

## International relations and media

Today the regional mass media of the Republic of Belarus face a very wide thematic spectrum, which in the near future should be fully reflected in the pages of city, district and regional newspapers. Let us highlight in this series those areas that emphasize the geography of international cooperation, which are discussed in the National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus until 2030: development of large-scale economic integration with the regions of the Eurasian Economic Union countries and especially with Russian Federation subjects within the framework of the Union State; expansion of all-round cooperation with the regions of the European Union countries and especially the "neighborhood belt" - Poland, Lithuania, Latvia; deepening of cooperation with regions of the countries participating in the implementation of the mega-project "One belt, one way" and especially with China; further intensification of trade and economic ties with regions of the "far arc" countries - South-East Asia, Middle East, Africa, Latin America and especially with those with significant potential for mutually beneficial cooperation. This is what we are talking about in this study.



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## International relations and media

*Pragmatism of cooperation dictates the regions*

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## Belarus: prospects for cross-border cooperation between regions and the media

In Belarus, regional mass media traditionally have a powerful impact on their audience. According to First Deputy Minister of Information of the Republic of Belarus P. Legkoi, "in terms of their impact on public consciousness and audience coverage they are not inferior to the national ones"<sup>1</sup>. This largely explains the large-scale tasks that the Belarusian regional press is now facing in terms of reflecting the peculiarities of the state policy of regional development in Belarus, one of the most important components of which is the deepening of **cross-border cooperation** with foreign partners, which implies, among other things, adequate development of the international segment of Belarusian regional journalism. At the same time, representatives of the media sphere should proceed from a number of basic provisions set forth in the program documents.

Recall that at the legislative level in the Republic of Belarus under the **transboundary cooperation** is understood: firstly, interaction with foreign countries at the regional and local levels in order to promptly solve border problems, attract foreign investments to improve border and transport infrastructure, create commercial organizations with foreign investments; secondly, develop and implement regional technical assistance projects financed by international organizations and programs in the field of economics, territorial planning, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, information, thirdly, "encouraging Euroregions as a form of cross-border cooperation in order to smooth differences in the level of socio-economic development of territories, development of<sup>2</sup> cross-border infrastructure, joint solution of problems in the field of nature conservation, overcoming imbalances in employment, cultural and language barriers.

The National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the Period until 2030, which defines the goals, stages and directions of the transition of the Belarusian state to a post-industrial society and innovative development of the economy, identifies the regions of the country as the place where a solid foundation for further sustainable development has yet to

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<sup>1</sup> Easy, P. Regional mass media should not yield to the republican ones / P. Easy // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/opinions/view/regionalnye-smi-ne-dolzny-ustupat-respublikanskim-6366/>.

<sup>2</sup> Law of the Republic of Belarus "Main directions of domestic and foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus" [Electronic resource]. - - 2005. - URL: <http://laws.newsby.org/documents/laws/law0361.htm>



be created through the modernization of the system of economic relations and effective management to ensure a balance between their social, economic and ecologically safe regions. The strategic goal of Belarusian regional policy is to develop each region in an integrated manner and to reduce existing regional differences, taking into account the effective use of its resource potential and competitive advantages, in order to ensure high standards of living, preserve nature and make a positive contribution to national competitiveness and security.

It is assumed that by 2030 the regional development policy in Belarus will be implemented in two stages. The first stage - until 2020 - envisages the formation and support of regional development centers, reduction of interregional differentiation in living standards, restructuring of the regional economy, creation of favorable conditions for business development, strengthening of the resource base of local budgets, addressing the problems of regions lagging behind the national average, overcoming infrastructure and institutional barriers to regional social and economic development, and increasing the efficiency of regional development.

At the second stage - until 2030 - the policy of development of regions of Belarus will be focused on "expanding local self-government in addressing socio-economic, environmental and ecological problems, reducing subsidization of areas and ensuring high living standards in all regions<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, the main long-term objectives will be to improve administrative and territorial division; to deepen specialization of the economies of regions, revealing their potential opportunities and competitive advantages in the domestic and **foreign** markets of goods and services; to develop faster cities and districts that serve as centers of territorial clusters; to raise social standards of living as the economy grows; and to differentiate them taking into account the peculiarities of population settlement, primarily for rural areas. As for the latter, it will have to take place at the expense of: firstly, formation of cooperative technological chains with productions in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union in the form of holding structures and transboundary clusters in border areas and creation of joint marketing alliances with them in the markets of third countries; secondly, development of import-substituting productions aimed at the market of the Eurasian Economic Union, including creation of branches and assembly productions of transnational corporations on the markets of the Eurasian Economic Union.

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<sup>3</sup> National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2030. - Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus. - Minsk, 2015. -- C. 115.

The Basic Provisions of the Program of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 set a task - "through the concentration of resources on key areas that can ensure maximum development of the territories, the effective use of local resource potential and competitive advantages" to<sup>4</sup> create centers of economic growth in the Belarusian regions, where modern production structures, engineering and social infrastructure will be concentrated. At the same time, the most important direction of the regional policy is to develop the main networks and facilities of energy, transport, telecommunications and other infrastructure in accordance with the development strategy of a particular region. This is explained by the fact that infrastructure development in conjunction with the location of production facilities will allow to ensure the development of territories with difficult economic situation and reduce the gap in the level and quality of life of the population in cities of different categories and rural areas. And support for the most lagging regions will be expressed in the location of new organizations, branches and workshops of existing industries related to the servicing of agriculture and forestry, processing of their products, production of goods from local raw materials, development of services for the population and tourism. It is also important that key projects involving foreign investment and the involvement of inefficiently used as well as vacant production facilities in the investment process are envisaged for the implementation of strategic regional development areas. In particular, "foreign investors will be attracted to implement projects important for regional development and create tourist and social infrastructure facilities, including through active inter-regional Sino-Belarusian contacts. An additional source of financing for such projects will be loans from China<sup>5</sup>.

In total, more than 60 economic growth centers are expected to be established in Belarus' regions, covering two thirds of the country's territory. In the process of their formation three complementary vectors will be taken into account: first, creation of these centers in those districts and cities where there is a potential for this; second, creation of jobs outside the centers of economic growth within one hour availability; and third, creation of comfortable conditions throughout the country, which will require a well-developed modern infrastructure. In this regard, the investment activity will have to be based on coordination of three policies: scientific and technological, industrial and

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<sup>4</sup> Basic provisions of the program of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <http://shod.belta.by/programma/>.

<sup>5</sup> Programme for Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 // Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: [http://www.government.by/upload/docs/program\\_ek2016-2020.pdf](http://www.government.by/upload/docs/program_ek2016-2020.pdf).

regional. In order to implement them, Belarus has set a task to develop a plan of industrialization of the regions, the foundation of which will consist of three main blocks: "The first is to identify priority economic activities, technological niches, and specific projects that will be offered to businesses to choose from. The second is to locate selected projects based on the specialization of the regions and taking into account their personnel, production and raw material potential. Herewith, one of the main conditions should be balanced development of regions. The third one is formation of a package of stimulating measures at the republican and regional levels for project implementation<sup>6</sup>. More specifically, the development prospects of Belarusian regions are as follows.

In **Brest region** priority development should be given to mining industry, agro-industrial complex, machine building, woodworking and furniture production, transport and logistics, tourism. The centers of economic growth will be the cities of Brest, Baranovichi, Pinsk and adjacent districts, as well as Berezovsky, Pruzhansky, Ivatsevichi, Kobrinsky and Luninets districts. Among the main investment projects here are the following: modernization of CJSC "Pinskdiv Holding Company" aimed at increasing the output of plywood and bent-glued parts up to one hundred thousand cubic meters per year; continued construction of a mining and processing plant at the Sitnitskoye deposit; creation of "Beldan" IOO - the agro-industrial organization on slaughtering and processing of bacon pork with capacity of 80 heads per hour; maintenance of a full cycle of manufacture of lead accumulator batteries in "Exaid Technologies" IOO; carrying out of reconstruction of palace and park ensemble "Soveiki" by forces of NWAO "LadaGarant".

In **Vitebsk region** the economic growth will be ensured, first of all, in oil refining and petrochemistry, power engineering, footwear production, agro-industrial complex, metallurgy, machine building, tourism. Vitebsk and Novopolotsk, as well as Vitebsk, Orsha, Braslav, Verkhnedvinsk, Glubokoe, Miorsky, Lepelsky, Polotsk, Postavsky and Chashnik districts should become investment attraction centers. As for the main investment projects, we are talking, first of all, about the completion of reconstruction of the vacuum unit of the AVT-2 unit for processing residual fuel oil and construction of a deferred coking complex in Naftan, modernization of the Orsha flax mill, as well as construction of production plants: metal sheet and white tin - MMPZ Group LLC in Miorsky

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<sup>6</sup> More than 60 regional economic growth centers can be established in Belarus - Zinovskiy [Electronic resource]. -- 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-belarusi-mozhet-byt-sozdano-bolee-60-tsentrov-ekonomicheskogo-rosta-v-regionah-zinovskij-272081-2017/>.

District; metal structures - in Polotsk District; trade equipment - in Modern-Expo LLC.

Oil refining and oil production, mining and chemical industry, metallurgy and machine building, pulp and paper industry, woodworking and alternative energy should become the key areas of development in **Gomel region**. The economic growth centers have been identified as Gomel, as well as the districts of Gomel, Mozyr, Rechitsa, Rogachevsk, Zhlobinsky, Svetlogorsky, Kalinkovichi, Dobrush and Zhitkovichi. And among the main investment projects are the following: reconstruction of the main technological units of electric steelmaking shops No. 1 and No. 2 and construction of a complex of special steels at the Belorussian Steel Works, the managing company of the Belorussian Steel Company Holding; creation of two crushed stone plants in Lelchitsy District; a plant for the production of sulphate bleached cellulose at the Svetlogorsk Cardboard and Pulp Mill with the capacity of 400 thousand tons per year; a complex for hydrocracking of heavy oil residues at the Mozyr Oil Refinery; technical re-equipment of a branch of the Dobrush Paper Mill Hero of Labor at the Managing Company of the Belarusian Wallpaper Holding with the organization of coated and uncoated cardboard production.

As for **Grodno Region**, a fundamentally new industry for the whole of Belarus - nuclear power - will appear here, as well as chemical production, agro-industrial complex, woodworking, tourism will continue to develop. Not only Grodno, but also the Grodno, Lidsky, Ostrovets, Mostovsky, Smorgonsky, Volkovysky and Slonim districts will become economic growth centers. Speaking about the main investment projects, we would like to mention the completion of technical re-equipment of phthalic anhydride production with the capacity increase up to 48 thousand tons per year in JSC "Lakokraska", construction of a shop for production of nitric acid in JSC "GrodnoAzot", implementation of the project in Skidel on production of pharmaceutical forms - tablets and capsules in JSC "Novalok", reconstruction of the hotel and restaurant complex "Grodno".

Chemical production, pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals, automotive and agro-industrial complex, transport and logistics, and tourism should get ahead of the development in **Minsk region**. Economic growth centers will be formed in Zhodino, Borisov, Minsk, Smolevichi, Soligorsk, Dzerzhinsk, Molodechno, Slutsk, Pukhovichi, Logoy, Nesvizh, Myadel and Volozhinsk districts. The key investment projects of the Minsk Region will be the construction of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Veliky Kamen", the mining and processing plant of Slavkaliy LLC in Lubansky district, the plant for the production of cars of NWAO

Belji, the dairy processing plant of Nesvizh Baby Food LLC, the transport and logistics complex in the free economic zone "Minsk", as well as the reconstruction of the ampoule production at the JSC "Borisovsky Plant of Medicines".

The **Mogilev region** will be developed through chemical production, production of rubber and plastic products, construction materials, foodstuffs, woodworking with economic growth centers in Mogilev, Bobruisk, as well as in the regions - Mogilev, Bobruisk, Osipovichy, Shklovsk, Bykhov, Goretsky. In the region it is assumed: to reconstruct the production facilities for the production of rubber products in Krichev with an increase in the production of model footwear made of polyvinyl chloride up to 250 thousand pairs per year; to build a complex for the production of polyester products in JSC "Mogilevkhimvolokno"; to expand the production of chicken broilers in the branch "Servulux Agro" NWAO "Servulux"; modernize casting and machining equipment of JSC "Bobruisk Machine-Building Plant"; continue the implementation of the Program of social and economic development of the south-eastern region of the Mogilev region, within the framework of which it is planned to implement twelve projects to create new organizations and production facilities in the field of small and medium business, six - in industry, more than thirty - in agriculture by 2020.

Finally, the priority development in **Minsk** will be given to mechanical engineering, high-tech areas - microelectronics, instrumentation, computing and telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, as well as medicine and services. The largest project implemented with the participation of foreign capital in the Belarusian capital should be the construction of an experimental multifunctional complex "Minsk-Mir", which "involves the construction of more than 2 million square meters of housing, 600 thousand square meters of space for administrative and public business purposes, including the international financial center<sup>7</sup>. This will create a strategic platform for doing business in the Republic of Belarus, contribute to the development of the domestic financial market and related services - tourism, banking, insurance, outsourcing - which will be an additional incentive to attract foreign investors. "Investments under the project will amount to about 3.5 billion US dollars"<sup>8</sup>.

In mechanical engineering, due to the comprehensive modernization, a number of capital enterprises will reach a new level. Among them: OJSC "Minsk Motor Plant Holding Management Company" - due to mastering the production

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<sup>7</sup> Program of Social and Economic Development of Minsk for 2016-2020 [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=D917o0083491&p1=1&p5=0>

<sup>8</sup> In the same place.

of high-precision, high-strength cast iron and development of small diesel engines with capacity up to 75 horsepower; OJSC "Minsk Automobile Plant" - due to reconstruction of cab frame production for MAZ family cars; LLC "Plant of automobile trailers and bodies MAZ-Kupava" - by implementing the technology of hydrocarbon foaming in the production of isothermal panels of vehicles; JSC "Minsk Bearing Plant" - on the basis of technical re-equipment and further development of roller spherical production of bearings; JSC "Plant of hydraulic transmissions" - by organizing the production of gear boxes.

In the field of microelectronics and instrumentation it is planned to implement projects on the development of a branch of the Scientific and Technical Center "Belmicrosystems" JSC "Integral" - the management company of the holding "Integral", creating a promising technology of enclosing integrated circuits and integration into the production of industrial, special and dual-purpose products, the development of epitaxial structures and the development of bipolar technology on wafers with a diameter of 150 mm. By 2020 it is planned to implement a pilot project aimed at formation in the Belarusian capital of an innovation-industrial cluster of high technologies in the field of complex medical equipment, safety systems, non-destructive testing equipment and analytical instrumentation, which will unite high-tech instrumentation organizations in Minsk, as well as scientific organizations and educational institutions with a strong research base and significant human resource potential. The implementation of this pilot project by 2020 should "ensure revenues from the sale of goods (works and services) in the amount of 450 million U.S. dollars, create 1000 new jobs, bring the proportion of innovative products shipped in the total volume of shipped products to 90 percent<sup>9</sup>. In general, the Belarusian capital's economy over the five years to 2020 "will attract at least \$38.1 billion of foreign investments, including over \$4.8 billion of foreign direct investment (FDI) on a net basis"<sup>10</sup>.

The deepening of cross-border cooperation of Belarusian regions should be seamlessly integrated into the development of international cooperation and foreign economic relations of the Republic of Belarus as a whole, the most important criteria of which are sustainable growth rates of exports of goods and services and achievement of a positive balance of foreign trade in goods and

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<sup>9</sup> Program of Social and Economic Development of Minsk for 2016-2020 [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=D917o0083491&p1=1&p5=0>

<sup>10</sup> In 2016-2020 Minsk plans to attract at least \$38 billion of foreign investment [Electronic Resources4c]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-planiruet-privlech-v-2016-2020-godah-ne-menee-38-mlrd-inostrannyh-investitsij-252054-2017/>.

services. In this regard, by 2020 the attention of the regions of Belarus will be focused on: expanding and diversifying trade and economic ties with various countries, regional unions and international economic organizations; developing economic integration within the Eurasian Economic Union; maintaining good neighborly relations and close cooperation with the Russian Federation; expanding all-round cooperation with the countries of the European Union, including within the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative; further intensifying trade with the European Union, including in the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative. At the second stage - until 2030 - it is the deepening of cross-border cooperation in all areas of trade and economic, scientific and technological and environmental activities should become an essential factor in sustainable development. It will promote the creation of flexible commercial structures with attraction of external investments for improvement of infrastructure; improvement of cross-border trade, tourism; effective cooperation in cultural, social and environmental spheres; formation of common socio-cultural space; development of joint cross-border regional policy. Under these conditions, it is the regional media that must become an essential part of mass communication in order to play its social and political role in the consolidation of society in terms of addressing the large-scale challenges of regional development in Belarus in the next 12-15 years.

## Belarus - Commonwealth of Independent States: the evolution of regional interaction

In February 2019, Moscow hosted a meeting of the Working Group on the preparation of a draft Strategy for Economic Development of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period up to 2030, which "approved the content of the first four sections of the draft Strategy"<sup>11</sup>. The fifth section is scheduled for discussion in April 2019. This fact shows that concrete work has begun in the CIS to update the Concept for Further Development of the CIS, adopted back in 2007, which should help identify common points of economic growth in the member states of this international association and implement plans to develop joint development priorities. It should be noted that the need to update the Concept was discussed back in September 2018 at the meeting of the Council of Heads of States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Dushanbe, where it was stated that "the CIS potential for regional cooperation development is not exhausted, and appropriate steps should be taken to implement it. This will contribute to the competitiveness of national economies, the welfare of citizens and the development of humanitarian ties"<sup>12</sup>.

In this regard, the Republic of Belarus has consistently advocated strengthening the economic potential of this association of post-Soviet countries, expanding their trade and production ties to consolidate the positive dynamics observed in the CIS: "Mutual trade within the CIS continues to grow. Last year [2017] the volume of trade turnover was 164 billion U.S. dollars, having increased by 25%"<sup>13</sup>. In the first seven months of 2018, "the value of mutual trade increased by 15% (\$102 billion) compared to the previous year".<sup>14</sup> And at the end of the year there was a 20% growth of mutual trade turnover of the CIS countries.

One of the effective levers for solving the tasks set in the Commonwealth is further intensification of interregional cooperation of its member states,

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<sup>11</sup> The meeting of the Working Group on the preparation of the draft Strategy of Economic Development of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period up to 2030 was held in Moscow [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.e-cis.info/news.php?id=21302>.

<sup>12</sup> On the results of the meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.e-cis.info/page.php?id=26493>.

<sup>13</sup> Results of the meeting of the CIS Heads of Government Council and the list of adopted documents (November 2, 2018, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan) [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.e-cis.info/page.php?id=26548>.

<sup>14</sup> Participation in the session of the CIS Council of Heads of Government [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8365>.



