countries. At the beginning of this summer "they exported \$340 million worth of goods, the total trade turnover exceeded \$500 million"<sup>237</sup>. An important trend in this context

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<sup>235</sup> Zalessky, B. Success is in development. Free economic zones as points of growth / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 17.

<sup>236</sup> Modernization of production facilities, competitive goods. In FEZ "Vitebsk" named the secret of success for business [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/modernizatsija-proizvodstv-konkurentosposobnyj-tovar-v-sez-vitebsk-nazvali-sekret-uspeha-dlja-biznesa-653077-2024/>

<sup>237</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" strengthened interaction with the CIS countries [Electronic resource]. - 2024. URL:

is the strengthening of cooperation with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In 2024, the growth of exports to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan has already been ensured.

It should be reminded that among the main tasks of the FEZ for the current year are defined - "growth of investments in fixed capital by 10%, export of goods by 9%, wages of employees by 12%, registration of 6 new enterprises"<sup>238</sup> . And by 2027 FEZ residents plan to increase the volume of industrial production at least twice, which will amount to eight billion Belarusian rubles. "Also, a twofold increase by 2027 is expected in all key indicators: the size of the average salary of employees, tax payments, exports of goods, the volume of import-substituting products"<sup>239</sup> .

In the first half of 2024, FEZ residents increased production by almost a quarter, increased profit from sales by two and a half times, doubled both net profit and the number of new jobs - 294 people. The main activities of FEZ residents in the current year - production of cable and mechanical engineering products, hydraulics, construction materials and equipment, woodworking, chemical and oil and gas industry, radio electronics, food production, pharmaceuticals, water purification and water treatment, printing and packaging, light industry goods, transportation and logistics. "The main export items, providing more than 60% of supplies abroad, were insulated wires, cables, TV

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<https://subs.belta.by/Republ.nsf/59e33ed42f57f8c5422569f8002b86f7/2137d035c089e21e43258b7300419c56!OpenDocument>

<sup>238</sup> Abramenko: FEZ administrations need to keep under control the implementation of investment projects of residents [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/abramenko-administratsijam-sez-nuzhno-derzhat-na-kontrol-e-hod-realizatsii-investirovok-rezidentov-631354-2024/>

<sup>239</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" enterprises intend to double industrial production by 2027 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-sez-vitebsk-k-2027-godu-namereny-uvlechit-promproizvodstvo-v-dvoe-653093-2024/>

sets, monitors and projectors, fiberglass and fiberglass products, water treatment and water purification equipment, linen fabrics, processed fish, plastic containers, flat rolled white tin plate"<sup>240</sup> .

Recently registered FEZ residents will also work to increase exports. First, it is the Belarusian-Italian EuroPressForm LLC, which is the only enterprise in the Eurasian Economic Union with competence in the production of molds for casting shoe soles. Secondly, it is the Belarusian-Chinese Chile New Energy LLC, which plans to produce urban electric transport - trucks with a load capacity of up to three and a half tons and municipal vehicles, as well as three-wheeled agricultural machinery.

And in 2025, four major investment projects will be realized in the FEZ. "Two projects in machine-tool engineering, one project in food industry, one project in woodworking"<sup>241</sup> . In particular, Vitebsk Tractor Spare Parts Plant plans to organize a new production in the FEZ. It is about that "together with Minsk Tractor Plant a road map of the project realization has been developed. At the initial stages it is envisaged large-scale assembly, and in the future - the organization of a full cycle of machinery production"<sup>242</sup> . So, the choice of a new site in the FEZ was caused by the need for innovative production with modern infrastructure, as well as the shortage of space directly on the territory of the plant.

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<sup>240</sup> For 25 years of activity FEZ "Vitebsk" attracted \$1.2 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/za-25-let-deyatelnosti-sez-vitebsk-privlekla-12-mlrd-664898-2024/>

<sup>241</sup> Four large investment projects will be realized in Vitebsk region in 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/chetyre-krupnyh-investproekta-realizuiut-v-vitebskoi-oblasti-v-2025-godu-653071-2024/>

<sup>242</sup> Vitebsk Tractor Spare Parts Plant plans to organize new production in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://vitvesti.by/obshchestvo/vitebskii-zavod-traktornykh-zapchastei-planiruet-organizovat-novoe-proizvodstvo-v-sez-vitebsk.html>



Returning to the 25th anniversary of FEZ "Vitebsk", it should be noted that for a quarter of a century on this territory in Vitebsk region they managed to form a very effective system for the production of high-tech, innovative and import-substituting products. And today "the specific weight of FEZ "Vitebsk" residents in the indicators of the region in terms of direct foreign investments is 65%, in terms of industrial production - 14%, in terms of export of goods and services - 16%"<sup>243</sup> . And there is a strong belief that this FEZ will continue to increase the pace of development with the promotion of residents' products to new markets and with the involvement of new participants of this innovative platform.

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<sup>243</sup> Subbotin: an effective business environment for new industries has been created in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/subbotin-v-sez-vitebsk-sozdana-effektivnaia-biznes-sreda-dlia-novyh-proizvodstv-653047-2024/>

## Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: from Europe to Asia and Africa

The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) has been showing impressive rates of sales of domestic goods to foreign companies since the beginning of this year. Among the reasons for the successful performance of the exchange platform are the increase in the number of non-resident buyers, the opening of new markets, the introduction of additional commodity positions, as well as the opening of the exchange's representative office in Shanghai, the expansion of the network of exchange brokers in Central Asian countries, the introduction of the mechanism of exchange-targeted transactions and the intensification of cooperation with Belarusian diplomatic missions abroad. As a result, "in January-February 2024, foreign participants of exchange trading concluded more than 1.5 thousand transactions for the purchase of Belarusian goods totaling \$170 million. In the same period last year, the number of transactions amounted to 155, and their amount was \$14 million"<sup>244</sup>.

Today, foreign clients of the Belarusian stock exchange are among the leaders in the production of domestic agriculture and woodworking industry. For example, lumber is actively imported by China, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan, while Kazakhstan is in first place in sugar purchases. At the same time, as of March 1, 2024, 167 companies from China, 116 from Kazakhstan, 108 from Uzbekistan have already been accredited to BUTB. 100 - from Azerbaijan. And in **Europe** - in the Baltic States and Switzerland - rapeseed oil, beet pulp

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<sup>244</sup> Companies from 23 countries buy Belarusian goods on BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kompanii-iz-23-stran-pokupajut-belorusskie-tovary-na-butb-620798-2024>

and molasses are traditionally in demand. In 2024, a number of European countries plan to intensify cooperation with BUTB.

<sup>245</sup>In particular, in January this year BUTB agreed to cooperate with the **Belarus-Italy Chamber of Commerce** in the field of electronic exchange trade to facilitate the export of Belarusian agricultural products to the **Italian** market, as well as to establish supplies of Italian-made goods in demand in Belarus, including industrial equipment, special machinery, spare parts and components, since "Italian business is interested in working with Belarusian enterprises, and the BUTB platform is exactly the right tool that allows the Belarusian companies to cooperate with Italian companies. It should be noted that as of January 1, 2024, 22 Italian companies were already accredited on the Belarusian exchange platform. Last year, their exchange transactions were actually only for the purchase of "vet-blue" leather from Belarusian tanneries. This year, it seems that Belarusian rapeseed oil, beet pulp and molasses will also be in demand among Italian partners.

Beet molasses produced by Belarusian sugar mills is also in high demand on the Hungarian market. For this reason, the organization of its supplies through the BUTB can significantly increase the exchange turnover between the two countries. So companies from **Hungary** are already ready to be accredited at the Belarusian exchange platform and participate in the trades as sellers and buyers of agricultural products. "As for exports from Hungary, it could be agricultural seeds, which

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<sup>245</sup> BUTB will cooperate with the Belarus-Italy Chamber of Commerce [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-budet-sotrudnichat-s-torgovoi-palatoj-belarus-italija-611942-2024/>

<...> are very much in demand among Belarusian exchange traders"<sup>246</sup>

Another interesting partner of BUTB in Europe is **Serbia**. As of December 1, 2023, three companies from this country were accredited on the Belarusian stock exchange, which, as a rule, limited themselves to the purchase of sawn timber. But at the end of last year, the first transaction for the sale of butter to Serbia was registered on the BUTB. "The volume of the trial shipment amounted to 20 tons, and the buyer was a Serbian food importer accredited in November 2023"<sup>247</sup>. It is to be assumed that once the whole scheme of purchasing this product is worked out, butter deliveries to the Serbian market will become regular.

Speaking about BUTB's plans for cooperation with **Turkey** in 2024, we would like to remind you that last year the number of Turkish companies accredited to participate in exchange trading increased from 32 to 70, which increased the amount of transactions by 2.7 times during this period. At the same time, woodworking products and scrap metals were in the greatest demand of Turkish economic entities, which accounted for more than 90% of the Belarusian-Turkish exchange turnover. Imports accounted for only about two percent. These were mainly supplies of viscose yarn for Belarusian textile enterprises. In March 2024, at the business forum organized by the National Marketing Center together with the **Association of Businessmen of Turkey**, a priority task was set to expand the range of goods involved in exchange trade with this country in order to "attract Turkish enterprises from such

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<sup>246</sup> Hungarian business is interested in exchange trade in agricultural products with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vengerskij-biznes-zainteresovan-v-birzhevoj-torgovle-selhozproduksiej-s-belarusiju-615721-2024/>

<sup>247</sup> Belarusian butter for the first time realized in Serbia through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorussskoe-slivochnoe-maslo-vpervye-realizovano-v-serbiju-cherez-butb-604633-2023/>

spheres as agriculture, machine building, chemical industry to the BUTB, which will contribute to the growth of Belarusian-Turkish exchange trade turnover"<sup>248</sup>. In the agro-industrial sector, Belarus is already working on supplies of Belarusian vegetable oils, milk powder, beet pulp and molasses to Turkey. Turkish spare parts and components for automobiles and machinery, as well as industrial equipment may be in demand in Belarus. As a result, agreements on accreditation of importers of meat products and oilseed processing products from Turkey at the BUTB were reached within the framework of the business forum. In addition, suppliers of spare parts for construction machinery, sanitary equipment and polymer materials from this country are interested in participating in these tenders.