15 which has become an effective instrument of interstate dialogue and an integral part of economic interaction since the existence of this international organization, as "it allows strengthening economic ties between regions, optimizing the location of infrastructure facilities, joint efforts to start solving large-scale investment projects, and increasing efficiency

Let us recall that back in 2004 the **Concept of Interregional and Cross-Border Cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States** was adopted. The Concept was dictated by the fact that "due to the formation of newly independent states, the population of the border territories where economic, labor, cultural and household ties were severed or significantly limited, found themselves in a particularly difficult situation. The severity of this situation confirms the need to realize the potential of interregional and cross-border cooperation to engage regions in foreign economic activity and implement a set of measures to ensure normal living conditions for the population of border regions"<sup>16</sup>.

It was this document that laid down the basic principles of interregional and cross-border cooperation in the Commonwealth of Independent States: Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of other CIS member states; inviolability of state borders; peaceful settlement of border disputes; mutual respect for national legislation governing interregional and cross-border cooperation, as well as relevant international treaties; ensuring mutual interests in interregional and cross-border cooperation; taking into account the peculiarities of border territories of CIS member states, including their diversity, the nature of interstate relations and historical ties with neighboring CIS member states, natural resources, socio-economic, town-planning, transport characteristics of border territories; ensuring security of life of citizens, non-infringement of the environment, economic and other interests of the states that carry out interregional and cross-border cooperation within the scope of national and international agreements

And among the main tasks were identified: to create an environment of trust, mutual understanding and good neighborliness between the population, authorities and business communities of the regions and border territories of the CIS member states; to stimulate the increase of mutually beneficial trade,

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<sup>15</sup> The development of interregional and cross-border cooperation is the most important factor in the consolidation of the Commonwealth [Electronic Resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://www.cis.minsk.by/news.php?id=5355>.

<sup>16</sup> The concept of interregional and cross-border cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - - 2004. - URL: <http://www.cis.minsk.by/page.php?id=13214>.

development and strengthening of economic, cultural and humanitarian ties between the regions; to preserve the cultural heritage; to simplify mutual communication between interested authorities, business communities and population groups, including ethnic communities divided by state borders, to support the compatriots. creating conditions that will help reduce the time it takes for export and import goods to cross the border territory of a CIS member state, including assistance in setting up checkpoints across the state border with an electronic document flow and automatic identification system; improving transport infrastructure, customs warehouses and terminals, including the drafting and adoption of relevant regulations; and increasing the efficiency of the use of the production and social base across the border. creation of conditions for interaction of the systems for prevention and liquidation of emergency situations of the neighboring CIS member states, including information systems, in order to improve the efficiency of response to emergency situations with transboundary consequences; implementation of a coordinated policy in the field of ensuring the safety of life of citizens, environmental protection, prevention and liquidation of emergency situations of transboundary impact on the border territories.

In October 2008, the legal framework for interregional cooperation in the post-Soviet space was supplemented by the **Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States**. The adoption of this document was due to the fact that by that time a number of prerequisites had already matured in the CIS for developing cross-border cooperation as the most active form of interregional cooperation. These include: a new vision of coordinated cross-border development leading to the formation of new competitive advantages; a new understanding of community interests, sociocultural, environmental and other public initiatives that rise above municipal and regional administrative borders; and "actualization of existing and formation of new formalized and informal institutions of interterritorial cooperation"<sup>17</sup>.

The Convention specified the main directions of joint activities of stakeholders: establishment of special or special economic zones (free economic zones) in border territories; border trade, ensuring its security; conducting joint monitoring activities by competent authorities in the field of environmental protection, including transboundary rivers, and rational use of natural resources, ensuring sanitary and epidemiological, environmental, veterinary and sanitary

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<sup>17</sup> Sachuk, T.V. Sachuk // Prospects of socio-economic development of border regions: Proceedings of the Fourth Scientific-Practical Conference with intergovernmental participation, [June 9, 2017, Petrozavodsk] / FIC "Karelian Scientific Center of RAS", Economics Institute of KarNC RAS; [edited by: T.V. Morozova]. - Petrozavodsk, 2017. - - C. 15.

well-being of the population, as well as protection of territories from infectious animal diseases; development of joint programs to protect the population and territories from natural and man-made emergencies, as well as integration of natural and man-made disaster management systems in border areas to improve the efficiency of response to emergencies with transboundary consequences; provision by the parties of support to compatriots living in border areas in maintaining and expanding humanitarian ties; coordination of efforts to increase efficiency of protection and defense of state borders of the parties; implementation of investment projects; industrial and technical cooperation; agriculture and food supply; transport; information technologies and communications; law enforcement activities; urban planning and public utilities; regulation of population migration; formation of labor market; h In the same 2008 the **Council for Interregional and Border Cooperation of the CIS** member states was established to solve the issues of "sustainable economic development of the regions and border territories, ensuring security of citizens, strengthening friendship and good neighborliness"<sup>18</sup>.

By 2010, active development of cooperation at the level of administrative-territorial units and border territories in the CIS countries began to really help solve or mitigate some problems of interstate relations, strengthen and develop historically established ties. By this time, the regional environment in the post-Soviet space is increasingly beginning to define "the competitiveness of national businesses in today's world market, promoting the development of high-tech production, where prevail not the scale of production and sales, but the ability to constantly update products through the introduction, creation and promotion of fundamentally new products on the market"<sup>19</sup>. Small and medium businesses are beginning to emerge from the "shadow" as the most adaptable to a rapid change in technology and capable of creating competitive products. Regional unions of scientists, entrepreneurs and local administrations are beginning to become a factor of success in the market. At the same time, intergovernmental commissions for cooperation of the CIS member states are becoming permanent formats that organize and coordinate interregional and cross-border cooperation. Thus, only "in the Republic of Belarus in 2009 there were 6 meetings of the intergovernmental commissions on trade and economic cooperation with

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<sup>18</sup> Regulation on the Council for Interregional and Cross-Border Cooperation of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic Resource]. - - 2008. - URL: <http://cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=2520>.

<sup>19</sup> Development of interregional and cross-border cooperation in CIS member states (information and analytical note). - Moscow, 2010. - - C. 6.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine (2), 19 meetings of Belarusian parts of the intergovernmental commissions"<sup>20</sup>.

By 2014, interregional cooperation at the level of administrative and territorial entities is already "an important feature of modern interstate relations of the CIS member states, contributing to the strengthening and development of historically established ties, increasing mutual trade turnover. The use of its potential is one of the most effective factors contributing to real integration and playing an important role in creating a common market for goods, capital, services and labor"<sup>21</sup>. Bilateral agreements regulating interregional cooperation already include 7 (out of 74) regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 10 (out of 11) - the Republic of Armenia, all regions of the Republic of Belarus, 16 (out of 17) - the Republic of Kazakhstan, all regions of the Kyrgyz Republic, 12 (out of 33) - the Republic of Moldova, 4 (out of 13) - the Republic of Tajikistan, 5 (out of 6) - Turkmenistan, all regions of the Republic of Uzbekistan, almost all regions of the Russian Federation. Such a form of interaction between the regions as bilateral forums, which provide a constant dialogue on a wide range of problems, is increasingly being developed. In particular, the first forum of regions of Belarus and Russia was held in Minsk in June 2014. Its theme was "Efficient development of agro-industrial complexes of Belarus and Russia is a crucial condition for food security of the Union State".

In May 2015, another important document appears in the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States - the **Concept of Interregional and Cross-Border Cooperation of the CIS Member States for the Period until 2020**, which concludes that "interregional and cross-border cooperation has become an effective instrument of interstate dialogue"<sup>22</sup>. And it is already aimed at developing cooperation not only between neighboring regions, but also with regions that are not neighboring, with which there are common interests and intentions to develop partnership on both multilateral and bilateral basis, as it allows to restore and strengthen economic ties between regions, optimize the location of infrastructure facilities through cooperation, eliminate inefficient financial costs associated with the creation of duplicate economic structures in the

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<sup>20</sup> In the same place. C. 13.

<sup>21</sup> Information on the role of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS Member States in the development of interregional cooperation between the CIS Member States [Electronic resource]. - - 2014. - URL: <http://naviny.org/2014/10/10/by1130.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> The Concept of Interregional and Border Cooperation of the CIS Member States for the Period until 2020 [Electronic Resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://www.cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=5135>.

regions, jointly aimed at the following goals This document contains ten main tasks:

1. 1. Improvement of the legislation of the CIS member states taking into account existing bilateral and multilateral international treaties, including: a) legal regulation of interregional and cross-border cooperation in order to develop common approaches to its implementation; b) convergence of technical requirements and regulations in the economic sphere.

2. 2. Mobilization of existing opportunities in socio-economic and cultural spheres for solution of joint tasks, including: a) identification of socio-economic and cultural potential of the regions; b) development of modern forms of territory management; c) harmonization of approaches to the development of border areas.

3. 3. Organization of the Forum of Regions of the CIS member states, establishment of regional cooperation associations, in the framework of which the following activities are carried out: a) adoption of joint decisions on topical issues; b) exchange of experience in the effective management of regions and territorial communities; c) joint implementation of projects in various areas of cooperation with the aim of achieving a synergetic effect.

4. 4. Agreed arrangement of the border infrastructure in order to: a) increase the efficiency of border crossing points between the CIS member states, including through: a) organization of joint control at these border crossing points; b) improvement of procedures of state border crossing between the CIS member states for the citizens of the CIS member states, first of all, when the residents of border territories cross state borders; c) creation of favorable conditions for carrying out passenger operations; d) improvement of the border crossing procedures for the citizens of the CIS member states.

5. 5. Development of trade, economic and investment cooperation between regions, including: a) assistance in establishing mutually beneficial direct ties between the economic entities of the regions; b) development of cross-border trade; c) implementation of joint major innovative investment projects in various economic areas and the creation of joint competitive enterprises and financial and industrial groups

6. 6. Strengthening the atmosphere of trust, mutual understanding and good neighborliness among the population of the regions through the development of humanitarian ties, including the following areas: a) organization and holding of joint festive events, exhibitions, concerts, regional studies and historical

researches, in particular, holding events dedicated to the celebration of memorable dates in the common history of the CIS member states; b) joint preservation and restoration of historical and cultural heritage objects of the peoples of the CIS member states; c) joint holding of sporting events; d) creation of conditions for mutual provision of services in the sphere of tourism, creation and joint operation of tourist infrastructure, including the following activities e) Establishing cooperation in conducting joint scientific research by higher education institutions and scientific organizations of the CIS member states; f) Developing and jointly implementing exchange programs for students and teachers for training and professional development of specialists of mutual interest; g) Collaborating in the field of youth work, including by involving young people in projects and activities on topical issues of interregional and cross-border cooperation of the member states

7. Health care and law enforcement and security, implemented, among others, in the following areas: a) Creation of conditions for mutual provision of medical services; b) Organization of mutual provision of services in the field of sanatorium-resort, rehabilitation treatment of population; c) Implementation of joint actions to prevent occurrence and spread of sanitary-epidemiological threats in border territories; d) taking concerted measures to prevent, prevent, detect, suppress, investigate and solve crimes and other offenses, fight organized crime, terrorism and extremism, cross-border criminal activity, including smuggling, illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors, drug addiction, poaching and human trafficking.

8. Rational and safe use of natural resources and implementation of economic activities, taking into account environmental safety, implemented, among other things, in the following areas: a) regulation of economic activities for the purpose of industrial waste management and organization of joint control over the use of harmful substances, as well as implementation of joint environmental programs and projects; b) joint protection and rational use of transboundary waters and their ecosystems; c) implementation of joint measures for conservation and reproduction of fish resources and control over their use; d) mutual training of specialists in the areas of mineral resources development and industrial safety; e) mutual training of specialists in the areas of mineral resources development and industrial safety.

9. Ensuring timely prevention and joint liquidation of natural and anthropogenic emergencies in border territories, including the following areas: a) timely and regular provision of information on infectious diseases, epizootics,

epiphytotics and quarantine pests, joint implementation of preventive measures and implementation of emergency measures to eliminate diseases, quarantine diseases and pests; b) improvement of systems for cross-border monitoring of natural environments and operational information exchange on the occurrence of emergencies of natural and man-made nature, organization of cooperation to prevent and eliminate them; c) assistance in crossing the state borders of the CIS member states in accordance with the procedure established by the legislation of the CIS member states or international treaties to which they are parties, groups of specialists and vehicles to eliminate natural and man-made emergencies

10. 10. Regulation of labor market and migration processes in border territories, implemented including the following directions: a) development of coordinated measures to regulate migration flows, exchange of information on national legislation in the sphere of migration and the order of crossing the state border of neighboring states by local residents; b) coordination of measures to prevent illegal migration in regions and in border territories; c) exchange of information on the situation on the labor market in border territories and in regions.

Finally, in September 2016, at the level of heads of state, the **Convention on Interregional Cooperation of Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States**<sup>23</sup> is adopted, which contains a detailed list of possible areas of interaction between regions in the post-Soviet space: creation of free (special, special) economic zones in the regions; carrying out joint activities by the competent authorities of the parties to monitor the environment, rational use of natural resources, ensuring sanitary-epidemiological and environmental well-being of the population, as well as protecting areas from the entry of animal and plant diseases; development and implementation of joint programs to protect the population and territories from natural and man-made emergencies, as well as integration of systems of prevention and liquidation of natural and man-made emergencies in order to improve the efficiency of response to emergencies with transboundary consequences; support of compatriots living in the regions in preserving and expanding humanitarian ties; implementation of investment projects; industrial and technical cooperation with the local authorities in the field of environmental protection; development and implementation of joint programs to protect the population and territories from natural and man-made disasters. agriculture and food supply; development of transport, transport communications

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<sup>23</sup> Convention on Interregional Cooperation of Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <http://cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=5474>.

and infrastructure, provision of transport services; information technologies and communications; cooperation in law enforcement activities, including protection of public order, prevention and suppression of crimes, including combating smuggling and illegal migration; urban planning and municipal services; labor market and labor migration; health care; education; scientific and humanitarian cooperation; culture and exhibition activity; sport and tourism; creation and development of nature protection territories, health-improving zones (areas) and resorts; support and development of all forms of youth cooperation, participation in implementation of international projects and programs aimed at solving youth problems; development and implementation of programs on protection and use of historical and cultural heritage objects; trade and fair activities.

The practical implementation of the provisions of all these documents led to the fact that at the beginning of 2018 the Register of signed international documents on interregional and cross-border cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States already had "about 5000 documents in trade and economic, scientific and technical and humanitarian spheres of interregional and cross-border cooperation, characterizing the current level of development of relations between the CIS member states"<sup>24</sup>. Among the most effective formats for realizing the potential for cooperation between regions of different countries in the post-Soviet space were such bilateral events as: Russian-Armenian and Russian-Azerbaijani interregional forums; Russian-Kyrgyz interregional conference; conference on interregional cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan; forums for interregional cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus. These forums are held annually alternately in the regions of the states with the participation of representatives of federal executive and legislative authorities, business community and mass media, scientific and expert circles, as well as representatives of the regions of member states. During each forum, the parties organize expositions of the regions of the participating states, which include presentations of promising investment projects. The existing format of forums organization allows to present and realize the potential of the regions of the states in all the spheres in need. Thus, in 2018 with the participation of the Belarusian side were held the Fifth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, as well as the first Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine. These formats help to actively develop trade, economic and investment cooperation, as well as cooperation between the regions of the CIS countries.

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<sup>24</sup> Development and activities of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2017 (collection of information and analytical materials, issue No. 6). - Minsk, 2018. -- C. 75.



All these facts once again show that interregional and cross-border cooperation, which is an integral part of economic interaction in the Commonwealth of Independent States, already today allows each participant to realize their economic opportunities, compensate for the peculiarities of development and deployment of productive forces, solve social issues. But even more extensive prospects will open up here in the near future with the implementation of new approaches to deepening cooperation between the CIS member states in the spheres of trade and economic cooperation, energy, transport and communications within the framework of updating the provisions of the Concept of further development of the Commonwealth of Independent States after 2020.

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## **Belarus - Eurasian Economic Union: regional cooperation and media**

Today the Belarusian regional press is faced with large-scale creative tasks to cover all stages of the implementation of the state policy of regional development in Belarus, "one of the most important components of which is the deepening of cross-border cooperation with foreign partners, which implies, among other things, adequate development of the international segment of Belarusian regional journalism"<sup>25</sup>. At the same time, the interaction of Belarusian regions with foreign partners should be seamlessly integrated into the development of international cooperation of the Republic of Belarus as a whole, the most important criteria of which are sustainable growth rates of exports of goods and services, as well as achievement of a positive balance of foreign trade in goods and services.

In this regard, the Belarusian regional mass media are opening up a very broad thematic spectrum, which in the near future should be fully reflected in the pages of urban, district and regional newspapers. Let us highlight in this series those areas that emphasize the geography of interregional cooperation, which are discussed in the National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus until 2030<sup>26</sup>: expansion of all-round cooperation with the regions of the European Union countries and especially within the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative, as well as with the regions of the countries of the "Neighborhood Belt" - Poland, Lithuania, Latvia; deepening of cooperation with the regions of the countries participating in the mega-project "One Belt, One Way" and especially with the People's Republic of China; further intensification of trade and economic ties with the regions of the countries of the "Far Arc" - South-East Asia, Middle East, Africa, Latin America and especially with those where it is significant. But, perhaps, the most real development of large-scale economic integration so far has been observed with the regions of the Eurasian Economic Union countries (Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan) and especially with the Russian Federation entities within the framework of the Union State.

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<sup>25</sup> Zalesky, B. Media reflection of the peculiarities of transboundary cooperation of the regions of Belarus / B. Zalesky // *Jurnalistka-2018: mill, problems i prospects: materialy 20 Mizhnar. science. 2018 / eds.: V.M. Samusevich (eds.) [iinsh]. - Minsk : BDU, 2018. - - C. 291.*

<sup>26</sup> National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2030. - Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus. - Minsk, 2017. - - C. 137.

As for the **Eurasian Economic Union**, from the very beginning of its existence in terms of developing integration measures, it was considered that the level of regional cooperation is an indicator of the relevance and effectiveness of measures of supranational regulation, because historically there is an economic basis for the implementation of integration measures to stimulate regional development and inter-regional cooperation, as well as the potential for expanding cooperation in various areas and spheres of the economy at the level of regions of the EAEC Member States. As a result, "consideration of regional aspects allows for more effective implementation of measures to stimulate new areas of mutual trade, the construction of industry production chains, the formation of transport corridors and planning of infrastructure facilities and in the future to ensure social development and improve living standards<sup>27</sup>.

If we talk about the bilateral format of interregional cooperation in the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, the undoubted leader and impetus for the development of the entire Eurasian integration here is the interaction between the regions of Belarus and **Russia** in the framework of the Union State. Suffice it to say that in the middle of 2018 the Belarusian regions maintained "direct trade and economic relations with 80 regions of the Russian Federation, of which 70 - on the basis of long-term cooperation agreements".<sup>28</sup> And the top ten major trading partners included Moscow and St. Petersburg, the Republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, the Perm Region, as well as the Bryansk, Kaluga, Moscow, Smolensk and Tyumen Regions.