Among **Asian** countries, companies from **China** are traditionally trading at the Belarusian stock exchange in 2024. BUTB plans to further increase both exports of Belarusian agricultural products and Chinese imports of metals and metal products by participating in international exhibitions in the Celestial Empire. In particular, in March and April of this year BUTB specialists visited three authoritative forums at once. Firstly, at one of the largest food exhibitions in **China** - **China International Allfood Expo** in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, where more than 1,500 producers from all over the world participated. As a result of meetings with more than 50 Chinese companies "agreements were reached on accreditation of buyers of skimmed milk powder, whey powder and beef at BUTB. In addition, Chinese manufacturers of

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<sup>248</sup> The amount of transactions of Turkish companies on BUTB in 2023 almost tripled [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/summam-sdelok-turetskih-kompanij-na-butb-v-2023-godu-vyrosla-pochti-v-tri-raza-619661-2024/>

packaging lines, freezers, pasteurizers and beverage filling systems have shown interest in the Belarusian exchange platform"<sup>249</sup> .

Secondly, at the **Qingdao International Metal Processing Equipment Expo**, an international specialized exhibition of metallurgy and metal **processing**, where "major suppliers of sheet steel, pipe rolled products, foundry alloys and cable and wire products announced their readiness to participate in exchange trading"<sup>250</sup> . And already in the same March the first exchange deal on sale of import-substituting products by a Chinese resident was concluded on BUTB. The subject of the deal was a trial batch of pipe cutting disks. The seller "was a large supplier of equipment, spare parts and components for the steel, cement and electric power industries from Qingdao (Shandong Province), and the buyer was a Belarusian metallurgical enterprise"<sup>251</sup> . This fact shows that the list of states whose residents supply their products to Belarus using the import substitution service available on the BUTB industrial and consumer goods platform has expanded to eight.

Third, at the **135th Canton Fair** held in April in Guangzhou, where BUTB specialists held "substantive negotiations with a number of large manufacturers of lighting fixtures, video equipment, special machinery and electronics interested in entering the Belarusian market through exchange trading"<sup>252</sup> . The fact is that despite the shift of

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<sup>249</sup> BUTB took part in the food exhibition in China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-priniala-uchastie-v-prodovolstvennoi-vystavke-v-kitae-619317-2024/>

<sup>250</sup> BUTB plans to increase the supply of metals and metal products from China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-uvlechit-postavki-metallov-i-metalloizdelij-iz-kitaja-620557-2024/>

<sup>251</sup> The Chinese enterprise for the first time realized products through the service of import substitution BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajskoe-predpriatie-vpervye-realizovalo-produktsiju-cherez-servis-importozameschenija-butb-622959-2024/>

<sup>252</sup> BUTB platform interested manufacturers of machinery and equipment from China [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/ploschadka-butb-zainteresovala-proizvoditelei-tehniki-i-oborudovaniia-iz-kitaja-630456-2024/>

emphasis towards imports and domestic consumption, which has been observed in China in recent years, a significant part of Chinese companies are still export-oriented and are ready to use any opportunities to reach potential buyers, including with the help of the BUTB, considering not only exports, but also the conclusion of transit exchange transactions with companies from third countries, in particular, Central Asia - Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

And in the same April, the second resident broker from the Celestial Empire, accredited by the BUTB in 2024 as part of a set of measures to develop exchange trade with China and other Asian countries, appeared - the company **VIA Technology Import and Export Limited**, which "intends to assist importing organizations from the countries of the far arc in the procurement of Belarusian goods at exchange trading"<sup>253</sup>. At the initial stage, the new broker plans to focus on the countries of South and Southeast Asia - India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Cambodia. Earlier this company has already cooperated with buyers of sawn timber from China, and now it plans to extend its experience of cooperation with BUTB to other commodity positions, providing logistics and, if necessary, helping with mutual settlements. In general, as a result of this work, the amount of transactions of Chinese companies on BUTB "in the first quarter [of 2024] increased 7.5 times to \$56.3 million"<sup>254</sup>. At the same time, wood products accounted for the entire volume of export sales.

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<sup>253</sup> The new broker BUTB will facilitate the export of Belarusian goods to the countries of the far arc [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-broker-butb-posodejstvuet-eksportu-belorusskih-tovarov-v-strany-dalnej-dugi-625415-2024/>

<sup>254</sup> The amount of transactions of Chinese companies on BUTB in the first quarter increased 7.5 times to \$56.3 million [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/summa-sdelok-kitajskih-kompanij-na-butb-v-i-kvartale-voztrosla-v-75-raz-do-563-mln-630224-2024/>

Among East **Asian** countries, BUTB's cooperation with **Mongolia** is of interest. First, in 2024, it is planned to increase exports of Belarusian sugar, which is currently in high demand among Mongolian producers of soft drinks, through exchange trading. "Only in the first quarter of this year, 2.7 thousand tons of Belarusian sugar were sold to Mongolia. The next stage is to organize purchases of dairy products and flour"<sup>255</sup>. In particular, the issue of supplying the Mongolian market with domestic butter, skim milk powder and wheat flour is being worked out. Relevant agreements have already been reached with potential buyers of these goods - large retail chains and distributors.

As for the **Central Asian** countries, in 2024 BUTB plans to significantly increase trade turnover by realizing the export potential of the exchange platform with **Turkmenistan**. In particular, the bet is made on such demanded positions in the Turkmen market as lumber, dairy products and sugar. "Currently, 14 residents of Turkmenistan are accredited on the exchange, which use the exchange mechanism mainly for the purchase of softwood lumber"<sup>256</sup>. In order to expand the pool of buyers of these products, as well as to work out other promising areas of cooperation with business circles of the country, in March of this year, BUTB specialists visited Ashgabat. They held a number of meetings with potential importers of timber products and food industry enterprises of Turkmenistan, interested in buying skim milk powder and white granulated sugar in Belarus. In addition, following negotiations

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<sup>255</sup> Mongolia is interested in importing Belarusian flour and dairy products [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mongolija-zainteresovana-v-importe-belorusskoj-muki-i-molochnoi-produktsii-624977-2024/>

<sup>256</sup> BUTB counts on activation of exchange trade with Turkmenistan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasschitvvaet-na-aktivizatsiju-birzhevoj-torgovli-s-turkmenistanom-622734-2024/>



with the **State Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange of Turkmenistan** (GTSBT), an agreement was reached to exchange experience, technologies, and methodological developments in the field of electronic exchange trading, and the possibility of mutual accreditation of stockbrokers of BUTB and GTSBT to participate in trading on both platforms is being considered.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, BUTB will join efforts to develop exchange trading with the **Kyrgyz Chamber of Commerce and Industry**. Back in February 2024, the parties identified promising areas of cooperation, the implementation of which will increase the number of Kyrgyz companies using the exchange mechanism and multiply the volume of transactions concluded by residents of this Central Asian country on the BUTB platform. In particular, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kyrgyzstan expressed its readiness to assist in attracting new participants from among the members of the Chamber to the exchange trading, as well as to help in finding a company that would become a BUTB broker in this country. As for the commodity items of interest for mutual exchange trade, it is expedient to export sawn timber, sugar beet processing products, milk powder and steel fittings to Kyrgyzstan through the exchange platform, while food raw materials, groceries and cotton fiber will be in demand in the Belarusian market. We would like to add that as of mid-February this year, "25 residents of Kyrgyzstan are accredited at BUTB. At the end of 2023, the amount of transactions of exchange traders from this country increased by 34% due to purchases of Belarusian lumber and sugar"<sup>257</sup>.

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<sup>257</sup> Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kyrgyzstan will promote the development of exchange trade with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/torgovo-promyshlennaja-palata-kyrgyzstana-budet-sodejstvovat-razvitiyu-birzhevoj-torgovli-s-belarusiju-617034-2024/>

And in **Kazakhstan**, in February 2024, BUTB accredited a new broker - **Profit Standard LLP**, which will focus on organizing regular deliveries of products of the Belarusian timber industry to the Kazakhstan market. The matter is that in 2023 the specific weight of sawn timber in the structure of transactions with residents of Kazakhstan was relatively small, so with the assistance of the Kazakh broker it is planned to increase this key indicator, as well as to attract new participants to the exchange, ready to work as sellers or buyers. It should be noted that "last year [2023] the sum of exchange transactions of Kazakhstan companies increased by 13%. At the same time, the lion's share of trade turnover was provided by import of Belarusian sugar, and purchases of timber products were irregular. As a result, they accounted for only about 3% of total sales of Belarusian goods to Kazakhstan"<sup>258</sup>. For comparison, wood products occupy a much larger share in trade with Kazakhstan's neighbors, such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.

Finally, let's look at the development of cooperation of the Belarusian exchange platform with **African** countries. BUTB plans to promote effective e-commerce opportunities on this continent and has already formulated "clear objectives of using the exchange mechanism to intensify mutual trade and increase trade turnover this year with African partners"<sup>259</sup>, including from **Egypt**. And already in May 2024, the Egyptian company **International Co. for Industry & Projects** became the first BUTB broker in this African country. After all, it "has a wide network of business contacts in Egypt and beyond, as well as its

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<sup>258</sup> BUTB accredited broker in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-akkreditovala-brokera-v-kazahstane-615531-2024/>

<sup>259</sup> Zaleskii, B. Realization of economic potential in the conditions of global turbulence / Boris Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. - C. 70.

own warehouse and office space in Cairo, which can be provided to Belarusian exporters working for BUTB"<sup>260</sup>. The new partner of BUTB plans not to limit itself to the Egyptian market, but to supply Belarusian goods to Algeria, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia, where there is also a high demand for Belarusian products. It is planned to develop exchange trade between Belarus and Egypt both in the already developed commodity areas and to use new liquid positions, which include dairy products, sugar and potato starch. "In the past, Egyptian companies have already bought wood products on the exchange, so this direction is certainly one of the priorities. However, <...> Belarusian agricultural products are also in high demand in Egypt. In this regard, the launch of supplies of milk powder and whey, beet sugar and potato starch to the Egyptian market will significantly increase the exchange trade turnover with Belarus"<sup>261</sup>. In the future, the new broker intends to export Belarusian goods to Egypt's neighboring countries, which is a completely different scale and opportunities.