The growing potential of Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation was demonstrated by the results of the Fifth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which took place in Mogilev in October 2018 and covered such main thematic areas as: agrarian policy, unification and harmonization of legislation, digital economy, youth policy, international activities and economic security. It should be noted that today, to a large extent, it is from the point of view of Belarusian and Russian media that the Regional Forum is defined as "a key project of regional cooperation between Belarus and Russia, an effective platform for a partnership dialogue on economic integration and interregional cooperation<sup>29</sup>. And this is not

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<sup>27</sup> The main directions of economic development of the EAEC until 2030. - Eurasian Economic Commission. - - M., 2015. - - C. 42.

<sup>28</sup> Myasnikovich, M. Rabota na Result / M. Myasnikovich // Priority areas of regional cooperation as a key factor of allied construction: inform.-integr. project / com., interviewing: K. Gusev, B. Zalessky. - Minsk: Biznesoftet, 2018. - - C. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Myasnikovich, M. Regional Forum has become an effective platform for dialogue on integration and inter-regional cooperation / M. Myasnikovich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.sovrep.gov.by/ru/interview-ru/view/forum-regionov-stal-effektivnoj-ploschadkoj-dlja-dialoga-po-voprosam-integratsii-i-mezhregionalnogo-256/>

an unfounded statement. Suffice it to say that at the said forum in Mogilev, contracts were signed for more than half a billion dollars.

The fact that 76 more documents were added to the legal framework of the Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation within the framework of the fifth forum also says a lot. In particular, the Mogilev Regional Council concluded agreements on cooperation and development of relations with the legislative assemblies of the Kaluga Region and Krasnodar Krai. The Grodno Oblast Council will cooperate with the Kaliningrad Oblast Duma in trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural spheres. The Gomel Regional Council and the Legislative Assembly of the Nizhny Novgorod Region, as well as the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee and the Government of the Novosibirsk Region have identified similar areas for cooperation. But we are also talking not only about the integration of the regional or regional level, but also about the fact that "small cities are also involved in this process, which are quite actively cooperating, not only in the field of humanitarian relations, but building economic ties"<sup>30</sup>. As a result, it turns out that today, at the interregional level, cooperation between Belarusian regions and the absolute majority of the Russian Federation's regions has already been established. But how is it fully reflected in the regional press of Belarus? The question is topical, with great unrealized potential.

The coverage in the Belarusian regional press of the cooperation of the regions of Belarus and with partners in **Kazakhstan** - another country that is a member of the Eurasian Economic Union, with which the Treaty on Social and Economic Cooperation until 2026 was signed in November 2017, aimed at implementing a qualitatively new stage in bilateral relations, including at the regional level - should become very diverse. Here it is worth recalling that back in 2000 Belarus and Kazakhstan signed an Agreement on Cooperation in the field of press and information, which in 2017 was supplemented by a provision that attaches "special importance to the expansion of cooperation in the field of mass media between the two states"<sup>31</sup> and which came into force in October 2018.

The thematic range of publications in the regional press could be very broad in this regard. This is also the activity in Kazakhstan of joint assembly plants with the participation of the Belarusian side, which at the end of 2018 there were eight,

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<sup>30</sup> Matveev, V. Over 70 regional agreements were signed at the V Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/bolee-70-regionalnyh-soglashenij-podpisano-na-v-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-rossii-321404-2018/>

<sup>31</sup> Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on cooperation in the field of mass media [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=I01700071&p1=1>

including the production of BelAZ OAO, MTZ OAO, Gomselmash OAO, MAZ OAO, Bobruiskagromash MCH OAO for the production of quarry, mine, special utility and fire equipment, tractors, combines, engines, balers, medical equipment. This is also the implementation of the project of the Kazakhstan-Belarus Industrial and Technological Park of Agricultural and Municipal Equipment in Kokshetau, Akmola Oblast, the first phase of which was launched in 2016. It is also the implementation of several dozens of joint scientific and technical projects in Kazakhstan with the extensive use of Belarusian technologies, innovations and scientific developments. In this regard, we recall that Belarus and Kazakhstan should reach the volume of trade turnover of at least one billion dollars in 2020. Minsk and Astana believe that "the potential for interregional cooperation should be used to achieve this goal"<sup>32</sup>.

The topics of Belarusian-Kazakh interregional cooperation may be especially topical for the press of Gomel, Grodno and Mogilev regions. In particular, in 2014, Grodno and Akmola Regions adopted the Memorandum of Cooperation in Agriculture. In November 2016, the Gomel Oblast Executive Committee signed a cooperation agreement with the Pavlodar Oblast Akimat. The Mogilev Oblast has concluded similar agreements with the South Kazakhstan Oblast (2003) and the East Kazakhstan Oblast (2009). The Belarusian Mogilev and the Kazakh Family also have a cooperation agreement. The effectiveness of interregional cooperation between Mogilev Region and its Kazakh partners is demonstrated by such figures. In three quarters of 2018, "foreign trade turnover between the economic entities of the region and Kazakhstan increased by 57% to \$82.8 million, while exports to Kazakhstan increased by 52.4%"<sup>33</sup>. In many ways, such significant figures were the reason for the opening of the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Kazakhstan in November 2018 in Mogilev, which will help give new impetus to the development of Belarusian-Kazakh interregional cooperation. But what is the reflection of all these documents and results in the regional press? "They are not always adequately reflected in the media sphere. And this then has an impact on reducing the interest of partners and continuing cooperation as a whole"<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Belarus is interested in establishing new joint ventures with Kazakhstan - Myasnikovich [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-sozdani-novyh-sovmestnyh-predpriyatij-s-kazahstanom-mjasnikovich-323707-2018/>.

<sup>33</sup> Kulyagin, S. Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Kazakhstan was opened in Mogilev / S. Kulyagin // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/politics/view/pochetnoe-konsulstvo-respubliki-kazahstan-otkryli-v-mogileve-325498-2018/>.

<sup>34</sup> Zaleskiy, B. International relations and media. The multidimensional foreign policy in the conditions of global crisis of confidence / B. Zaleskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2018. - - C. 57.

The intensification of interregional cooperation is an important component in strengthening bilateral trade, economic and cultural cooperation with **Armenia**, another member state of the Eurasian Economic Union. Suffice it to say that to date, "21 agreements on twinning have been signed between the cities and regions of Belarus and Armenia"<sup>35</sup>. Thus, back in 2008, within the framework of the development of cooperation between Minsk Region and Syunik Region, the twinned cooperation agreements were signed with Borisov, Nesvizh, Soligorsk, Slutsk and Myadel regions with such Armenian cities as Kapan, Goris, Agarak, Sisian and Meghri respectively. Moreover, "in May 2011 the list of Belarusian and Armenian regional partners was expanded to include Osipovich district and Sevan city, in June 2012 - Vitebsk region and Lori marz, cities of Orsha and Spitak, Vitebsk and Vanadzor, and in October 2012 - Lepel district and Tashir, Braslav district and Stepanavan"<sup>36</sup>.

Taking into account the fact that the Belarusian-Armenian trade turnover has been growing in recent years, the parties need to reach a higher level of cooperation and establish joint production facilities to maintain this positive trend, and Belarus is ready to take part in the renovation of Armenia's passenger equipment fleet and in the program of elevator facilities renovation, the parliamentarians of the two countries intend to update the agenda of interregional Belarusian-Armenian cooperation in 2019. In particular, it means that "work will be accelerated on an agreement on the establishment of twinned relations between Minsk and Yerevan. It is currently under consideration by the Armenian side"<sup>37</sup>. Turning to the analysis of the implementation of already existing agreements, the regional press of Belarus and Armenia could proceed from the assumption that the Belarusian-Armenian interregional cooperation in general contributes to the intensification of joint business activity, the restoration of lost production ties, humanitarian and human contacts, ensures the promotion of bilateral economic projects and the creation of joint competitive products that are in demand both in domestic markets and in third countries.

Finally, in July 2018, Belarus signed an Agreement on cooperation in the field of information with another member country of the Eurasian Economic Union, **Kyrgyzstan**, to encourage the regular exchange of information materials

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<sup>35</sup> Trade and economic relations [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: [http://armenia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/trade\\_economic/](http://armenia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/)

<sup>36</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Belarusian International Journalism: Peculiarities, Trends, Perspectives: educational method / B.L. Zalessky. - Minsk: BSU, 2014. - - C. 221.

<sup>37</sup> Belarus is ready to participate in the renewal of the park of passenger equipment of Armenia [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-uchastvovat-v-obnovlenii-parka-passazhirskoj-tehniki-armenii-334782-2019/>.

on political, economic, social and cultural life of both countries, as well as to develop cooperation between the editorial offices. At the same time, "the Kyrgyz side also proposed a new direction for cooperation in the field of information. In particular, we are talking about cooperation at the level of regional journalism"<sup>38</sup>. The fact that the thematic portfolio of publications in the regional press of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in this regard can be very diverse is confirmed by many facts, based on the statement that "Kyrgyz-Belarusian relations are developing dynamically on a wide range of issues, including political and diplomatic sphere, economy, cultural and humanitarian sphere"<sup>39</sup>.

For example, in 2017 Belarusian exports to this Central Asian country exceeded 300 commodity items: from dairy products and trucks to chipboard, furniture, wallpaper. There are more than 50 representative offices of subjects of commodity distribution network and distributors of Belarusian enterprises. In November 2016 here opened an assembly production of MTZ tractors and service center for agricultural machinery based on the Bishkek company "Avtomash Radiator". At the same time, "UPP "Niva-Holding" (Soligorsk) registered in the Ministry of Justice of Kyrgyzstan, the Belarusian company LLC "Niva-Shakhtospetsstroy", which plans to produce equipment for the mining industry and hydraulic engineering from components manufactured by the company "Niva-Holding"<sup>40</sup>. The plans include the establishment of an assembly plant for Belarusian grain harvesters on Kyrgyz soil, which was the subject of the signed Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of Kyrgyzstan, Gomselmash OJSC and the dealer of the Belarusian enterprise Avtomash Radiator LLC.

In addition, at the eighth meeting of the Kyrgyz-Belarusian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, held in October 2018 in Bishkek, the Belarusian side proposed to Kyrgyz partners to implement a joint project to establish a dairy processing plant, interest in which was immediately expressed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of the Kyrgyz Republic. In this case, we are talking about the

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<sup>38</sup> Belarus and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of information [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kyrgyzstan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-informatsii-309989-2018/>

<sup>39</sup> Matveev, V. Heads of Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan confirmed their intention to intensify bilateral cooperation / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/glavy-mid-belarusi-i-kyrgyzstana-podtverdili-namerenie-aktivizirovat-dvustoronnee-sotrudnichestvo-324657-2018/>.

<sup>40</sup> Interview by A. Strachko, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the Kyrgyz Republic to the information and analytical magazine "Market conjuncture" (№1, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/ba775717cb6a991b.html>

establishment of an enterprise in this Central Asian country, which could produce milk, ice cream, sour milk products - kefir, yoghurt, sour cream, cottage cheese and soft cheese on the basis of Belarusian raw materials and specially developed technology in Belarus. And "in the future it is planned to enter the Chinese market with the products of this enterprise"<sup>41</sup>. In addition, consistently developing regional economic ties with partners in Kyrgyzstan, the Belarusian side in August 2018 delivered to the Kyrgyz capital 15 low-floor trolleybuses produced by JSC "Belkommunmash", which will also be organized training for drivers of the Bishkek trolleybus control. An interesting detail: this "equipment was purchased under the project "Development of public transport in the city of Bishkek", funded by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development"<sup>42</sup>.

The Agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian National Centre for Marketing and Price Study and the exhibition company BI Expo from Bishkek is aimed at expanding the Belarusian-Kyrgyz cooperation in the exhibition and fair activity. The Agreement aims at active participation of Belarusian exporters in international exhibitions and fairs held annually in Kyrgyzstan. In 2018, the exposition of manufacturers from Belarus has already been presented at the international food industry exhibition FoodExpo Kyrgyzstan, which is the most important industry event in this country. Their products were demonstrated in the Kyrgyz capital JV "Spartak" OJSC, "Skidelskiy Agro Plant" OJSC, "Oshmyanskiy Meat Processing Plant" OJSC, "Management Company of Holding "Concern Brestmyasomolprom" SE, "Smorgon Dairy Products" - branch of "Lida Dairy Canning Plant" OJSC, "Pinskiy Meat Processing Plant" OJSC. Apart from Belarusian exporters, companies from Bulgaria, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, France, Sri Lanka took part in it. About three and a half thousand people visited this business forum, 95 percent of which were professionals of food industry.

Perhaps due to this exhibition as well, "the trade turnover between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in January-October 2018 amounted to \$98.49 million, most of which falls on Belarusian exports (\$90.96 million)".<sup>43</sup> As the most important positions in Belarusian supplies to the Kyrgyz market are milk and dried

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<sup>41</sup> Belarus offers Kyrgyzstan a joint project to set up a milk processing enterprise [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlagaet-kyrgyzstanu-sovmestnyj-proekt-po-sozdaniyu-molokopererabatyvayushchego-predpriyatija-322349-2018/>.

<sup>42</sup> In Bishkek 37 trolleybuses manufactured in Belarus and Russia were delivered [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-bishkek-postavili-37-trollejbusov-belorusskogo-i-rossijskogo-proizvodstva-313496-2018/>

<sup>43</sup> Belarus will take part in Food Expo Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-vystavke-foodexpo-kyrgyzstan-v-bishkeke-333552-2019/>.



condensed cream, butter, cheese and curd sugar. It should be noted that in April 2019 the exposition of Belarusian enterprises will be again presented at the FoodExpo Kyrgyzstan-2019 in such thematic sections as food, equipment for food industry, goods and services to equip catering enterprises, packaging products, halal industry.

In April 2018, Belarusian exporting companies also took part in the International specialized exhibition MedExpo in Bishkek. Among them were ALC "Belsept", JSC "Gomselmash", the Republican Scientific and Practical Center of Neurology and Neurosurgery Ministry of Health of Belarus, JSC "Exon", LLC "Arvitmedikl". Representatives of the Belarusian medical and pharmaceutical industries were brought to Kyrgyzstan by the fact that in 2017 in this country began implementation of the state program to modernize the health care system, and therefore by the end of 2018 it was planned to "buy modern medical equipment and quality medicines for \$7 million"<sup>44</sup>. This is why the presentation of medical and pharmaceutical products was very useful.

Let's summarize. In this study we have cited the facts of rapid development and growth of interregional cooperation of Belarus with partners only from the Eurasian Economic Union countries - Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan. If we add to them similar trends observed today in the regions of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the European Union, the "far arc", the Economic Zone of the Silk Road, all of them will convincingly testify to the obvious: Even in the professional media environment, such a concept as "international regional journalism", which is still unfamiliar to hearing, should find its real contours in the media practice of the information and communication space of Belarus' regions as soon as possible, so that its representatives could competently build information strategies specific to the international regional issues, as well as "adequately reflect the fullness of international issues at the level of their region and effectively contribute to the solution of the problems faced here".<sup>45</sup> So that, as a result, the Eurasian theme - life and activity in the regions of the Eurasian Economic Union countries - becomes relevant for regional media structures and, accordingly, for their readers, viewers and listeners.

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<sup>44</sup> Belarus will take part in MedExpo and FoodExpo exhibitions in Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-vystavkah-medexpo-i-foodexpo-v-kyrgyzstane-297380-2018/>.

<sup>45</sup> Zalesky, B. Belarus - Russia: edges of integration. Chronicle of allied construction / B. Zaleskiy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2016. -- C. 96.

## Belarus - North Caucasus: topical issues of interaction

Back in May 2016 the Council of Ministers of the Union State of Belarus and Russia adopted a resolution "On the Plan of measures to create a common information space of the Union State for 2016-2020", the implementation of which would allow to systematize information activities in the Union State and improve the quality of thematic publications, including on cooperation between the regions of Belarus and Russia, which is the most important area of bilateral relations within the Union State. After all, as it was noted at the V Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, held in October 2018 in Mogilev, "it is in the regions of our countries begin a lot of production, technological chains for the production of joint products<sup>46</sup>. Suffice it to say that the contractual and legal framework of this interaction includes more than three hundred agreements relating to the increase in the volume of mutual supplies of goods, expanding the distribution network, strengthening production cooperation, creating assembly plants. Even today, it is very important that the implementation of these joint projects be constantly in the focus of attention of central and, what is especially important, regional mass media of the two countries.

It should be noted that the Central, Ural, Volga and North-Western Federal Districts have been leading the Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation for many years. The North Caucasus FD is lagging behind them in the development of partnership relations with the Republic of Belarus, but undoubtedly has a lot of potential and prerequisites to achieve positive changes in this regard. After all, it "has favorable conditions for the development of agro-industrial complex, tourism, health-resort, mining and manufacturing sectors, as well as developed transit functions<sup>47</sup>. These natural advantages of the region can be realized by actively developing foreign economic relations, taking into account that one of the key factors of long-term social and economic development of the North Caucasus Federal District, as written in the Strategy for Social and Economic Development of the North Caucasus Federal District until 2025, is integration into the Euro-Asian economic space, which "will ensure the inflow of investments into the regions of the North Caucasus Federal District, provided a favorable

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<sup>46</sup> Address at the plenary session of the V Regions Forum of Belarus and Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/vystuplenie-na-plenarnom-zasedanii-v-foruma-regionov-belarusi-i-rossii-19684/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vystuplenie-na-plenarnom-zasedanii-v-foruma-regionov-belarusi-i-rossii-19684/).

<sup>47</sup> Strategy for socio-economic development of the North Caucasus Federal District until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <http://skfo.gov.ru/district/soc/sed/>.

investment and business climate"<sup>48</sup>. The Republic of Belarus can be one of the effective partners of the SCFD entities. Analysis of publications in the Belarusian media shows that so far the clear leaders in establishing partnerships with Belarus in the SCFD are **Stavropol Krai, Chechen Republic and Republic of Dagestan**.

Thus, the Agreement on trade-economic, scientific-technical and social-cultural cooperation between the governments of the **Stavropol Territory** and the Republic of Belarus was signed in mid-March 2017. This document significantly expanded the existing legal framework for cooperation between the Russian region and Belarus, once again eloquently emphasizing the conclusion that "integration with the regions of Belarus is a conceptual direction of foreign relations of Stavropol Kra<sup>49</sup>. Back in 2000 and 2002, the Stavropol government signed cooperation agreements with the Brest and Gomel regional executive committees, which provide for interaction in trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural areas. And in 2008, an Agreement on Cooperation was adopted between the Stavropol Territory Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Even today, products of a number of leading Belarusian industrial enterprises are widely represented in the Krai. Among them are Minsk Tractor Plant and Minsk Automobile Plant. Belarusian food products are also popular here, which was the motive for opening a chain of stores selling meat and dairy products from Belarus in Stavropol. In turn, Stavropol enterprises have mastered the supply to the Belarusian market: agricultural raw materials and products of its primary processing - wheat, flour, sunflower and sunflower oil, sheep wool; engineering products - electricity meters and semi-trailers; chemical industry products - polymer materials, plastics, aerosols.