Another Egyptian business entity interested in accreditation at the BUTB for export-import activities in the Belarusian market is **KATO Investment** Holding, which plans to supply Egypt with Belarusian lumber, dairy products, sugar, vegetable oils and synthetic fiber, and Belarus with Egyptian polymer products, cotton yarn and fruit and vegetable products. And "this is only a foundation on the basis of which further interaction between the Egyptian holding and the stock exchange will be built, since the range of mutual interests of Belarus

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<sup>260</sup> BUTB is considering accrediting a broker in Egypt [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-akkreditatsii-brokera-v-egipte-615805-2024/>

<sup>261</sup> BUTB broker in Egypt will supply Belarusian goods to North Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/broker-butb-v-egipte-budet-postavliat-belorusskie-tovary-v-severnuyu-afriku-631847-2024/>

and Egypt is much wider"<sup>262</sup>. It only remains to add that as of February 1, 2024, five residents from this African country have already been accredited on the Belarusian stock exchange, the structure of transactions of which is dominated by imports of woodworking products from Belarus. But in the near future, the situation in this matter is likely to change for the better. Both in terms of the number of residents and the variety of transactions.

Another potential partner on the African continent where BUTB intends to develop exchange trading is **Algeria**, as the market of this country is interesting for Belarusian exporters for a number of reasons. First, because of the high solvent demand from local consumers. Secondly, there is an opportunity to enter the markets of neighboring countries through Algeria. So, by applying the mechanism of exchange trading for supplies of meat, dairy and oil and fat products, which are in high demand here, trade in these goods through the exchange platform will provide an additional sales channel for Belarusian exporters, while Algerian importers will have an opportunity to purchase directly from Belarusian producers. At the international exhibition of food industry DJAZAGRO, which was held in April this year in Algeria, BUTB specialists attracted Algerian companies that are ready to import agricultural products from Belarus, as well as partner organizations that can assist in the development of the Belarusian-Algerian exchange trade. Among them is the Algerian Association of Employers, which has already expressed interest in cooperation with BUTB in terms of informing the business community of this country about the potential and advantages of using the Belarusian exchange

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<sup>262</sup> BUTB will simplify the access of Egyptian business to the market of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/butb-uprostit-dostup-egipetskogo-biznesa-na-rynok-belarusi-618011-2024/>

platform in mutual trade. As a result of these negotiations, "agreements were reached on the sale of Belarusian dried milk and rapeseed oil to the Algerian market, which are now actively supplied to European and Asian countries"<sup>263</sup>.

In 2024, BUTB also plans joint steps with another African country, **Tanzania**, to organize the participation of Tanzanian companies in the exchange trading of agricultural and industrial products. For this purpose, an action plan will be drawn up to inform Tanzanian business. **The Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Tanzania**, "which unites about 9 thousand companies from different branches of industry and agriculture, will be involved in this work. Many of them are actively engaged in export-import activities..."<sup>264</sup>. The parties also formed a preliminary list of commodity items for the organization of mutually beneficial exchange trade between Belarusian and Tanzanian enterprises. Thus, the list of promising goods for export to Tanzania includes plant protection products, microfertilizers, fodder additives, and petrochemical products, while seeds for sowing, groceries, raw materials for the food industry, and cotton yarn are included for supplies to Belarus.

To summarize. As of May 1, 2024, 7192 non-resident companies from 70 countries were accredited on BUTB. This indicates that since the beginning of this year, 345 new traders from 36 countries have come to the exchange. And for four months the amount of export deals concluded on BUTB "exceeded the amount of import contracts by \$138

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<sup>263</sup> BUTB intends to develop exchange trade in agricultural products with Algeria [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-namerena-razvivat-birzhevuju-torgovlju-selhozproduksiei-s-alzhirom-630079-2024/>

<sup>264</sup> BUTB is working on the participation of companies from Tanzania in exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-prorabatyvaet-uchastie-kompanij-iz-tanzanii-v-birzhevyh-torgah-622486-2024/>

million. At the same time, compared to January-April 2023, the volume of exchange exports increased in value terms by 10 times..."<sup>265</sup> . All these facts show that BUTB is developing exchange trade on different continents and in different countries, both in terms of developed commodity directions and facilitating the emergence of new export-import positions, which will significantly increase the exchange trade turnover of Belarus with partners - from Europe to Asia and Africa - in the near future.

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<sup>265</sup> BUTB foreign trade surplus from the beginning of the year amounted to \$138 million [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/polozhitelnoe-saldo-vneshnej-torgovli-butb-s-nachala-goda-sostavilo-138-mln-632116-2024>

## **Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: to develop partnership both in known areas and new positions**

In 2024, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) continues to be active in the market of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to develop export-import opportunities and increase exchange turnover between the two countries. This is evidenced by the figures: as of the beginning of October this year, BUTB has already accredited 224 residents from the PRC, three of whom have the status of stockbrokers. And "for seven months of 2024, the amount of transactions of Chinese business entities reached \$84 million, which is 2.6 times more than in the same period of 2023"<sup>266</sup>. At the same time, residents of the Celestial Empire bought and sold mainly timber, meat and dairy products, ferrous metal products, and industrial equipment on the Belarusian exchange platform. Among the effective tools for promoting BUTB to the Chinese market is the participation of this exchange platform in international exhibitions held in different regions of China.

For example, in June this year BUTB for the first time took part in the **international exhibition EXPO "China-Eurasia"** held in Urumqi - the administrative center of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Taking into account the theme of the exhibition, the main emphasis at the stand of BUTB was made on agricultural products and industrial goods. Visitors were offered to familiarize themselves with the commodity nomenclature and export-import opportunities of the Belarusian exchange platform, as well as to consult on the issues of

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<sup>266</sup> BUTB will help Chinese producers of synthetic fiber to enter the Belarusian market [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/butb-pomozhet-kitajskim-proizvoditeljam-sinteticheskogo-volokna-vyjti-na-belorusskij-rynok-652563-2024>

accreditation at the exchange and participation in trading. In addition, at the stand of BUTB there was an opportunity to view actual purchase and sale orders placed at the exchange by Belarusian enterprises, which made it possible to conduct substantive negotiations with Chinese importers and exporters. It should be noted that participation in this exhibition forum helped to attract manufacturing and trade enterprises from the whole Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to BUTB. Through the exchange they can trade with Belarusian companies without intermediaries on a wide range of goods: from cotton fiber and oilseeds to industrial equipment and special machinery. One more important detail: in 2024, the trend towards diversification of the structure of the Belarusian-Chinese exchange turnover became clearer. Thus, "following the results of January-May, the amount of transactions with goods other than woodworking products increased more than 8 times. The exchange platform, in particular, was used by Chinese producers for supplies of ferrous and non-ferrous metal products, spare parts and components for machinery and equipment, raw materials for the food industry to Belarus"<sup>267</sup>. The BUTB expects that the share of products of the agro-industrial complex, metallurgy and light industry in the total volume of exchange trade between Belarus and China will grow as new participants from the PRC regions come to the trades.

In July 2024, thanks to the participation of BUTB in the **international exhibition of aluminum industry Aluminium China 2024**, held in Shanghai, more than twenty Chinese metal producers announced their readiness to enter the exchange commodity market of Belarus. Through BUTB "it is planned to supply the Belarusian market

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<sup>267</sup> BUTB electronic tools are presented at the EXPO "China-Eurasia" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/elektronnnye-instrumenty-butb-predstavleny-na-eks-po-kitai-evraziia-643984-2024/>



with aluminum pipes, profiles, sheets, foil and other demanded products"<sup>268</sup>. Thus, the circle of foreign suppliers of rolled aluminum products, using the Belarusian platform, will expand, and consumers from Belarus will be able to make purchases on more favorable terms. The appearance of new aluminum producers from China at the auction should not only have a positive impact on the volume of sales of products, but also increase the economic effect of the exchange mechanism for Belarusian enterprises of the real sector.

In August this year in the same Shanghai, the BUTB delegation participated in the **international exhibition of thermal insulation materials and energy-saving technologies TIM Expo Shanghai**, where it held talks on cooperation with leading Chinese producers of synthetic fibers on the issue of selling their products on the exchange trading. And "a number of Chinese companies expressed their readiness to place bids for the sale of the most demanded in Belarus types of fibers on the platform of industrial and consumer goods BUTB. Thus, Belarusian light industry enterprises will be able to purchase the raw materials they need from suppliers from the Celestial Empire verified by the exchange without intermediaries"<sup>269</sup>. This will not only make it possible to increase the efficiency of procurement activities of Belarusian bidders, but will also contribute to further strengthening of trade and economic relations between Belarus and China.

It should be noted that this year the BUTB is paying special attention to the involvement of non-residents of Belarus in exchange

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<sup>268</sup> Chinese aluminum producers are ready to enter the exchange market of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/kitajskie-proizvoditeli-aluminija-gotovy-vyiti-na-birzhevoi-rynok-belarusi-645865-2024/>

<sup>269</sup> BUTB will help Chinese producers of synthetic fiber to enter the Belarusian market [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/butb-pomozhet-kitajskim-proizvoditeljam-sinteticheskogo-voлокna-vyiti-na-belorusskij-rynok-652563-2024>

trading in industrial and consumer goods. In January-July 2024, companies from eight countries, including China, concluded transactions with such goods. Transactions have become more frequent, and for some commodity items have become regular. For example, this year China supplied Belarus with spare parts and components for machinery, industrial tools and technological equipment. Moreover, these were mostly import-substituting products.

A separate topic in this context is the activity of the BUTB representative office in Shanghai, which opened in 2023. Its specialists already regularly participate in the largest industry exhibitions, forums, conferences and other business events in China. Direct contact with representatives of Chinese business provides additional opportunities to inform potential bidders about BUTB's tools and services, and also simplifies interaction with already accredited companies.

Finally, in early September 2024, the opportunities for purchasing woodworking industry products from Belarus at the BUTB auction were presented at the **International Conference on Cooperation in the Production of Household Goods and Building Materials in China and Central Asia**, which was held in Xi'an, the administrative center of Shaanxi Province. The event, organized by the International Chamber of Furniture and Décor of China and the Furniture Chamber of Commerce of this province, was attended by about 400 business entities engaged in the production and sale of furniture, building materials and interior items. By involving these companies in the exchange trade, the BUTB plans to expand the pool of Chinese importers of Belarusian lumber products, as well as to establish supplies of wood panels to China, which are especially demanded in the furniture industry of the country.