All these facts show that Stavropol Krai is one of the most promising economic partners of Belarus in Russia. Back in 2013, the trade turnover of the Krai and the Republic increased by half compared to 2012 and amounted to 6.7 billion Russian rubles. However, then there was a certain decline. And only in 2016 the volume of mutual trade reached 140 million dollars. This meant that after two years of decline, its growth dynamics exceeded 9 percent. At the same time, this fact testifies to the fact that the Stavropol Territory and the Republic of Belarus now have a real potential to significantly increase trade turnover and

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<sup>48</sup> Amirova, E.A. Analysis of features of social and economic differentiation of development of regions of the SCFD / E.A. Amirova // Regional problems of economic transformation. -- 2014. -- №9. -- C. 159.

<sup>49</sup> Vladimirov, V. Market expansion is always a good thing for entrepreneurs / V. Vladimirov // Eurasian Economic Union: regional aspect: inform.-integ. project / com., interviewer. B. Zalesky, M. Valkovsky, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk : Biznesosset, 2014. -- C. 56.

expand bilateral cooperation. That is why the visit of Stavropol Governor V. Vladimirov to Belarus in March 2017 was considered in Minsk as a serious intention of the Russian side "to significantly increase mutual trade and launch new promising projects in sectors where we are interesting and useful to each other"<sup>50</sup>. Such promising directions of the parties include: development of industrial cooperation ties; effective interaction in the agro-industrial sector; implementation of promising projects in the construction sphere; activation of cooperation in the light industry; and updating the innovative component of the partnership.

As for industrial cooperation, in 2013 it was noted that "in the Stavropol Territory more than ten enterprises with the participation of Belarusian investments are registered"<sup>51</sup>. Further, in order to expand cooperation relations, the Belarusian side proposes to "implement joint projects of MAZ and holding "Autocomponents" with the Stavropol Territory enterprises"<sup>52</sup>. Moreover, the Stavropol Territory "wants to return to the issue of organizing assembly production of Belarusian equipment and its maintenance"<sup>53</sup>. We are also talking about expanding the supply of various equipment from Belarus to the Russian region - passenger, municipal, cargo and road-building - to implement major infrastructure projects there. At the same time, "equipment supplies are possible on leasing terms"<sup>54</sup>. In the agro-industrial sphere, two directions are of the greatest interest: supplies of modern technological equipment to Stavropol Krai for the reconstruction of dairy farms with the involvement of Belarusian specialists in the projects of reconstruction and construction of cattle-breeding complexes; supplies of specialized equipment of Minsk Tractor Plant, taking into account Stavropol Krai's plans for the development of viticulture. In the field of innovations, Belarusian and Stavropol scientists can really cooperate in robotics and resource saving, geoinformatics and geophysics, microbiology and biotechnology.

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<sup>50</sup> Negotiations with the Governor of the Stavropol Territory of Russia Vladimir Vladimirov [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/peregovory-s-gubernatorom-stavropolskogo-kraja-rossii-vladimirom-vladimirovym-15800/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-gubernatorom-stavropolskogo-kraja-rossii-vladimirom-vladimirovym-15800/).

<sup>51</sup> Vysheslavov, V. In the future - joint development of innovative technologies / V. Vysheslavov // Common economic space: integration of regions: inform.-integ. project / edited by interviewees: B. Zalesky, M. Valkovsky, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk : Biznesosset, 2013. - - C. 79.

<sup>52</sup> Meeting with the governor of the Stavropol Territory of Russia [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7111>.

<sup>53</sup> Negotiations with the Governor of the Stavropol Territory of Russia Vladimir Vladimirov [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/peregovory-s-gubernatorom-stavropolskogo-kraja-rossii-vladimirom-vladimirovym-15800/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-gubernatorom-stavropolskogo-kraja-rossii-vladimirom-vladimirovym-15800/).

<sup>54</sup> Belarus expects to increase the supply of equipment to the Stavropol Territory and create new joint ventures - Kobayakov [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-na-uvelichenie-postavok-tehniki-v-stavropolskij-kraj-i-sozdanie-novyh-sp-kobjakov-237868-2017/>.

As for the **Chechen Republic**, it signed the Agreement on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation with the Republic of Belarus in June 2017 at the Fourth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia. This document has seriously strengthened the legal framework for cooperation between Minsk and Grozny in virtually all areas of partnership, which was initiated by the agreement between the Russian region and the Minsk City Executive Committee on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation, signed back in July 2002. At that time, this document became one of the first agreements between the Chechen Republic and foreign countries after the beginning of the reconstruction period. "However, due to objective reasons available at that time, including the general socio-economic situation in [Chechnya] and concerns of potential investors about possible risks in the field of investment activity, these agreements, unfortunately, did not receive further development"<sup>55</sup>.

But years later, when the Chechen government significantly stepped up its work to implement all previously signed agreements with foreign countries, progress began in relations with the Belarusian side as well. New impulses to cooperation between Belarus and Chechnya were given to the understanding that this Russian region has a significant economic and resource potential, which allows it to form a competitive economy that has a positive impact on the development of interaction with Belarusian administrative and territorial entities, business structures, public and cultural organizations. That is why "the first visit of the delegation of the Chechen Republic headed by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic to Belarus took place on July 6, 2015 to discuss the issues of mutually beneficial cooperation"<sup>56</sup>. And supplies of Belarusian household appliances, textiles, cosmetics, tires, as well as road-building, municipal and agricultural equipment of Amkodor Holding started in the Russian region.

But, of course, a new stage in the interaction between the parties was opened by the visit of the head of the Chechen Republic R. Kadyrov to Belarus in September 2017, during which the attention was focused both on the development of trade cooperation and on the key topic of bilateral cooperation - industrial cooperation, which both in Minsk and Grozny are considered the most advanced, mutually beneficial form of cooperation, "which allows to meet the needs of the

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<sup>55</sup> Kadyrov, R. It is necessary to give a new impetus to cooperation with Belarus / R. Kadyrov // Belarus - Russia: cooperation of regions: inform.-integrat. project / com. B.L. Zalesky, E.A. Korovkin, M.E. Korovkin. - Minsk: BelTA, 2010. -- C. 58.

<sup>56</sup> Umarov, D. Umarov // Interaction of regions: the Union State - the locomotive of the Eurasian integration: inform.-integrat. project / ess., interviewing : B. Zalesky, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesoftet, 2016. -- C. 60.

regional market and create high-tech jobs"<sup>57</sup>. As for trade cooperation, according to the parties, the potential for its multiple increase in the coming years lies in the supply of Belarusian passenger, cargo, quarry, agricultural, road-building and municipal equipment to Chechnya. A specific project in this regard could be the participation of the Minsk Automobile Plant in the modernization of the Chechen truck and bus fleet.

The first step in the development of the Belarusian-Chechen production cooperation should be the establishment of an assembly plant in this Russian region by "Bobruiskagromash" from Belarus. At least, an agreement has already been signed with the Chechen Ministry of Agriculture in this regard, and there is also clarity both with the sites and with the stages of this project. And this may become a kind of a prologue to large-scale cooperation between the parties in the field of industrial cooperation, as "Belarus and Chechnya need to develop other joint projects, in particular, the supply of equipment and spare parts holding" Autocomponents "to the enterprises of the automotive industry in Chechnya"<sup>58</sup>. Among other promising areas of cooperation, the parties identified such as: the agricultural sector - the introduction of advanced technologies in the production and processing of agricultural products, the creation of dairy farms, the supply of modern milking parlors, crop production, livestock breeding, veterinary medicine; construction and housing and communal services - road construction, design and construction of housing and infrastructure, supply of road construction and communal equipment, construction materials and elevators.

In other words, Minsk and Grozny seriously undertook to fill the agreement signed in June 2017 with concrete mutually beneficial projects, taking into account the principle voiced by the Chechen leader - "it is the interest of the Chechen side to work directly, without intermediaries"<sup>59</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that the implementation of the action plan for 2018-20120, which sets out all the promising areas of Belarusian-Chechen cooperation, will be another eloquent illustration of the fact that the establishment of ties between Belarus and Chechnya is a new stage in the strengthening of Belarusian-Russian relations.

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<sup>57</sup> Meeting with the head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov [Electronic Resource]. -- 2017. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/vstrecha-s-glavoj-chechenskoj-respubliki-ramzanom-kadyrovym-17164/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-glavoj-chechenskoj-respubliki-ramzanom-kadyrovym-17164/).

<sup>58</sup> Meeting with the head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov [Electronic Resource]. -- 2017. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7518>.

<sup>59</sup> Kadyrov, R. On the Word of the President, Image of Chechnya and Cooperation / R. Kadyrov // [Electron resource]. -- 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/interview/view/o-slove-prezidenta-imidzhe-chechni-i-sotrudnichestve-kadyrov-podelilsja-vpechatlenijami-ot-vstrechi-s-5791/>.

As for another subject of the North Caucasus Federal District, the **Republic of Dagestan**, the Agreement with this Russian region on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation was signed by the Republic of Belarus back in 2002. In April 2014, the legal framework of this interregional cooperation was supplemented by the Agreement between the Standing Committee of the Union State and the Government of the Republic of Dagestan on cooperation in the sphere of trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation, based on mutual interest in preserving and expanding Belarusian-Russian ties, in creating the appropriate organizational, economic, legal and other conditions to strengthen partnership between the regions, in ensuring effective interaction, exchange of experience and information. In the framework of this document, the parties have expressed their intention to assist in the implementation of joint programs and activities aimed at developing economic relations between the regions of Belarus and Dagestan, to create conditions for the expansion of trade and economic relations between business entities of the parties, as well as to cooperate in the development of solutions for investment and innovation activities, including the attraction of foreign capital and advanced foreign technologies. At the time, Dagestan stated that it was interested in supplying Belarusian agricultural equipment because "Dagestan needs to organize processing of agricultural products"<sup>60</sup>.

In the same 2014, the foreign trade turnover between Belarus and Dagestan came close to \$14 million with the share of Belarusian exports - about \$13 million, based on "mineral products, metal products, wood, pulp and paper products, machinery, equipment and vehicles, chemical industry products, rubber, textiles, textiles and footwear, leather goods, fur products, food products and agricultural raw material"<sup>61</sup>. At the event "Forum of regions of Belarus and Russia" held in June 2014 in Makhachkala, the parties agreed to work out "the issue of introduction of Belarusian technologies of cultivation of agricultural products, milk processing technologies, cheese production, cultivation of poultry meat of broilers, use of new technologies in egg production" within the framework of

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<sup>60</sup> A Cooperation Agreement has been signed with the Standing Committee of the Union State of Russia and Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2014. - URL: [https://www.riadagestan.ru/news/president/podpisano\\_soglashenie\\_o\\_sotrudnichestve\\_s\\_postoyannym\\_komitetom\\_soyuznogo\\_gosudarstva\\_rossii\\_i\\_belorussii/](https://www.riadagestan.ru/news/president/podpisano_soglashenie_o_sotrudnichestve_s_postoyannym_komitetom_soyuznogo_gosudarstva_rossii_i_belorussii/)

<sup>61</sup> Abdulatipov, R. Regional cooperation is strategically necessary in the conditions of sanctions policy of the West / R. Abdulatipov // Interaction of regions: the Union State - the locomotive of the Eurasian integration: inform.-integr. project / ess., interviewing : B. Zalesky, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesoftet, 2016. - - C. 22.

implementation of joint investment projects in Dagestan land<sup>62</sup>. In September 2014, the parties agreed to create and implement joint projects aimed at forming rural tourism infrastructure. In particular, the Treaty of Intent was then signed by the Committee on Tourism of Dagestan and the Belarusian public association "Rest in the village". This document "implies cooperation of the parties in the sphere of rural tourism and cultural cooperation, attraction of tourists, promotion of Dagestan brand as a tourist territory"<sup>63</sup>.

In March 2015 Minsk Tractor Works opened its dealer center in Dagestan on the basis of "Dagselmash" company in Buynak district, where at the first stage "the restoration of tractors, and in the future - the implementation of new equipment"<sup>64</sup>. To this end, they took up the task of preparing the exhibition site of Belarusian tractors, as well as training specialists, providing them with the opportunity to get the necessary skills for maintenance and repair of equipment in the training center of Minsk Tractor Works. In the same year 2015 a bright event of interregional cooperation was the Fair of Belarusian commodity producers, which took place in Dagestan and presented the goods of agro-industrial complex and light industry: sweets, honey of different sorts, sausage products, clothes, footwear, textile and many other things. As a result, the Dagestani side estimated that in 2017 it had "the largest trade transactions with Azerbaijan - \$47.93 million, Iran - \$34.54 million, China - \$ 17.81 million, Belarus - \$ 16.67 million"<sup>65</sup>.

Let's summarize. All these facts clearly demonstrate how broad the thematic range of media publications of the two countries to organize cooperation between the regions of Belarus and the Stavropol, Chechnya and Dagestan is already becoming. The most important task facing Belarusian, Stavropol, Chechen and Dagestani media today in this regard is to ensure the level of adequate media articulation of this interregional cooperation, where all joint projects should be fully reflected in the media space in order to eventually ensure the transition of union integration into a qualitatively new state - total interaction at all levels.

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<sup>62</sup> Dagestan and Belarus have agreed on cooperation in business [Electronic resource]. - - 2014. - URL: <http://www.dag.aif.ru/society/details/1186729>.

<sup>63</sup> Belarusians will teach Dagestanis to develop rural tourism [Electronic resource]. - - 2014. - URL: <https://www.interfax.by/news/belarus/1167841>.

<sup>64</sup> \_MTZ opened a dealer center in Dagestan [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: [https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/mtz-otkryl-dilerskij-tsentr-v-dagestane\\_i\\_0000020779.html](https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/mtz-otkryl-dilerskij-tsentr-v-dagestane_i_0000020779.html).

<sup>65</sup> On the results of foreign trade of the Republic of Dagestan for 2017. [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: [https://makhachkala.mid.ru/mezdunarodnoe-sotrudnicestvo/-/asset\\_publisher/ZPNsLt1FS6Qn/content/ob-itogah-vnesnej-torgovli-respubliki-dagestan-za-2017-g-?inheritRedirect=false](https://makhachkala.mid.ru/mezdunarodnoe-sotrudnicestvo/-/asset_publisher/ZPNsLt1FS6Qn/content/ob-itogah-vnesnej-torgovli-respubliki-dagestan-za-2017-g-?inheritRedirect=false).



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## **Belarus - Rostov region: opportunities to intensify cooperation**

Rostov region in Belarus is called one of the key partners among the regions of the Southern Federal District of the Russian Federation. This is largely due to the fact that among the main directions of the region's international activities the priority is "strengthening economic and humanitarian ties within the framework of cross-border cooperation and expanding partnerships with CIS countries"<sup>66</sup>. The region has about three thousand legal entities - participants of foreign economic activity, which in 2016 carried out export-import operations with 149 countries, including the Republic of Belarus, which, along with Turkey, Ukraine, Switzerland, Egypt, China and Kazakhstan, is one of the first seven states - the main trading partners of Rostov region.

The parties signed an agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural spheres back in April 2002. Since then, the relations between the Republic and the region have been developing quite consistently and systematically, which is greatly facilitated by the activities of the established joint working group, the regulations of which presuppose the holding of annual joint meetings, where the development of cooperation between enterprises and organizations of the Republic of Belarus and the Rostov region in such areas as trade and economic relations, medicine, education, culture and sports are considered.

Productive interaction between the parties after the signing of this agreement soon led to the registration of several joint ventures with Belarusian capital in Rostov region. "This is Atlant-Yug CJSC, which sells refrigeration equipment manufactured in Belarus. This is BelarusYugService LLC, which sells and services Belarusian tractors and other agricultural machinery. This is LLC "BMZ Trading House", which is the representative of the largest metallurgical plant in Belarus, which supplies the Russian market with construction fittings and imports to Belarus components for metallurgical production. This is LLC "BelAvtoMaz", which represents the Minsk Automobile Plant, sells its products and provides subsequent service"<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Ministry activity - International cooperation of the Rostov region [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://mineconomikiro.ru/a25.php>.

<sup>67</sup> Pavlatenko, G. Pavlatenko // Belarus - Russia: cooperation of regions: inform.-integrat. project / com. B.L. Zalessky, E.A. Korovkin, M.E. Korovkin. - Minsk: BelTA, 2010. - - C. 219.

In 2011, a branch of the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in the Russian Federation began operating in Rostov-on-Don, which contributed to strengthening interaction between the parties. In June 2011, an Agreement on cooperation was signed between the Regional Information and Analytical Center and the Belarusian National Centre for Marketing and Price Study. And in November the same year, JSC "NIAEP" and the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of the Republic of Belarus signed a protocol on the participation of the Belarusian construction complex in the construction of facilities - units 3 and 4 of the Rostov NPP - for the period 2011-2012.

In 2011, the main export positions of Rostov citizens in the Belarusian market included: electric machines and equipment, their parts; animal or vegetable fats and oils and products of their splitting; food products; coal; chemical products; products of ferrous and non-ferrous metals; lamps and electronic tubes. And from Belarus to the Rostov region were actively supplied: engineering products; aluminum and aluminum products; equipment and mechanical devices, their parts for boilers; products made of ferrous metals; rubber, rubber and products made of them; dairy products, eggs of birds, natural honey; food products of animal origin; vegetables; finished products from meat and fish; plastics and products made of them; paper products; synthetic fibers and products made of them; electric machines and equipment. In addition, Belarusian manufacturers supplied other hygiene products, cosmetics, electrical goods, household appliances and furniture.

Such enterprises of the region as PK LLC "Novocherkassk Electric Locomotive Plant", LLC "Combine Plant "Rostselmash", OJSC "Energomashinostroitelny Alliance", CJSC "Don-Tex" successfully cooperated with partners from Belarus. At the same time, OOO Belneftekhim-RUS continued to supply polyethylene products manufactured in Belarus to enterprises in Rostov-on-Don. "And on October 1, 2010 in Oktyabrsky district of Rostov region a joint Russian-Belarusian enterprise "BelaRus-South" on assembly of tractors "Belarus 320" was opened<sup>68</sup>. It was planned to create a trade and logistics center for selling Belarusian products in the Southern Federal District on the basis of BeltechTorg. Even a land plot in Bataisk, Rostov region, was allocated for its construction.

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<sup>68</sup> Gavrilenko, E. The range of goods from Belarus is quite wide and is not limited only to clothing and food products / E. Gavrilenko // Customs Union: regional interaction. View from Russia: inform.-integr. project / edited by interviewer: B. Zalesky, M. Valkovsky, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk : Theseus, 2012. - - C. 164.

Record trade turnover "between the region and the republic was achieved in 2012, amounting then to 423.3 million dollars"<sup>69</sup>. Let us recall that in the same year, a landmark for interaction between the parties took place the meeting of the Belarusian leader A. Lukashenko with the Governor of Rostov region V. Golubev, which noted that "it is necessary to reach the level of implementation of joint economically integrated projects and programs. Use the synergetic effect of merging our production, technological and intellectual resources"<sup>70</sup>. And at the same time, the parties identified the most promising areas of cooperation, one of which is the agro-industrial complex, where they outlined the possibilities of joint projects on modernization and development of agricultural infrastructure, production base, introduction of progressive technologies for production and processing of agricultural products. The fact is that at that time the Rostov citizens came forward with an initiative to become a pilot site for the implementation of the Union State programs in the agricultural sector, where two programs have already been implemented, aimed at the introduction of modern technologies, primarily in the field of agriculture, the development of promising resource-saving environmentally friendly technologies, equipment for the production of biologically valuable feed, as well as to increase the efficiency of food production through the processing of their waste on the basis of advanced technologies. Another area of interaction is participation of Belarusian companies in road development programs, transport infrastructure projects, water supply and drainage systems, and construction of residential, social, cultural and sports facilities in the Russian region. At that time, the opportunities for cooperation in the transport sector aroused particular interest, as major projects such as the construction of an airport complex and modernization of the Rostov universal port were being prepared in Rostov region.

As a result, the parties concluded that they could significantly increase the volume of mutual trade by implementing a number of joint projects: first, by organizing the assembly of Belarusian elevators in Rostov region and establishing a further system of their service; second, by joining efforts to produce agricultural machinery; third, by implementing a major integration project for the production of turkey meat; and fourth, by jointly producing steel structures and panels at the production site in the Belarusian Klimovichi. Projects to create a joint venture in

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<sup>69</sup> Golubev, V. Golubev // Interaction of regions: the Union State - the locomotive of the Eurasian integration: inform.-integr. project / comp., interviewing : B. Zalessky, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesoftet, 2016. - - C. 235.

<sup>70</sup> Alexander Lukashenko met with Governor of Rostov region Vasily Golubev [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-vstretilsja-s-gubernatorom-rostovskoj-oblasti-vasiliem-golubevym-974/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-vstretilsja-s-gubernatorom-rostovskoj-oblasti-vasiliem-golubevym-974/).

Rostov-on-Don to produce confectionery products, as well as joint production of sunflower and rapeseed oil were named as promising then. And in the following years, a number of concrete steps were taken to implement the plans. In particular, with the help of the Belarusian company Beltranslift in 2013-2014 in the housing and communal services of the Rostov region was replaced and installed 513 elevators. In 2015-2016, this Russian region has purchased 43 Belarusian buses of large capacity and 15 trolley buses.

Nevertheless, in 2016 the volume of mutual trade slightly decreased - to 339 million dollars. For this reason, signing in May 2017 in Minsk Road Map of Cooperation for 2017-2019, the parties clearly outlined plans for the medium term in terms of increasing trade turnover: "We have all the possibilities over the next two years to 2019 to bring it to \$500 million"<sup>71</sup>. At the same meeting of the Belarusian leader with the Governor of Rostov, the two sides expressed their firm belief that the parties have every opportunity to "significantly increase the volume of trade and economic cooperation in the coming years and master new promising areas of interaction"<sup>72</sup>. In particular, it was about "bringing back to life joint production of energy-saturated tractors in Bataisk",<sup>73</sup> to implement plans to build a bypass road around Rostov-on-Don with the participation of the Belarusian side, to develop cooperation in the field of livestock breeding. As for the resumption of assembly production of Belarusian tractors in Bataisk, it is worth recalling that the Minsk Tractor Works' Trading House owns in Rostov region "a production site prepared for assembly of energy-saturated equipment - tractors of 5th and 6th traction classes with capacity from 300 to 500 hp. The Russian party is considering the possibility of subsidizing the production from the budgets of different levels"<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup> Matveev, V. The potential for cooperation with Belarus is huge - the Governor of the Rostov region / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/potential-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusju-gromadnyj-gubernator-rostovskoj-oblasti-246760-2017/>.

<sup>72</sup> Meeting with the Governor of the Rostov region Vasily Golubev [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL:

[http://president.gov.by/ru/search\\_ru/getExtendedResults/?query=&search\\_type=type\\_all\\_words&group=0&from\\_day=11&from\\_month=5&from\\_year=2017&to\\_day=11&to\\_month=5&to\\_year=2017&search\\_type\\_sort=desc&search\\_ok.x=31&search\\_ok.y=5&search\\_mode=&search\\_node=news&search\\_node\\_id=374&search\\_title\\_name=events](http://president.gov.by/ru/search_ru/getExtendedResults/?query=&search_type=type_all_words&group=0&from_day=11&from_month=5&from_year=2017&to_day=11&to_month=5&to_year=2017&search_type_sort=desc&search_ok.x=31&search_ok.y=5&search_mode=&search_node=news&search_node_id=374&search_title_name=events).

<sup>73</sup> Meeting with the Governor of the Rostov region of Russia [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7227>.

<sup>74</sup> Rostov region is interested in assembly production of BELARUS tractors [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/rostovskaja-oblast-zainteresovana-v-sborochnom-proizvodstve-tractorov-belarus-246848-2017/>.

Among the 75 most effective ways to increase the volume of mutual trade between the Republic of Belarus and the Rostov region, the Roadmap for Cooperation for 2017-2019 also indicates the transition from regional interaction at the level of two states - Belarus and Russia - to effective partnerships at the level of cities and districts, which can provide new incentives and prospects, as they allow "to strengthen existing contacts and develop new economic ties, unite creative and intellectual potential, strengthen trust and mutual respect.

One of the first documents in this regard, the Partnership Development Agreement, was signed between Rostov-on-Don and Gomel in 2009. Five years later, when this document expired, the parties adopted a new agreement, already indefinite, agreeing that "cooperation between partner cities from now on will be more dense, and meetings - more frequent"<sup>76</sup>. The main areas of cooperation between Rostov-on-Don and Gomel were defined as "mutual supplies of agricultural machinery, road-building machinery and agricultural products"<sup>77</sup>.

In 2012, on the margins of the seventh joint meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Rostov region, the Treaty on Fraternal Relations was signed between the Zernograd District of the Rostov region and the Goretzky District of Mogilev region, indicating their intention to develop comprehensive cooperation not only in the field of culture, but also in science, between agricultural universities working in these areas: "They have already found common points of contact. They have plans for further development in the economic sphere. There is a breeding center in Zernogradsky Raion, where new varieties of wheat and grains are bred; they are interested in Belarusian corn and winter crops. In the future, ties will also be established here"<sup>78</sup>.

At the same time, in 2012, the Agreement on establishing direct cooperation was signed between Kogalnitsky District of Rostov Region and Smolevichi District of Minsk Region - in order to direct their efforts "to intensify information exchange and mutual cooperation in the field of promoting economic development, governance, health care, education, culture, regional planning,

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<sup>75</sup> Voronina, T. The Twinning of Minsk and Rostov-on-Don will be a logical step - an economist / T. Voronina // [Electronic Re6 Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://eurasia.expert/pobratimstvo-minska-i-rostova-na-donu-budet-logichnym-shagom-ekonomist/>.

<sup>76</sup> Lucik, A. Rostov-on-Don + partner cities = new prospects for constructive cooperation / A. Lucik // [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://rostov.mk.ru/articles/2015/09/29/rostovnadonu-gorodapartnery-novye-perspektivy-konstruktivnogo-sotrudnichestva.html>.

<sup>77</sup> Signing of cooperation agreements between the city of Rostov and the cities of Gomel, Volgograd and Glasgow [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://www.don-plaza.ru/ru/press/news/881/>.

<sup>78</sup> Belarusians of Russia: View from Rostov-on-Don [Electronic resource]. - - 2014. - URL: <http://www.soyuz.by/news/region/1054.html>.

environmental protection, development of districts as a whole, to expand direct contacts between representatives and public organizations of the twin districts"<sup>79</sup>.

Finally, in late June 2018, Minsk and Rostov-on-Don signed a twinning agreement aimed at improving trade and economic relations, cooperation in the social sphere and partnerships. According to the parties, this document "opens even more opportunities for the two cities, including the implementation of projects in the field of urban management, cooperation between secondary and higher educational institutions, sports events and festivals. Besides, it is planned to develop fair trade"<sup>80</sup>. Facts show that previously the citizens of Minsk and Rostov had long-standing mutually beneficial relations. Rostov enterprises exported sunflower oil, women's clothes, paintwork to the Belarusian capital. Foodstuffs and footwear, engineering and chemical products were supplied to the Don from Minsk. Only in 2017, the Rostov administration bought 75 Minsk low-floor buses with large capacity for transportation of tourists and residents during the World Cup in 2018. As a result, "the turnover of enterprises in Rostov-on-Don with Belarusian companies in 2017 was \$ 143.6 million"<sup>81</sup>. And in April 2018 was opened direct air service Minsk - Rostov-on-Don. Since then, the aircraft of the Belarusian air carrier regularly departs from the Rostov airport on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, and from Minsk - on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. It should be assumed that both the opening of direct flights and the signing of the Treaty on twinned relations will allow the enterprises of Minsk and Rostov-on-Don to cooperate more actively, create new joint projects, which, in turn, will increase bilateral trade turnover.

Among other directions of cooperation the parties intend to pay attention to the development of cooperation in scientific and educational spheres. Moreover, the Southern National Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences has been cooperating with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus for many years. "Cooperation with Belarusian scientists is developing most dynamically under the Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation between the Gubkin Institute of Metal-Polymer Systems Mechanics of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Gubkin Institute of Metal-Polymer Systems Mechanics of the

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<sup>79</sup> Smolevichi [Electronic resource]. - - 2012. - URL: <http://kag-layon.donland.ru/news/2012/09/05.aspx>.

<sup>80</sup> Brewer, E. Minsk and Rostov-on-Don established a twin relationship / E. Brewer // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-rostov-na-donu-ustanovili-pobratimskie-otnoshenija-308489-2018/>.

<sup>81</sup> Will Minsk and Rostov-on-Don become twin cities? [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://regnum.ru/news/2371856.html>.

<sup>82</sup> Barteniev, V. Barteniev // Single economic space: integration of regions: inform.-integ. project / edited by interviewer: B. Zalesky, M. Valkovsky, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk: Biznesoftet, 2013. - - C. 200.

Russian Academy of Sciences. The most dynamically developing cooperation is with Belarusian scientists within the framework of the Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation between the State Scientific Institution "V.A. White National Academy of Sciences of Belarus Institute of Metal Polymer Systems Mechanics" and the Southern National Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the International Project on Large-Scale Environmental Risk Assessment by ALARM methods supported by the 6th Framework Program of the European Commission <...> with participation of scientists from the Republic of Belarus, Germany, Lithuania, Russia and other countries" .

Cooperation between Belarusian and Rostov scientists in the field of agriculture is very promising, where the Federal State Budget Scientific Institution "All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Viticulture and Winemaking of Ya.I. Potapenko's estate" signed an agreement on scientific cooperation with the Republican Scientific Production Subsidiary Unitary Enterprise "Fruit Farming Institute", which provides for the exchange of initial selection material of fruit, berry crops and grapes. In addition, back in 2015, Novocherkassk Engineering and Reclamation Institute named after A.K. Kortunov FSBEI HPE "Don State Agrarian University" and the Belarusian RUE "Institute of Reclamation" conducted work on the exchange of experience in research work and participation in scientific conferences. Since 2016, the Donskoy Experimental Station named after L.A. Zhdanov of the All-Russian Research Institute of Oilseeds Crops named after V.S. Pustovoit has established cooperation with Belarusian enterprises on the issues of selection, variety testing of early-ripening hybrids of sunflower, oil flax, rapeseed and soybean.

About three dozen signed agreements and contracts include cooperation of Rostov region higher educational institutions with Belarusian educational and scientific institutions. These documents provide for the development and implementation of joint scientific projects and training programs to improve education based on new information and pedagogical technologies and concepts, implementation of joint publications, exchange of published scientific and methodical literature, holding of scientific seminars, conferences and symposiums to exchange positive experience. In particular, in April 2011, the Faculty of Nanotechnologies and Composite Materials and the Department of Technology of Structural Materials of Don State University and the Belarusian Institute of Powder Metallurgy signed an Agreement on Cooperation, which provides for innovative, research and development work, as well as improving the scientific, technical and professional level of staff. Fruitful creative links have also been established between Rostov and Belarusian State Economic Universities.



All these facts testify to the fact that the Republic of Belarus and the Rostov region still have a lot of opportunities for expanding mutually beneficial cooperation, mastering new promising areas of cooperation and deepening existing partnerships in trade, economic, industrial and operational, as well as scientific and technological spheres, in order to successfully meet the challenges to increase mutual trade turnover in the coming years.

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## Belarus-France: from deeper dialogue to effective solutions

In the Republic of Belarus relations with France are traditionally considered in the context of constructive interaction on all issues of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, counting on "further deepening of the dialogue and increasing the level of contacts"<sup>83</sup>. And in 2018 the parties took a number of important steps in this direction. First of all, the Senate of France and the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus agreed on considerable intensification of bilateral inter-parliamentary cooperation. They singled out "the promotion of economic relations, as well as the attraction of French investments into economic projects in Belarus" as the most important priorities for the development of partnership relations<sup>84</sup>. Secondly, in 2018, for the first time in the history of bilateral relations, friendship groups were established in the Council of the Republic and the Senate of France, which testifies to the desire of the Belarusian and French sides to give a new impetus to bilateral relations. Third, the Joint Belarusian-French Commission on Economic Cooperation and the business forum of businessmen of the two countries, which meets regularly, have significantly stepped up their activities in terms of coordinating bilateral partnership relations. The third meeting of the joint commission and the fifth business forum held in October 2018 in Minsk testify to it quite eloquently.

Participants of the meeting of the commission summed up the results of joint work over the past two years in the field of trade, economic and investment cooperation, as well as outlined priority areas of partnership development, including trade, environment, agriculture, transport, tourism, banking and financial sphere, as well as "inter-regional relations and development of legal framework of bilateral cooperation"<sup>85</sup>.

Speaking about the results, the parties stated several positive trends in the development of Belarusian-French partnership relations. Firstly, the volume of

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<sup>83</sup> Congratulations to the President of France Emmanuel Macron [Electronic Resource]. -- 2018. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-frantsii-emmanuelju-makronu-19118/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-frantsii-emmanuelju-makronu-19118/).

<sup>84</sup> The problem of regional security was discussed at a meeting between Myasnikovich and the President of the French Senate [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/problematika-regionalnoj-bezopasnosti-obsuzhdjena-na-vstreche-mjasnikovicha-s-prezidentom-senata-325177-2018/>.

<sup>85</sup> On holding the third session of the Joint Belarusian-French Commission on Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: [http://mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/dff75390f947ce6c.html](http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/dff75390f947ce6c.html)

mutual trade between the two countries has been steadily increasing over the past two years: in 2017 - by 28 percent, for the first eight months of 2018 - by almost 15 percent, exceeding 260 million dollars. At the same time in 2017, "the growth of Belarusian exports amounted to 155%, the positive dynamics of exports in 2018<sup>86</sup>. This happened primarily due to such positions as transport, computer, telecommunications and information services. In addition, from Belarus to France are now supplied goods 250 items. An interesting detail: at a meeting in Minsk, the French side suggested doubling the turnover with Belarusian partners in the next five years, believing that "promising areas of cooperation could be agriculture, insurance, transport, supply of equipment and machinery<sup>87</sup>.

Secondly, there are positive developments in terms of attracting French investment in the Belarusian economy, which in the first half of 2018 increased by more than 75 percent to four and a half million dollars. In this case, "40 organizations with French investments are registered in Belarus<sup>88</sup>.

As for the development of the legal framework of Belarusian-French relations, until recently there have been 21 documents: from the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations (1992) to the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus and the French National Chamber of Court Bailiffs (2017). Within the framework of the third meeting of the joint commission, the parties have supplemented this list of bilateral documents with an intergovernmental agreement on international road transport of passengers and cargo, the draft of which was agreed back in the 1990s and now "legally fixes the existing agreements between Belarus and France in the field of international road transport<sup>89</sup>.

The fifth Belarusian-French business forum, which took place in Minsk on the same October days, has added its bright colors to the trade, economic and investment components of the joint commission. The forum was attended by about 40 French businessmen interested in developing cooperation with Belarusian partners in such areas as energy, food, woodworking and light

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<sup>86</sup> Interview with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the agency "Minsk-Novosti" (October 26, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

<sup>87</sup> France proposes to double the turnover with Belarus [Electronic resource] in the next five years. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/frantsija-predlagaet-v-blizhajshie-pjat-let-udvoit-tovarooborot-s-belarusju-323245-2018/>

<sup>88</sup> Igor Petrishenko met with the State Secretary to the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8349>.

<sup>89</sup> Belarus and France signed an interstate agreement on international road transport [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-frantsija-podpisali-mezhpravsovlashenie-o-mezhdunarodnyh-avtomobilnyh-perevozkah-323221-2018/>.

industry, construction and engineering, petrochemical industry, tourism, legal and consulting services, aircraft construction, IT-technology. This is evidenced by the documents accepted in the fields of the business forum.

First, the National Centre for Marketing and Price Study of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the French business association MEDEF International signed a memorandum of understanding, which "will contribute to increasing the number of French investments in the Belarusian economy"<sup>90</sup> and will help to develop cooperation in agriculture, energy and construction. Secondly, the forum participants signed two framework agreements in the sphere of education and culture.

Thirdly, a concrete result of the fifth business forum was the contract signed by the branch "Domostroenie" RUE "Newspaper Factory" (Shklov) with the French company SARL Logibat, which is engaged in the construction of residential settlements in their country, for the supply in 2018-2019 about 60 sets of frame-board houses for a total of one million euros. It is interesting that "the first two houses from the Belarusian Shklov were sent to France back in 2015"<sup>91</sup>. In the next five years, the company plans to sell about 650 houses in France. In just eight months of 2018, the concern "Bellesbumprom", whose structure includes "Domostroenie", exported to the French market products for three million dollars - furniture, wooden structures, windows and doors.

As we can see, the development of interregional ties has become one of the priorities on the agenda of the fifth Belarusian-French business forum and the third session of the Joint Belarusian-French Commission on Economic Cooperation. This is explained by the fact that it is the regions of the two countries that today make their most important contribution to the growth of mutual trade between Belarus and France observed over the past two years, as "the regions understand the pragmatism of relations. People just walk the earth there"<sup>92</sup>. Specifically, the twinning relations currently connect such cities of the two

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<sup>90</sup> The National Centre for Marketing and the Business Association of France have signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyj-tsentr-marketinga-i-biznes-assotsiatsija-frantsii-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-323213-2018/>.