It is known that in the current year PRC residents are the largest buyers of woodworking products at the exchange platform, but the potential for cooperation in this area is far from being exhausted. "For 9 months of 2024, Chinese participants purchased at the exchange trading almost 672 thousand cubic meters of sawn wood products, 2.4 times exceeding the figure achieved in January - September 2023. The growth of sales is connected with the reduction of sawn timber stocks in the domestic market of China, which stimulates demand for imports from Belarus"<sup>270</sup>. Traditionally, the highest demand from Chinese participants was for softwood sawn timber. At the same time, other types of products of the timber industry, which could interest the Chinese side, are also presented at the auction. In particular, the stock exchange is ready to assist furniture companies from China in purchasing Belarusian chipboard and fiberboard. After all, the leading producers of these goods are accredited on the Belarusian exchange platform, which will make it much easier for Chinese exporters to enter the Belarusian market.

All these facts demonstrate that BUTB "plans to further increase both exports of Belarusian agricultural products and Chinese imports of metals and metal products by participating in international exhibition events in the Celestial Empire"<sup>271</sup>, in order to develop exchange trading in different regions of China, both in developed commodity areas and in new items that will significantly increase the overall volume of Belarusian-Chinese trade turnover.

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<sup>270</sup> A large batch of Belarusian cellulose is planned to be realized for export through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/krupnuju-partiju-belorusskoi-tselliulozv-planiruetsja-realizovat-na-eksport-cherez-butb-667638-2024/>

<sup>271</sup> Zaleskii, B. Growth points of the Belarusian economy in the dynamics of global challenges / Boris Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. - C. 6.

In the second half of 2024, BUTB is also expanding cooperation with other countries on the Asian continent, including **Mongolia, South Korea, Vietnam, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Jordan, and Turkey.**

For example, back in June this year, BUTB signed a memorandum of cooperation with the **Mongolian Commodity Exchange** to combine the resources, technologies and experience of the two exchange platforms and give a new impetus to trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Mongolia. The parties will focus on agro-industrial products. At the same time, "based on the nomenclature of goods currently available on the Belarusian and Mongolian exchanges, the most promising positions for supplies to Mongolia are sugar and milk products, while Belarus should import raw materials for the textile industry - primarily wool and cashmere. .<sup>272</sup>

Recall that until recently, only Belarusian sugar was exported to Mongolia using the exchange mechanism. In four months of 2024, a little less than four thousand tons of this product worth about two and a half million dollars were sold to the Mongolian market. And already in May this year, two first deals were concluded at BUTB to supply skim milk powder to this East Asian country. "The buyer was a well-known Mongolian producer of dairy and sour-milk products. The total volume of the trial purchase amounted to 73 tons. Assistance in attracting the first Mongolian importer of Belarusian dairy products to the exchange

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<sup>272</sup> Commodity exchanges of Belarus and Mongolia plan to cooperate in trade in agricultural products [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/tovarnye-birzhi-belarusi-i-mongolii-planirujut-sotrudnicat-v-torgovle-selhozproduktsej-635733-2024/>

trading was provided by United Meres Machinery, an accredited broker of BUTB in Mongolia" .<sup>273</sup>

This fact can be considered a landmark event in the development of Belarusian-Mongolian exchange trade, especially considering that the expansion of the commodity nomenclature has a positive impact on the volume of exchange turnover and contributes to the growth of business activity of both sellers from Belarus and buyers from Mongolia. In addition, the parties plan to work out the issue of supplying the Mongolian market with Belarusian sawn timber, which is in high demand in the construction sector of the country. It only remains to add that six residents of Mongolia have already been "accredited on the BUTB, one of which has the status of a stock broker. In January-May 2024, the amount of exchange transactions of Mongolian traders reached \$2.5 million"<sup>274</sup> .

Another East Asian country, the **Republic of Korea**, is a very promising market for Belarusian timber companies. Korean residents of BUTB have been participating in the exchange trading in timber products since November 2023, gradually increasing the volume of transactions. In the first half of this year, they purchased almost six thousand cubic meters of softwood lumber. At the end of July 2024, "two companies from the Republic of Korea, specializing in the import, production and distribution of wood products, announced their readiness to make regular purchases of sawn timber on the exchange

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<sup>273</sup> Mongolia started buying Belarusian dairy products at the stock exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/mongolija-nachala-pokupat-belorusskuiu-molochnuiu-produktsiju-na-birzhevnyh-torgah-634389-2024/>

<sup>274</sup> BUTB will expand cooperation with Mongolian business [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-mongolskim-biznesom-638715-2024/>

platform"<sup>275</sup> . In addition, the issue of supplying wood fuel pellets or pellets to this East Asian country is under consideration. We are talking about the so-called "gray pellets" used for industrial purposes. And this issue, to all appearances, will soon become a practical matter.

Since the beginning of this fall, **Vietnam** has joined the list of BUTB's partners from the countries of South-East Asia. In the first days of September, the pool of foreign buyers of Belarusian milk powder was enlarged by a Vietnamese trading company, which concluded the first exchange transaction with a milk processing enterprise of Belarus using the address mechanism, operating on BUTB since August 9. "The purchase volume amounted to 52 tons"<sup>276</sup> . It should be noted that buyers from seven new countries came to BUTB in August to buy milk powder and other dairy products of domestic production.