<sup>91</sup> Shklovskoye "Domostroenie" will supply a new batch of wooden houses in France [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shklovskoe-domostroenie-podpishet-soglashenie-o-postavke-novoj-partii-derevjannyh-domov-vo-frantsiju-323174-2018/>

<sup>92</sup> We are at the crossroads of mutual interests: Latushko on cooperation with France [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-ulitki-perekrestok-interesov-i-sharl-de-goll-latushko-o-razvitii-sotrudnichestva-s-222884-2016/>.

countries as Minsk and Lyon, Gomel and Clermont-Ferrand, Brest and Brest, Partisansky District of Minsk and Turkuen, Central District of Minsk and Nevers.

The undoubted flagship of interregional cooperation with French partners is the Belarusian capital, where 39 business entities with the participation of French capital are registered, including 24 joint ventures and 15 foreign enterprises. In the first eight months of 2018 the trade turnover between Minsk and France increased by a quarter, and exports - even by 37.1%. During the same period, the economy of the Belarusian capital received more than one million dollars of direct French investments, which is twice as much as during the same period in 2017. It is worth recalling here that the agreement on friendly relations between Minsk and Lyon was signed over forty years ago. In 2016, under the auspices of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of these twinning ties to enhance trade, economic and investment cooperation between the regions of the two countries "the Belarusian capital hosted the First Belarusian-French Interregional Forum, which was attended by more than 50 representatives from the French side and about 80 - from the Belarusian side"<sup>93</sup>.

And today Minsk offers its French partners to undertake several joint projects at once. The Belarusian capital is based on the understanding that "an important sector of innovation in France is the environment".<sup>94</sup> and the green economy is seen there as an engine of economic growth. In particular, we are talking about possible participation of French companies in the projects of reconstruction of the Minsk treatment plant and construction of the waste processing plant. The Belarusian capital authorities plan to start the reconstruction of the Minsk treatment plant - the most complex industrial and domestic wastewater treatment facility - in 2019 in order to improve the efficiency of wastewater treatment, reduce the environmental impact of this facility, build a biogas complex and a waste incineration complex. As for the implementation of the project in the sphere of municipal solid waste management, it is planned to build a waste processing plant with the volume of processing up to 800 tons per year.

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<sup>93</sup> Minsk offers French companies to participate in the projects of reconstruction of the treatment plant and waste processing [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-predlagaet-frantsuzskim-kompanijam-uchastie-v-proektah-rekonstruktsii-ochistnoj-stantsii-i-323285-2018/>.

<sup>94</sup> Ambassador of France on visa-free regime, Minsk agreements and Belarusian language [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/posol-frantsii-o-bezvizovom-rezhime-minskih-soglashenijah-i-belorusskom-jazyke-237950-2017/>.

The French, as we know, have the most modern technologies in this regard. In addition, Belarus and France already have experience in mutually beneficial partnership in the field of environmental protection, including the management of hazardous waste. "In 2012, 823 tons of waste containing hazardous chemicals were taken to the factory of the French company "Tredi" and destroyed there. This allowed reducing the total amount of wastes containing polychlorinated biphenyls in Belarus by 17%"<sup>95</sup>. In addition, the Company participated in an international technical assistance project to liquidate a temporary storage warehouse for potentially hazardous pesticides in the village of Mizgiri, Slonimsky Raion, Grodno Oblast. The agreement signed back in 2016 between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus and the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Sea of France on cooperation in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development can and should give additional impetus to Belarusian-French cooperation in this area.

The fact that the cooperation of the Belarusian capital with its French partners may significantly expand in the near future is also evidence of this fact. In November 2017, Minsk was visited by a representative delegation of companies from France, which consider the Belarusian market as potentially interesting for its development. Announcing this visit, the French side made no secret that "the geographical location of Belarus, its economic, scientific and, of course, human resources are important arguments for French exporters and investors"<sup>96</sup>. In particular, JT Finances did not rule out the possibility of establishing an enterprise in Belarus, "supplying transporters for the automatic payment of roads"<sup>97</sup>. Interesting proposals brought then to Minsk and other well-known brands - Alteo, Atos, Airbus Helicopter Vostok, La Fonte Ardennaise, Secmair, Servier, Schneider Electric.

The fact that intensification of the Belarusian-French interregional cooperation has become one of the important components of the positive dynamics of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries observed today is also confirmed by the fact that over the past two years the number of

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<sup>95</sup> Belarus and France will develop cooperation in the environmental sphere [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-frantsija-budut-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-prirodoohrannojsfere-311222-2018/>.

<sup>96</sup> Grishkevich, A. Representatives of major French companies will visit Belarus on November 14-15 / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predstaviteli-krupnejshih-frantsuzskih-kompanij-14-15-nojabrja-posetjat-belarus-275346-2017/>

<sup>97</sup> Mikhalchuk, L. Business France: Many French companies just discover the Belarusian market / A. Mikhalchuk // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belrynok.by/2017/11/18/business-france-mnogie-frantsuzskie-kompanii-tolko-otkryvayut-dlya-sebja-belorusskij-rynok/4133/>.

French and French-Belarusian companies operating in Belarus, including such large companies as Renault, Lactalis, Danone, has increased from 40 to 63, and the list of Belarusian exports to France, as noted above, is already two and a half. But the parties still believe that "Belarusian-French trade and economic relations do not meet the potential of the two countries"<sup>98</sup>. Even today, not only Minsk, but also other regions of Belarus and France can and should make a significant contribution to the increase in bilateral trade. They certainly have the necessary potential for this.

Thus, in November 2018 in the French city of Villeux, located in the Lorraine region, a quarter of Belarusian wooden houses was opened. Interestingly, at the suggestion of the Belarusian side this quarter was named after Jean Gilbert - an outstanding physician, botanist, biologist. "This man was the founder of one of the first hospitals, a hospital in Grodno, and one of the first botanical gardens in Eastern Europe. In Grodno, a monument was erected in honor of Jean Gilbert, there is a square of the same name"<sup>99</sup>. In total, 71 residential buildings were built in Lorraine in mid-November 2018 from Belarusian materials. In particular, in the city of Okur-Mulen "has already built a street of 17 Belarusian houses."<sup>100</sup> where the first tenants settled back in the first quarter of 2018.

These wooden houses are made by the branch "Domostroenie" of Shklovsk Newspaper Plant. They have good thermal insulation characteristics, and their installation together with other construction work takes up to three months. Since all the main elements of the frame-panel house are made in Shklov, then at the construction site in Lorraine is only to mount ready-made structures. "Such a house does not shrink and can be erected at any time of year. <...> Term of their operation with full observance of construction technology is 30-50 years" . Perhaps for these reasons, Lorraine now has plans to increase the construction to 132 houses by the end of 2019, to sign a contract for the supply of Belarusian tiles to be used in the finishing of houses, as well as kitchens made in Belarus to equip houses. In general, "in 2017 in France supplied Belarusian furniture, houses, other

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<sup>98</sup> Belarus and France will intensify inter-parliamentary cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-frantsija-aktivizirujut-mezhparlamentskoe-sotrudnichestvo-325720-2018/>.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the agency "Minsk-Novosti" (October 26, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

<sup>100</sup> The first stone was laid in France to build a quarter of Belarusian wooden houses [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervyj-kamen-zalozhen-vo-frantsii-v-stroitelstvo-kvartala-iz-belorusskih-derevjannyh-domov-276022-2017/>.

wooden products for \$ 16 million, and for the first 9 months of this year - already more than \$ 17 million<sup>101</sup>.

All these facts very eloquently testify to what points in the development of interregional cooperation with French partners are emphasized in the Mogilev region, where JLLC Unimilk Shklov - one of the enterprises of the main French investor in Belarus - Danone company, which successfully operates in Shklov and intends to develop further. And the parties are already discussing "the issue of possible cooperation and partnership in domestic waste processing and drinking water treatment"<sup>102</sup>.

Among other Belarusian regions seriously interested in developing cooperation with partners from France is the Brest region, where three enterprises with French capital operate. They are a subsidiary of the already well-known corporation "Danone Pruzhany" and two small enterprises in Brest. Cooperation in mechanical engineering, light industry, chemical and perfume and cosmetics industry, in which France is one of the world leaders, seems to be promising<sup>103</sup>. In addition, the Brest branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the summer of 2018 expressed its great interest in "establishing ties with the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This could be Brest, Lyon, Strasbourg"<sup>104</sup>.

Another area of Brestchina's partnership with France is medicine. At the end of 2017, the Brest Regional Hospital and the University Hospital of Strasbourg concluded that it was necessary to sign a cooperation agreement in order to "give it a new impetus and systemic character"<sup>105</sup>. And this cooperation began with ten employees of the Brest regional hospital - seven doctors and three nurses - receiving training in Strasbourg, which lasted up to one and a half months.

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<sup>101</sup> A quarter of Belarusian wooden houses appeared in French Villeu [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kvartal-belorusskih-derevjannyh-domov-pojavilsja-vo-frantsuzskom-vilrju-324661-2018/>

<sup>102</sup> Kulyagin, S. Mogilev region and France intend to focus on developing economic cooperation / S. Kulyagin // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-frantsija-namereny-sdelat-aktsent-na-razvitii-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-251920-2017/>.

<sup>103</sup> Vechorko, S. French businessmen are offered to invest in Brest region / S. Vechorko // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/frantsuzskim-biznesmenam-predlagajut-vkladyvat-kapital-v-oao-brestskoj-oblasti-227920-2017/>.

<sup>104</sup> The development of interregional ties strengthens relations between Belarus and France - Lejeune [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/razvitie-mezhregionalnyh-svjazej-ukrepit-otnoshenija-belarusi-i-frantsii-lezhen-308504-2018/>.

<sup>105</sup> Brest Regional Hospital and University Clinic of Strasbourg will sign a cooperation agreement [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskaja-oblastnaja-bolnitsa-i-universitetskaja-klinika-strasburga-podpishut-dogovor-o-277163-2017/>.



Brest surgeons, anesthesiologists and pulmonologists have mastered new techniques in diagnostics and treatment of lung diseases, anesthesiological assistance during operations. And as a result, the links between Brest and Strasbourg doctors based on personal contacts reached the level of a significant social project.

Back in 2016 it was announced the intention to "sign an agreement between the Minsk region and the region of Upper France"<sup>106</sup>. And in early December 2018, a representative delegation of heads of enterprises from the region came to Minsk to continue these contacts and possible joint projects. The seriousness and multiplicity of intentions of businessmen from Upper France is evidenced by the fact that "the areas of interest of the French delegation include the automotive industry and international transport, distribution of industrial materials and packaging equipment, industrial cooperation, services to industrial enterprises, credit and financial services, decor and sale of luxury cosmetic products"<sup>107</sup>. Another partner of Minsk region in France may appear in the region Center - the Valley of the Loire, where in September 2018 in the department of Endre-e-Loire was held a demonstration of the Belarusian capital region in trade and economic spheres, as well as "presentation of products of food industry enterprises of Minsk region, investment and tourism potential of the region"<sup>108</sup>.

The French side is also interested in intensifying cooperation with Vitebsk region, where joint projects in flax processing, an area where France has advanced technologies, may become a real sphere of cooperation. In addition, both parties see promising cooperation in the production of pharmaceuticals. The starting point here is that "annually about \$20 million worth of raw materials is supplied to Vitebsk region from French producers"<sup>109</sup>.

Establishing and developing interregional Belarusian-French relations is also very effectively facilitated by the practice of creating honorary consulates. It

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<sup>106</sup> Minsk region can establish twinning relations with the region of Upper France [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-mozhet-naladit-pobratimskie-otnoshenija-s-regionom-verhnjaja-frantsija-221581-2016/>.

<sup>107</sup> Grishkevich, A. Cooperation with Belarus in IT sphere is attractive for France - Ambassador / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dlja-frantsii-privlekatelno-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusju-v-it-sfere-posol-327534-2018>.

<sup>108</sup> The Ministry of Regional Development and the French department of Endre-e-Loire are planning to expand trade and economic relations [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minoblispolkom-i-frantsuzskij-departament-endre-e-luar-planirujut-rasshirjat-torgovo-ekonomicheskie-318037-2018/>.

<sup>109</sup> Bogacheva, O. France is interested in intensifying cooperation with Vitebsk region / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/frantsija-zainteresovana-v-aktivizatsii-sotrudnichestva-s-vitebskoj-oblastju-299991-2018/>.

should be noted that the existing format of honorary consulates in the Republic of Belarus is generally considered to be an important and effective tool to expand the Belarusian presence abroad, "to search for new opportunities for economic growth, new partners to implement a new strategy to ensure systematic diversification of foreign trade"<sup>110</sup>. Thus, the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in France has accumulated an interesting experience of creating a whole system of such structures in one country. According to the head of the Belarusian diplomatic mission in this European country P. Latushko, it is "through honorary consulates and regional contacts that we can develop economic ties"<sup>111</sup>. That is why "opening honorary consulates is an important and necessary tool to intensify the dialogue between people and countries"<sup>112</sup>.

Let us remind you that the first Honorary Consulate of Belarus in France was opened in 2015 in Lyon - one of the largest administrative-territorial, political, economic and cultural regional centers of France, in the agglomeration which has 1 million 253 thousand inhabitants and with which Belarus has long historical ties. The activities of the Honorary Consul in Lyon are carried out in the consular district, which includes the Rhône-Alpes region, and the main task is "to promote economic cooperation through contacts between business circles of the two countries, implementation of joint projects in the field of culture and education, consular and legal assistance to citizens of Belarus"<sup>113</sup>. Already in 2016, on the initiative of the Honorary Consul in this region was signed a cooperation agreement between the Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after M. Tank and the Higher School of Teaching and Education of the Academy of Lyon.

Second Honorary Consulate of Belarus in France opened in October 2017 in the city of Bordeaux, the territory of which became the region of New Aquitaine - the third largest gross domestic product in this country. The primary project, the implementation of which immediately took on a new structure - the study of the possibility of "export supplies of glass factory products" Neman "as well as

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<sup>110</sup> Zalessky, B. Borders of Sustainable Partnership. Part II / B. Zalesskiy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. - - C. 4.

<sup>111</sup> Transcript of the interview with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to France Pavel Latushko to the program "Picture of the World" on the TV channel "RTR-Belarus" (December 12, 2015) [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/d0ab2a8cf81749f7.html>.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the agency "Minsk-Novosti" (October 26, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

<sup>113</sup> The Honorary Consulate of Belarus opened in French Lyon [Electronic Resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/pochetnoe-konsulstvo-belarusi-otkrylos-vo-frantsuzskom-lione-173804-2015>.

mineral water of Belarusian enterprises<sup>114</sup>. Besides, there is a great potential for cooperation of Belarusian partners with this region of France in agriculture, engineering, science and education.

In December 2017, the third similar structure appeared in Marseille - one of the largest industrial, scientific and cultural centers of France, the second largest city in the country in terms of population. The Honorary Consulate of Marseille extended its activities to the district, which "includes the departments of Bouche-du-Rhône, Var, the Haute-Alpes, Vaucluse, the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region".<sup>115</sup> which is generally one of the key French trade and economic regions. Its gross domestic product exceeds 150 billion euros.

The fourth French city, where in December 2018 another Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Belarus opened, was Biarritz, located in the south-west of France near the border with Spain, in the historic region of New Aquitaine, and washed by the waters of the Bay of Biscay. Since 1912, it has had the official status of climatic and balneological resort in France and is famous for its mild climate, sandy beaches, unconventional medicine and mineral waters. That is why "employment in Biarritz is mainly related to the tourism sector"<sup>116</sup>.

In addition, the Belarusian side plans to open a number of honorary consulates in several French cities, including Metz - "one of the regional capitals of France. This may happen in 2019"<sup>117</sup>. It is appropriate to remind here that Metz is the "economic heart" of the Lorraine region in the north-east of France, which is the leader in the country in iron ore and coal mining, iron and steel smelting, and is characterized by diverse ties with Germany: "It is this neighboring country where thousands of Lorraine residents go to work every day <...>, from here they sell a significant part of their products, and industrial enterprises, which continue to function successfully.

And one more detail: France also sees the format of honorary consulates as an important tool to promote its national interests in Belarus. This is evidenced by the fact that in October 2014 the Honorary Consulate of this country opened in

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<sup>114</sup> The Honorary Consulate of Belarus [Electronic resource] has been opened in French Bordeaux. - - 2017. - URL: <https://naviny.by/new/20170930/1506782954-vo-francuzskom-bordo-otkryto-pochetnoe-konsulstvo-belarusi>.

<sup>115</sup> On opening of the Honorary Consulate of Belarus in Marseille [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://france.mfa.gov.by/be/embassy/news/a7c1eb9186dc9eb8.html>.

<sup>116</sup> Biarritz city in France [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://www.gorodamira.biz/goroda/159-gorod-biarric-vo-francii.html>.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the agency "Minsk-Novosti" (October 26, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

Brest, the choice of which cannot be called accidental. According to the French side, the geographical location of Brest on the border with the European Union, as well as "the status of the city, perhaps the most important on the road axis connecting Paris with Moscow, is an undeniable advantage and creates all the necessary prerequisites for a deep and constant exchange"<sup>118</sup>.

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<sup>118</sup> On October 24 in Brest the Honorary Consulate of France [Electronic resource] was opened. -- 2014.  
- URL: <https://by.ambafrance.org/24-oktyabrya-v-Breste-otkrylos>.

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## Belarus - China: decisions of the committee on cooperation as a topical media topic

In November 2018, the third meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation was held in Beijing, where the parties agreed: firstly, to expand mutual trade; secondly, to increase mutual investments; thirdly, to strengthen interregional ties; fourthly, they signed an action plan for the Year of Education between Belarus and China in 2019. Let us say at once that the parties undoubtedly have the necessary prerequisites for successful implementation of the planned tasks in each of these vectors of development, which makes them the object of close attention of representatives of the international segment of Belarusian and Chinese journalism, whose professional duty is to adequately cover the implementation of the whole complex of plans aimed at achieving the level of comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation in Belarusian-Chinese relations.

As for the **expansion of mutual trade**, the goal set by the Belarusian side is as follows: "The volume of Belarusian exports to China should reach \$5 billion in the medium term"<sup>119</sup>. It is expected to be achieved in several directions, one of which is to increase the supply of Belarusian agricultural products to Chinese consumers. Suffice it to say that for three quarters of 2018, Belarus sent to China food for 52 million dollars. And before the end of the fourth quarter, this figure should actually double. In this case, "the leading position in Belarusian exports of dairy products, whose supplies compared to the same level in 2017 increased by 9 times"<sup>120</sup>. The fact that in November 2018 the third train with Belarusian dairy products, consisting of 41 containers with a total weight exceeding one thousand tons, arrived in Chongqing, China, also contributed to such rapid dynamics. Encouraging in this regard, and the fact that "the parties have agreed to soon reach a weekly schedule of trains to Chongqing with Belarusian agricultural products"<sup>121</sup>. In addition, the Belarusian JSC "Meat and Dairy Company" and the joint Sinoby

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<sup>119</sup> Grishkevich, A. The volume of Belarusian exports to China in the medium term should reach \$5 billion - Snopkov / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://news.21.by/economics/2018/11/06/1648136.html>.

<sup>120</sup> Ministry of Agriculture: exports of Belarusian agricultural products to China at the end of the year will reach \$100 million [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minselhozprod-eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduksii-v-kitaj-poitogam-goda-dostignet-100-mln-324799-2018/>.

<sup>121</sup> A train with Belarusian dairy products arrived in Chongqing [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/poezd-s-belorusskoj-molochnoj-produktsiej-pribyl-v-chuntsin-324784-2018/>.

Agriculture signed a contract for the supply of dairy products in 2019 for \$ 30 million.

A significant contribution to the **increase of mutual investment** will be the expansion of the product line in Hebei Province in 2019 through the joint venture "Hebei Agricultural Machinery Enterprise Zunshen Gomel", based on the joint capital of Gomselmash OJSC and Industrial Corporation Zunshen. Recall that the framework agreement on the establishment of this enterprise was signed in 2014, and a year later there was a strategic agreement, the implementation of which led in 2016 to the start of joint production - forage and cob harvesting machines. For three years, from the machine sets of "Gomselmash" collected about five hundred harvesters. By April 2019 it is planned to replenish the range of manufactured machinery with forage harvesters with capacity of 290 and 450 horsepower. For this purpose, a new production building has already been built in Wei Xiang County, Hebei Province, which will make it possible to increase the production of agricultural machinery to one and a half thousand a year. "The Chinese partners are planning to build one more building, which will expand the production capacity to 3 thousand combines"<sup>122</sup>.

In terms of **strengthening interregional ties**, the cooperation between the Mogilev region and Hunan Province can be very effective and promising, where the parties intend to focus on such strategic areas as the economy, investment and tourism. In this case, in the first stage, the efforts of the region and the province will be focused on accelerated development of tourism. The fact is that the parties are sure: "There is a link between tourism development trends and the general state of the economy, so this direction has been chosen as one of the strategic directions for strengthening and developing joint cooperation"<sup>123</sup>. That is why, in terms of infrastructure projects, business people from Hunan Province have already proposed to build hotels, cultural and entertainment complexes in the Mogilev region, even a Chinese restaurant, where Chinese tourists could feel comfortable. And the next step in the development of this interregional investment cooperation could be projects for processing local raw materials and food

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<sup>122</sup> The Junshen Gomel agricultural machine building company intends to expand its product line [Electronic Resource] in 2019. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatije-selhoz mashinostroenija-tszunshen-gomel-namereno-v-2019-godu-rasshirit-linejku-produktsii-325877-2018/>.

<sup>123</sup> Kulyagin, S. Mogilev region and Hunan Province of China intend to accelerate the development of mutual tourism / S. Kulyagin // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-hunan-namereny-uskorit-razvitie-vzaimnogo-turizma-325776-2018/>.

production, with the prospect of their export to China and other countries. About two hundred sites are already being offered to Chinese investors for this purpose.

In November 2018 Minsk and Shanghai signed an agreement of intent to establish friendly relations. According to the parties, this document is very important for developing closer trade contacts and implementing specific projects: "It will become a platform for development of our relations in all spheres"<sup>124</sup>. The representatives of the Chinese city are interested in Minsk experience in industry, metalworking, mechanical engineering. And the Belarusian capital is interested in partnership with investors from Shanghai "in terms of urban infrastructure management, "Smart City" system, transport system, improvement, solid municipal waste management"<sup>125</sup>. Before that, Minsk had already signed agreements on establishing sister cities with such cities as Changchun, Beijing, Shenzhen, as well as on establishing cooperation - with Shenyang.

Important detail: the signing of the November agreement was preceded by the trade and economic forum "Sails of Shanghai", held in September 2018 in Minsk, where representatives of this Chinese city said that "given the current good Belarusian-Chinese relations, the implementation of new joint projects, including with Shanghai businessmen, have great prospects"<sup>126</sup>. This trade and economic forum brought together in the Belarusian capital more than 130 domestic and Chinese companies interested in cooperation in the fields of engineering, construction, information technology, chemical industry, environmental protection, light industry, food, jewelry production. Chinese manufacturers of electronics and household appliances, clothing and fabrics, packaging for medical equipment, cosmetics, toys, jewelry, as well as importers of cars, electrical and welding equipment, computer equipment, interested in finding business partners in Belarus, came to Minsk to participate in the forum.

It is also symbolic that the signing of this agreement took place during the first China International Import Expo, held in Shanghai, where a solid list of

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<sup>124</sup> The agreement on cooperation between Minsk and Shanghai will take the partnership to a new level - Jiang Ping [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-minska-i-shanhaja-vyvedet-partnerstvo-na-novyj-uroven-tszjan-pin-321797-2018/>.

<sup>125</sup> Minsk counts on Shanghai's assistance in upgrading its urban infrastructure [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minsk-rasschityvaet-na-pomosch-shanhaja-v-modernizatsii-gorodskoj-infrastruktury-321799-2018/>.

<sup>126</sup> Grishkevich, A. Forum "Sails of Shanghai" in Minsk will contribute to implementation of joint projects / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/forum-parus-shanhaja-v-minske-posposobstvuet-realizatsii-sovmestnyh-proektov-lin-sjan-317232-2018/>.



Minsk enterprises and organizations was presented. Among them are Minsk Tractor Plant, Minskkhlebprom, Kommunarka, Minsk Automobile Plant, Integral, Minsk Dairy Plant №1. The voluminous portfolio of its developments in the field of instrument engineering, production automation, medicine, agriculture - more than thirty - was demonstrated in Shanghai and the Belarusian State University, located, as it is known, in Minsk. In particular, at the exhibition of imported goods and services his medical unit of general hyperthermia "Ptich-M", designed for complex treatment of various forms of cancer in specialized clinics, was shown. Among the innovations of the Belarusian State University were also presented in Shanghai "phytosols for correction of the increased threshold of taste sensitivity to table salt, edible packaging films, a series of veterinary biopreparations for the treatment and prevention of diseases of agricultural and domestic animals, antitumoral drugs, hardware and software complex "Calibration"<sup>127</sup>.

An interesting continuation of cooperation between Minsk and Shanghai can be obtained at the level of partnership between individual districts of these cities. In this case we are talking about the Soviet district of the Belarusian capital and Channin Shanghai district, which in September 2018 signed a framework agreement on cooperation. It is interesting that "cooperation between the two districts began in 1994, when the first cooperation agreement was signed. During this time, trade turnover has increased several times<sup>128</sup>. This time, the parties expressed interest in implementing a number of joint projects. In particular, "Magic of Light" offered Chinese businessmen partnership in the production of protective holograms. Considers to find partners in Shanghai and Minsk OJSC "Promsvyaz" to participate in the project to bring the production of the enterprise in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone. The company "Medical Initiative" made an investment proposal to create a multifunctional medical and scientific-practical center.

Apparently, in the near future, the Chinese vector of its international contacts will significantly intensify another district of Minsk - Frunzensky, which signed an agreement on twinning with the Chinese city of Jilin, located in the province of Girin in September 2018. The document adopted by the parties envisages the development of trade and economic relations and cultural exchange.

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<sup>127</sup> More than 30 scientific and technical developments will be presented by BSU at the exhibition of imports in China [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-30-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-razrabotok-predstavit-bgu-na-vystavke-importa-v-kitae-324163-2018/>.

<sup>128</sup> Sovetsky District of Minsk and Channin District of Shanghai signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sovetskij-rajon-minska-i-rajon-channin-shanhaja-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-317462-2018/>.

And "among the promising areas are joint projects in the construction industry, education, tourism, food supplies"<sup>129</sup>.

Cooperation between the Chinese province of Zhejiang and the Belarusian Minsk region, which signed an agreement on establishing friendly relations back in May 2015, promises to be very effective. Then, assessing the prospects for the development of these bilateral interregional ties, the Chinese side stated that "Zhejiang Province intends to make significant investments in the economy of Minsk region".<sup>130</sup>, will encourage its businessmen in every possible way, as well as offered partners from the capital region "to jointly develop tourism"<sup>131</sup>. And a year later, the Borisov plant of medical products, located in the Minsk region, began negotiations with the company "Menovo" from the province of Zhejiang on a joint project to produce medicines. And today, this project is already beginning to take shape more and more clearly.

In January 2018, another result of cooperation between the Minsk Region and Zhejiang was the opening of a center of traditional Chinese medicine at the Minsk Regional Clinical Hospital in the village of Lesnoy, Minsk District, where the Chinese colleagues have already begun to transfer years of experience in traditional medicine and their skills, which allows Belarusian specialists to improve and expand the list of medical services. More specifically, in four treatment rooms and the office of reflextherapists "patients are invited to undergo the procedure of classical acupuncture (acupuncture), laser puncture, electropuncture, vacuum reflex therapy, hirudotherapy, auriculoreflex therapy"<sup>132</sup>. In addition, the "Center of Traditional Chinese Medicine" is also planned to open on the basis of the Minsk Regional Center of Medrehabilitation "Zagorie"<sup>133</sup>.

In November 2018, the Belarusian capital region, given the interest of Chinese partners in the supply of dairy and meat products from Belarus - ice

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<sup>129</sup> Frunzensky district of Minsk and Chinese Jilin signed an agreement on twinned connections [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/frunzenskij-rajon-minska-i-kitajskij-tszilin-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-318157-2018/>.

<sup>130</sup> Zhejiang Province intends to make significant investments in the economy of Minsk region [Electronic Resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://investinbelarus.by/press/news/provinciya-chjeczyan-amerena-napravit-v-ekonomiku-minskoy-oblasti-znachitelnye-investicii/>.

<sup>131</sup> Zhejiang Province offers Minsk region to cooperate in tourism [Electronic Resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/provintsija-chzhetszjan-predlagaet-minskoy-oblasti-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-turizma-2646-2015/>.

<sup>132</sup> The Chinese Medicine Center was established on the basis of the Minsk Regional Hospital [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.zviazda.by/ru/news/20180112/1515764769-centr-kitayskoj-mediciny-sozdan-na-baze-minskoy-oblastnoj-bolnicy>.

<sup>133</sup> The Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine [Electronic Resource] was opened in Minsk. - - 2018. - URL: <https://politring.com/region/12002-v-minske-otkrylsya-centr-tradicionnoj-kitayskoj-mediciny.html>.

cream, beef and poultry, said the willingness to load their agricultural products container trains that are returning from Europe to China. As for the prospects of this cooperation, the partner regions "plan to implement joint projects in tourism, trade, industrial production, agriculture, medicine, culture and transport logistics"<sup>134</sup>.

Another important point is that cities and districts located on their territory are beginning to provide significant support to the interaction between the Belarusian region and the Chinese province. In particular, in the same 2015 the Memorandum on establishing friendly relations was signed between Smolevichi District and the city of Yiu. It is curious that twenty years ago this Chinese city in Zhejiang Province was a "little-known agricultural settlement, and nowadays it is a rapidly developing center of international middle and small wholesale trade"<sup>135</sup>. Here, in the southeast of China, is the largest indoor wholesale market in the world "Yiu International Trade City", the uniqueness of which is that without leaving the walls of the shopping mall, the buyer can choose the right product from a huge range of products, make a wholesale deal and organize the shipment of products to any destination. At the same time, "a huge range of goods is presented in the ultra-modern Futian complex on the area of 2.6 million sq. m. About 58 thousand trade stands are located on 5 floors. The length of the building itself is about 4 km"<sup>136</sup>. Now it is clear why today the Belarusian side is already discussing the issues of "increasing the supply of dairy and other food products of Minsk region to the Chinese market through the site of the pavilion of Belarusian goods of the company "Kingston" in the international market of goods of the city of Yu"<sup>137</sup>.

In November 2018 the Belarusian Borisov and Chinese Ningbo concluded an agreement on establishing friendly relations. "The parties agreed to develop multilateral ties and cooperation in trade, economy, education, culture, tourism, sports, health care, urban development, environmental protection, as well as to

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<sup>134</sup> Minsk region expects to implement a project with Chinese Ningbo on production of medical drugs [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-rasschityvaet-realizovat-s-kitajskim-ninbo-proekt-po-vypusku-medpreparatov-326994-2018/>.

<sup>135</sup> Belarus plans to sell goods in the Chinese center of medium and small wholesale trade Yu [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-realizovyvat-tovary-v-kitajskom-tsentre-srednej-i-melkooptovoj-torgovli-iu-242556-2017/>.

<sup>136</sup> Grishkevich, A. International trade town of Chinese goods may appear in Bolbasovo / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mezhdunarodnyj-torgovyj-gorodok-kitajskih-tovarov-mozhet-pojavitsja-v-bolbasovo-262012-2017/>.

<sup>137</sup> About inter-regional cooperation of Minsk region with Zhejiang province [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://minsk-region.gov.by/ru/glavnyj-novosti/item/36377-nikolay-rogaschuk-chtoby-nazad-konteynery-ne-shli-pustymi>.

promote mutual prosperity<sup>138</sup>. Apparently, the parties have the potential to realize such a scenario. After all, Ningbo is a major Chinese port city in Zhejiang Province. Here are located at once four sea port complexes. One of the largest is Beilun, where are car factories of the company "Jili", which are well known in Belarus. And the city's gross domestic product in 2017 reached nearly 145 billion dollars - a figure that speaks for itself. In short, this city also has a lot to learn from. And not only Borisov.

Speaking about the action plan for the **Year of Education of Belarus and China** in 2019, signed during the third meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, it should be noted that the very opening of the Year of Education is planned to be held in January 2019 on the basis of Dalian Polytechnic University, which should continue to implement a whole range of measures to establish direct ties between universities of Belarus and institutions of higher education in China and eventually raise the whole range of Belarusian-Chinese universities to a new level.

Speaking about the development of partnerships in this field, it should be noted that "the Chinese education system is unique in its kind. Unlike the Western European system, it cultivates not so much individuality as discipline and devotion to collective interests. This model has proven its worth: the overall level of education development in China exceeds the world average<sup>139</sup>. In this regard, the Belarusian side is obviously interested not only in getting acquainted with the Chinese experience, but also in comparing it with its own. To this end, in 2019 it is planned to significantly increase the presence of Belarusian educational institutions in the Chinese educational market through such formats of cooperation as opening representative offices of universities, joint faculties, centers of study of Belarus. In addition, the Belarusian national exposition "may take a central place at the largest international exhibition" China Education Expo", which is traditionally held in October consistently in four major cities of China: Beijing, Chengdu, Shanghai and Guangzhou<sup>140</sup>.

As for new forms of interaction between higher education institutions of the two countries and new participants, a number of promising projects in this regard were implemented by the parties back in 2018. These include, for example,

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<sup>138</sup> Borisov and the Chinese city of Ningbo have established friendly relations [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/borisov-i-kitajskij-gorod-ninbo-ustanovili-druzhestvennye-svjazi-326980-2018/>.

<sup>139</sup> China [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://export.by/china>.

<sup>140</sup> Features of organization of ideological and educational work in higher education institutions in 2018/2019 academic year. - RIVSH, 2018, - P. 7.

the Agreement signed by F. Skorina State University of Gomel and Nanjing University of Science and Technology in December 2018 on joint training of researchers of higher qualification (Ph.D.) and on double international guidance for writing and defending Ph.D. theses, according to which "the parties will organize joint training of researchers of higher qualification in the most promising areas: physics, chemistry, physicochemistry<sup>141</sup>. The basic element of this training will be postgraduate studies at these universities, and the topics of PhD dissertations will be determined by the partner universities. As a result of this interaction, it will be possible to obtain PhD degrees at both Gomel and Nanjing universities. The results of the research will be made available to two universities and published in international scientific collections.

In October 2018, the cooperation agreement was signed by Baranovich State University and Nanchan Institute of Technology, which "intend to develop cooperation in technical profile - in information systems and technologies, automation of technological processes<sup>142</sup>. In addition, the Chinese side expressed its interest in studying the Belarusian method of ion-plasma nitriding, the environment and mechanisms of socio-economic stability. As a result, the partners agreed to form a joint team of scientists in each of the selected fields.

In September 2018, the Center for Belarusian Studies was opened at Ankhui University with the assistance of the Consulate General of the Republic of Belarus in Shanghai and the Pushkin Brest State University. It is expected to become "a broad platform for the development of inter-university research, educational and cultural cooperation, as well as strengthening and expanding regional ties between the Brest region and the Chinese province of Anhu<sup>143144</sup>. It should be added that the first center for the study of Belarus in China opened in 2012 at the East China Pedagogical University in Shanghai, with which in November 2018 was "signed a cooperation program of Belarusian universities <...> for the development of the Center for Study of Belarus.

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<sup>141</sup>The universities of Gomel and Nanjing will start joint training of candidates of science [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/gomelskij-i-nankinskij-universitety-nachnutsovmestnuju-podgotovku-kandidatov-nauk-328395-2018/>.

<sup>142</sup>Baranovich State University will cooperate with the Nanchanian Institute of Technology [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/baranovichskij-gosuniversitet-budet-sotrudnicat-s-nanchanskim-tehnologicheskim-institutom-320995-2018/>.

<sup>143</sup>Grishkevich, A. Center for the Study of Belarus opened in Anhui University in China / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsentr-izuchenija-belarusi-otkrylsja-v-anhojskom-universitete-v-kitae-318426-2018/>.

<sup>144</sup>Center for China Studies plans to open in Brest State University [Electronic mode]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/tsentr-izuchenija-kitaja-planirujut-otkryt-v-brestskom-gosuniversitete-314837-2018/>.

As we see, the thematic spectrum of the Belarusian-Chinese interaction is growing like a chain reaction. And this sets very difficult tasks for journalists of both countries in terms of adequate media articulation and prompt and high-quality coverage of the processes of cooperation between Belarus and China. In order to cope with them successfully, representatives of Belarusian and Chinese media are also trying to find new solutions to strengthen partnerships. Among them, in particular, is the cooperation agreement signed in September 2018 between the Publishing House "Belarus Today" and the Chinese news agency Xinhua. Let it not be the first document of such a plan, because about 20 years ago was signed a cooperation agreement between the Belarusian Telegraph Agency ELTA and "Xinhua". But "this cooperation was filled with interesting projects for both sides, in BelTA appeared a news feed in Chinese<sup>145</sup>. That is why the current agreement should be seen as a new level of cooperation between the Belarusian and Chinese media. All the more so because it is not only about exchange of information but also multimedia materials, about creation of new rubrics on cooperation between Belarus and China. In particular, in the newspapers of the Belarus Today Publishing House such rubric should be called "Window to China". It should be assumed that this experience of creative interaction with colleagues from the Celestial Empire will be continued in publications of regional and departmental levels of Belarus.