Now let's move to the Middle East, where Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Syria are among the countries using the domestic exchange platform for imports of Belarusian-made goods. As of the beginning of October 2024, BUTB had accredited: 26 business entities from the UAE, 6 each from Lebanon and Egypt, 5 from Syria, 3 from Jordan, 2 from Iraq, and 1 each from Oman and Saudi Arabia. The UAE and Lebanon are the leaders by the sum of deals for three quarters. At that, in both cases the dynamics is positive. In particular, "compared to January-September of last year, the turnover of Emirati participants increased in monetary terms 96 times, and that of Lebanese participants - 1.5 times. Based on

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<sup>275</sup> Importers of forest products from the Republic of Korea are interested in cooperation with BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/uzhnokorejskie-importerv-lesoproductsij-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-s-butb-650959-2024/>

<sup>276</sup> Vietnam has joined the list of buyers of Belarusian dried milk through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/vietnam-popolnil-spisok-pokupatelej-belorusskogo-suhogo-moloka-cherez-butb-658614-2024/>

the structure of exchange sales, domestic lumber and milk powder are in the greatest demand among Middle Eastern companies. Their specific weight in the total volume of transactions is more than 70%"<sup>277</sup>

Speaking about landmark events in this context, we can note a number of interesting observations. For example, in early July this year, a UAE resident company purchased feed additives produced in Belarus for the first time via BUTB. The thing is that the companies from the Middle East countries had not previously concluded stock exchange transactions on the purchase of domestic feed additives. And these first exchange transactions on the purchase of amino acids, concluded by a company from the UAE, open a new page in the development of exchange trade between Belarus and this Middle Eastern country. Until now, UAE residents have been buying only sawn timber on the exchange. In particular, "in the first half of 2024, the volume of purchases amounted to 29 thousand cubic meters, which is 5.3 times more than in the whole of 2023. The entry of Emirati companies into the exchange market of agricultural products will undoubtedly give an additional impetus to cooperation between Belarus and the UAE in the exchange sphere and create prerequisites for further growth of mutual trade turnover"<sup>278</sup>.

Another interesting fact. In September this year, a major dairy distributor headquartered in Dubai (UAE), which serves the Middle East and North Africa region, intends to significantly increase its

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<sup>277</sup> Belarusian dairy products were first sold to Jordan through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belorusskuiu-molochnuiu-produktsiiu-vpervye-prodali-v-jordaniiu-cherez-butb-668653-2024/>

<sup>278</sup> The company from the UAE bought Belarusian feed additives for the first time at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/kompanija-iz-oe-vpervye-kupila-belorusskie-kormovve-dobavki-na-butb-644906-2024/>

purchases of skim milk powder on the BUTB by the end of the year. In addition to increasing imports of dried milk through the exchange, the Emirati company is considering the possibility of cooperation with Belarus in other commodity items. In particular, the company is working on the issue of purchasing butter and meat products, as well as organizing palm oil supplies from Southeast Asia for the Belarusian food industry. It only remains to add that "at the end of January-August 2024, the trade turnover of residents of the United Arab Emirates at the BUTB exceeded \$25.5 million. About 77% of this amount was brought by the export of Belarusian agricultural products"<sup>279</sup> .

**Oman** and **Jordan** are also planning to use the BUTB platform to supply dairy products produced in Belarus. In the first case, for this purpose, the first Omani company has already been accredited on the domestic exchange platform and intends to take part in exchange trading in the near future. "In the future, in addition to dairy products, the range of Belarusian goods supplied to Oman through the BUTB may be expanded to include such items as rapeseed oil, beet pulp and molasses, sugar, amino acids, feed additives"<sup>280</sup> . In the second case, in October this year, the first transactions for the sale of dairy products to the Jordanian market have already been registered at BUTB. The subject of the trial purchase was skimmed milk powder and whey powder with a total volume of 26 tons.

Finally, speaking about **Turkey**, we would like to remind that as of June 1, 2024, 85 Turkish residents were accredited on the BUTB, 19

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<sup>279</sup> UAE businesses are ready to increase purchases of milk powder at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/biznes-oe-gotov-naraschivat-zakupki-suhogo-moloka-na-butb-662372-2024/>

<sup>280</sup> Zalessky, B. The potential for increasing economic cooperation between Belarus and the countries of the far arc / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. - C. 37.



of which started participating in exchange trading only this year. Until recently, the structure of the Belarusian-Turkish exchange turnover was dominated by exports of timber products from Belarus, as well as scrap ferrous metals and artificial fibers. But already in June 2024, a deal to buy sugar was concluded for the first time on the BUTB. The volume of the trial purchase amounted to 136 tons. This fact shows that "Turkey, as a country with a developed confectionery industry, is certainly of significant interest in terms of exporting Belarusian sugar and other sugar beet processing products"<sup>281</sup>. And there is confidence that the first deal concluded by a resident company from Turkey will serve as a positive signal for other representatives of Turkish business, including chocolate and soft drink producers, for whom the exchange can become a reliable source of raw materials in demand.

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<sup>281</sup> On BUTB the company-resident of Turkey for the first time concluded a deal to buy Belarusian sugar [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-kompanija-rezident-turtsii-vpervye-zakliuchila-sdelku-na-pokupku-belorusskogo-sahara-640235-2024/>

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