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<sup>145</sup> "Belarus Today and Xinhua News Agency will cooperate [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-segodnja-i-informagentstvo-sinhua-budut-sotrudnichat-317352-2018/>.

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## **Belarus - Africa: point of reference - mutual interest**

The Republic of Belarus traditionally adheres to common approaches to the development of relations with all foreign partners, while focusing its foreign policy efforts on the most important and promising vectors, which include the so-called "far arc" countries - in the African, Latin American and African regions, with many of which the Belarusian side seeks to expand and strengthen cooperation, bringing it to the level of strategic partnership.

Belarusian foreign policy is aimed at developing relations with the "far arc" countries in two main directions:

Firstly, intensification of political and economic interaction with traditional partners, among which official Minsk includes Argentina, Brazil, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Iran, Japan, South Africa, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, Vietnam;

Secondly, the establishment of dialogue, active entry and consolidation in the markets of states with significant potential for mutually beneficial cooperation, including the Belarusian side sees Angola, Australia, Bolivia, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Zimbabwe.

It is explained by the fact that "diversification of trade, deepening of economic cooperation with the countries of these regions of the world is an important prerequisite for growth of the export-oriented Belarusian economy"<sup>146</sup>. And it should be noted that over the past few years the Republic of Belarus has taken many concrete steps to develop each of the mentioned regions.

Thus, Asian countries are interesting for Belarus as a capacious, promising and rapidly expanding market for domestic goods and services, as well as a promising donor to the Belarusian economy. And let the Asian market "still remain underdeveloped by Belarusian exporters in terms of promoting many types of their products there, including those produced by mechanical engineering, electronic and petrochemical industries."<sup>147</sup> Nevertheless, Minsk seeks to fully

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<sup>146</sup> Countries and regions [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/bilateral/>.

<sup>147</sup> Zalesky, B. Belarus - Asia: a vector of partnership. Chronicle of mutually beneficial cooperation / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. - - C. 5.



implement its ambitious plans to increase the supply of Belarusian trucks, tractors, machinery, bearings, chemical fibers, electronic and medical devices to this region, as well as to strengthen scientific and production cooperation with the leading countries of the continent.

As for Latin America, the development of interaction with the states of this continent is facilitated by strengthening the dialogue with priority partners and expanding the geography of bilateral contacts and economic ties in promising industries for Belarus. Belarus' trade with Latin America has more than quadrupled between 2000 and 2015, with Belarusian exports growing faster and more than six times higher"<sup>148</sup>.

And the events held in 2016 by the Belarusian side with African countries "contributed both to the activation of political relations and the promotion of trade and economic cooperation in the supply of Belarusian quarry, cargo, road-building and agricultural machinery and petrochemical products"<sup>149</sup>. This led to the fact that in 2017 Belarusian exports to Africa more than doubled, and also "managed to form strategic approaches to consolidate in the South Africa"<sup>150</sup>. Even today, at the highest level, Belarus has already formed the opinion that "Africa is the future of the entire planet. Today and tomorrow the whole world will develop at the expense of Africa"<sup>151</sup>. In 2018, the work on strengthening relations with the countries of the African continent has been further developed. At the same time, Belarus' rapidly developing partnership with **Sudan** and **Zimbabwe** looks very promising.

Thus, back in August 2017, Belarus and **Sudan** adopted a "road map" of cooperation, which outlined the parameters of cooperation in the oil and gas industry, water resources and electricity, industry and trade, higher education and scientific research, banking and finance. The signed document should ensure implementation of the agreements reached in recent years between Minsk and Khartoum on the entire range of bilateral cooperation, including joint projects,

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<sup>148</sup> Review of the results of the foreign policy of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2016 [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/ea444d5cceb4798d.html>.

<sup>149</sup> Review of the results of the foreign policy of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2016 [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/ea444d5cceb4798d.html>.

<sup>150</sup> Review of the results of the foreign policy of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2017 [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/a8a5169b6e487b3b.html>.

<sup>151</sup> Address to the deputies of the Parliament of the Republic of Sudan [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/vystuplenie-pered-deputatami-parlamenta-respubliki-sudan-15402/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vystuplenie-pered-deputatami-parlamenta-respubliki-sudan-15402/).

including "establishment of Belarusian machinery production facilities in Sudan, organization of supplies of road-building, municipal, forestry equipment, grain drying complexes, geological exploration work in this country"<sup>152</sup>.

The very fact that the road map was adopted shows that Belarus sees Sudan as one of the key partners on the African continent and "is interested in significantly increasing bilateral cooperation in all sectors"<sup>153</sup>. Statistics also show that Belarusian-Sudanese bilateral trade is clearly dominated by export deliveries of tractors, trucks, various types of machines, transformers, instrumentation and tires from Belarus. Suffice it to say that in the period from 2010 to 2015, trade turnover between the two countries increased from 15.4 to 41.3 million dollars, reaching a record figure of 70.8 million dollars in 2013.

And even if in 2016 this indicator has decreased to 38 million dollars, the very fact of adoption of the "road map" Minsk and Khartoum have demonstrated their determination to return to the highest level of mutual trade turnover in the near future. Moreover, in recent years, the parties have taken a number of concrete steps for this purpose - "introduced annual political consultations, resumed the activities of the intergovernmental commission on cooperation after ten years of downtime, established direct cooperation between the ministries of industry, agriculture, oil and energy, and education"<sup>154</sup>.

An obvious prologue to the adoption of the road map of cooperation was the visit of the Head of the Belarusian State to Sudan in January 2017, during which an interested position of Belarus to participate in industrial and infrastructure development projects on Sudanese soil, to establish joint ventures for the production of agricultural and commercial vehicles on the basis of existing plants in Sudan. More specifically, "a pioneer in this area could be a project to assemble tractors"<sup>155</sup>.

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<sup>152</sup> Belarus and Sudan signed a road map for cooperation [Electronic Resource]. -- 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-sudan-podpisali-dorozhnuju-kartu-razvittija-sotrudnichestva-263976-2017/>.

<sup>153</sup> Alexander Lukashenko has congratulated President of Sudan Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir [Electronic Resource]. -- 2017. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-sudana-omara-xasana-axmeda-al-bashira-15252/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-sudana-omara-xasana-axmeda-al-bashira-15252/).

<sup>154</sup> Belarus and Sudan plan to sign a treaty on friendly relations and cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-sudan-planirujut-podpisat-dogovor-odruzhestvennyh-otnoshenijah-i-sotrudnichestve-228043-2017/>.

<sup>155</sup> Negotiations with the President of Sudan Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-sudana-omaron-xasanom-axmedom-al-bashirom-15397/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-sudana-omaron-xasanom-axmedom-al-bashirom-15397/).

The fact is that Minsk Tractor Works has been cooperating with Sudanese partners since 1994. The local company MIG Agriculture is an exclusive distributor of Belarusian tractor, truck and tire manufacturers on the Sudanese market. In particular, by selling a number of tractor models, it has become one of the "three best distributors in Sudan"<sup>156</sup>. In addition, it has a site that can be used to assemble tractors, located just 15 kilometers from Khartoum. In turn, in 2016, MTZ delivered to this African country 123 tractors, in the first half of 2017 - 51 more machines, planning to ship there before the end of the year at least 80 more vehicles. As we see, the trend of increasing exports is evident. But the Belarusian side has set a task to significantly increase the presence of this complex technical product in Sudan, based on a number of important arguments. First of all, "the designers of the plant have adapted a 200 hp tractor to climatic conditions in Sudan, a new model BELARUS-2023.3 is already being tested at the plant. The new tractor can operate in 50-degree heat"<sup>157</sup>. Secondly, the assembly plant in Sudan can be used as a platform for Belarusian tractors to reach neighboring countries and the African continent in general.

Among other promising areas of the Belarusian-Sudanese production cooperation, which were considered in January 2017 by the business community of the two countries at a business forum in Khartoum, were joint projects "in mechanical engineering, mining, agro-industrial complex and pharmaceuticals"<sup>158</sup>. As for mechanical engineering, in February 2017 the first consignment of Minsk Automobile Plant machines - "10 trucks for Petrola company working in the oil sector"<sup>159</sup> - arrived in Sudan from Belarus. In spring 2017, Sudan tested a combine harvester KZS-575, developed by JSC "Gomselmash" specifically for this country, where one of the main crops is sorghum. In the Sudanese version, we are talking about the supply of this equipment to farmers, and the prospects are very significant, as "sorghum crops here occupy several million hectares"<sup>160</sup>. At the

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<sup>156</sup> Matveev, V. Assembly production of MTZ tractors may appear in Sudan / V. Matveev // [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-tractorov-mtz-mozhet-pojavitsja-v-sudane-228348-2017/>.

<sup>157</sup> Sergeeva, V. Assembly production of Belarusian tractors can be established in Sudan / V. Sergeeva // [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-belorusskih-tractorov-mozhet-byt-sozdano-v-sudane-263919-2017/>.

<sup>158</sup> Belarus offered Sudan joint business projects [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlozila-sudanu-sovmestnye-biznes-proekty-228663-2017/>.

<sup>159</sup> Matveev, V. The first automotive equipment MAZ has arrived in Sudan / V. Matveev // [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-sudan-pribyla-pervaja-avtotehnika-maz-234543-2017/>.

<sup>160</sup> Sidorchik, V. "Gomselmash" is testing a combine harvester in Sudan / V. Sidorchik // [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-provodit-ispytanija-zernoborochnogo-kombajna-v-sudane-244896-2017/>.

same time, the Belarusian side aims not only to supply this African country with its equipment, but also to organize assembly on Sudanese soil "under certain conditions to be created by the government of Sudan. Then it is possible to organize here the assembly of agricultural machinery and reach the localization level of about 40%"<sup>161</sup>.

An important continuation of the Belarusian-Sudanese dialogue took place in December 2018, when President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan paid an official visit to Belarus, which "gave a significant impetus to further deepening of the interstate dialogue and realization of the existing potential of Belarusian-Sudanese cooperation"<sup>162</sup>. The following facts testify to the serious potential and tempting prospects of cooperation between Belarus and Sudan: 17 documents - agreements, contracts - were signed during the mentioned visit of the head of the Sudanese state to Minsk for the total amount of about 250 million dollars. Among the documents developing the legal framework of Belarusian-Sudanese relations, the intergovernmental agreement on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of tax evasion with respect to income taxes, as well as the memorandum on cooperation in the industrial sphere should be mentioned. Apparently, this is only the starting point for the development of the whole complex of bilateral relations, since, according to O. al-Bashir, "Sudan is interested in expanding economic cooperation with Belarus"<sup>163</sup>. To raise these relations to a new level in the near future, the Sudanese side opened its diplomatic mission in Minsk in December 2018.

Belarus assumes that in relations with Sudan, which is a bridge between Arab civilization and Africa, it is necessary to rely on the export of high-tech products with the subsequent establishment of joint assembly enterprises, since the increase and diversification of Belarusian exports should "contribute to the economic development of Sudan, solving the problems of the Sudanese side in the field of industrialization, development of agriculture, training of local highly qualified personnel"<sup>164</sup>. If in 2017 from Belarus to the Sudanese market for the first

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<sup>161</sup> Matveev, V. Belarusian-Sudanese agreements for \$50 million signed in Khartoum / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusko-sudanskiedogovorennosti-na-50-mln-podpisany-v-hartume-228714-2017/>.

<sup>162</sup> Congratulations to the President of Sudan Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-sudana-omaru-xasanu-axmedu-al-bashiru-20193/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-sudana-omaru-xasanu-axmedu-al-bashiru-20193/).

<sup>163</sup> Grishkevich, A. Sudan interested in expanding economic cooperation with Belarus / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/sudan-zainteresovan-v-rashhirenii-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusju-328885-2018/>.

<sup>164</sup> Negotiations with the President of Sudan Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-sudana-omaronom-axanodom-al-bashirom-20033/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-sudana-omaronom-axanodom-al-bashirom-20033/).

time were delivered dump trucks, prototypes of high-tech combine harvester and energy-saturated tractor, road-building machinery, agricultural equipment, as well as resumed the supply of trucks, "for the first 10 months of 2018, exports of Belarusian goods to Sudan almost doubled compared with the same period last year<sup>165</sup>.

This African country attracts the attention of Belarus not only by its rich natural resources and good geographical location, not only by the opportunities to supply Belarusian equipment and training for Sudan, but also by the opening of promising areas of cooperation, the list of which is quite wide: "This cooperation in the agro-industrial sector, in the development of minerals, infrastructure and logistics<sup>166</sup>.

In terms of industrial cooperation, today Belarus and Sudan are already developing and implementing twelve joint projects, which "concern the extraction of gold, the establishment of a diversified machine-building enterprise for the assembly of tractors, MAZ trucks and equipment" Gomselmash<sup>167</sup>". The same list should also mention the participation of Belarusian organizations in energy projects, measures to improve oil recovery at Sudanese deposits, the establishment of joint ventures to produce meat and dairy products, fodder, growing vegetables and sprouts.

If we talk about the development of Belarusian-Sudanese cooperation in the field of agriculture, we should first of all mention the framework contract for the supply of 17 grain storage facilities from Belarus to this African country for a total of 60 million euros. Back in September 2018, Belarusian JSC "Leedselmash" and LLC "Selenergoprom" signed the relevant documents with the Sudanese Agricultural Bank of Sudan. As a result, "Leedselmash" has signed a contract for the supply of eight grain storage facilities with a capacity of 50 thousand tons and four - 25 thousand tons each, worth 32.4 million euros. "Selenergoprom" signed

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<sup>165</sup> In the same place.

<sup>166</sup> During the visit of the President of Sudan to Belarus, contracts for \$250 million [Electronic Resource] were signed. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vo-vremja-vizita-prezidenta-sudana-v-belarus-podpisano-kontraktov-na-250-mln-328785-2018/>.

<sup>167</sup> Grishkevich, A. Belarus and Sudan emphasize cooperation in economy and industrial cooperation - Rachkov / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-i-sudan-delajut-aktsent-na-sotrudnichestve-v-ekonomike-i-promkooperatsii-rachkov-328692-2018/>.

the documents for the supply of five grain storage facilities with a capacity of 100 thousand tons each, worth 27.25 million euros<sup>168</sup>.

Exploration work in Sudan is also promising for Belarus. There is already a corresponding Belarusian enterprise registered for this purpose. In December 2018 it became known that "Sudan intends in the near future to allocate to Belarus a second site for gold mining, located near the Nile<sup>169</sup>. And then the Belarusian specialists in this African country will conduct exploration work at two sites simultaneously. In addition, in the near future both countries will also take measures at the level of parliaments and business circles to "bring relations between the regions of Belarus and the states of Sudan to a higher level".<sup>170</sup> corresponding to the level of strategic partnership.

As for **Zimbabwe**, President E. Mnangagwa visited the Republic of Belarus in January 2019, within the framework of which the parties agreed to build a strategy and implement a concrete plan for the future development of cooperation. In Belarus, this African country, located in the south of the "black" continent, is considered an important partner in the South African region, seeking for this reason to gradually move to a strategic level of cooperation with it, and see significant potential in the development of bilateral relations despite the fact that "Zimbabwe is going through hard times: for almost two decades the country has been subject to various economic sanctions, in fact, was isolated<sup>171</sup>.

Official Minsk sees significant potential for cooperation with Harare, primarily in the areas of trade and economy. The fact is that in this African country today "actively changing legislation to attract investment, the green light is given to create joint ventures.<sup>172</sup> Specific steps are being taken for growth and industrialization of various spheres of economy, and the main priorities of

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<sup>168</sup> Belarus will supply grain storage facilities in Sudan for 60 million euros [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-postavit-v-sudan-zernohranilischa-na-60-mln-evro-318290-2018/>.

<sup>169</sup> Grishkevich, A. Sudan intends to allocate the second area for gold mining to Belarus / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sudan-nameren-vydelit-belarusi-vtoroj-uchastok-dlja-dobychi-zolota-328681-2018/>.

<sup>170</sup> Interregional cooperation between Belarus and Sudan should be brought to a higher level - Andreichenko [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/politics/view/mezhregionalnoe-sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-sudana-sleduet-vyvesti-na-bolee-vysokij-uroven-andrejchenko-328837-2018/>.

<sup>171</sup> Negotiations with President of Zimbabwe Emmerson Mnangagwa [Electronic Resource]. -- 2019. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-prezidenta-respubliki-zimbabve-emmersona-mnangagvy-20303/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-prezidenta-respubliki-zimbabve-emmersona-mnangagvy-20303/)

<sup>172</sup> Belarus and Zimbabwe can enter into large-scale economic cooperation - Sheiman [Electronic Resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-zimbabve-mogut-vyjti-na-masshtabnoe-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-shejman-333102-2019/>.

domestic policy are modernization and mechanization of agriculture, mining industry, as well as construction of social and economic infrastructure. Let us not forget that "Zimbabwe has rich natural resources - coal, diamonds and other mineral deposits. Therefore, there is a need for machinery that is produced in Belarus"<sup>173</sup>.

We would like to remind that contacts between Belarus and Zimbabwe intensified significantly and received strong impulses for development in 2015 after E. Mnangagwa visited our country, only then in the status of Vice-President of this South African state. In Minsk, he said three and a half years ago that "the Zimbabwean side is interested in expanding trade and economic interaction, as well as cooperation in such areas as infrastructure, agriculture and mining"<sup>174</sup>. At the same time, speaking about the need to implement large-scale infrastructure projects in their country, Zimbabwe's high-ranking representatives clearly emphasized an important detail for the Belarusian side: "Zimbabweans would like to give preference to machines from Belarus rather than their Western analogues for a number of objective reasons"<sup>175</sup>. Since then, the Belarusian-Zimbabwean partnership has been gradually developing and strengthening. Until recently, Belarusian exports to Zimbabwe were based on potash fertilizers and spare parts for motor vehicles, while Belarus imported minerals, citrus fruits and vegetables in small amounts.

Back in 2014, the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Belarus in Zimbabwe were supplied mine dump trucks and loaders, which began to work in the coal mine "Hwange". In 2017, deals were concluded for the supply of mine dump trucks of lower payload capacity to southern Africa. In 2018, the Amkodor company signed a contract for the supply of forty pieces of equipment and spare parts for almost four and a half million dollars in Zimbabwe with the financial support of the Development Bank of Belarus and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. But it was in 2019 that the Belarusian supplies to the Zimbabwean market should gain new scale. We are talking about the shipment of equipment to this country under previously signed contracts - tractors, seeders, products of the Minsk

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<sup>173</sup> Matveev, V. Matveev // [Electronic Repe6surs]. New contracts for delivery of Belarusian equipment in Zimbabwe are under development. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prorabatyvajutsja-novye-kontrakty-na-postavku-belorusskoj-tehniki-v-zimbabwe-333019-2019/>.

<sup>174</sup> Meeting with Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Emmerson Mnangagwa [Electronic Resource]. - - 2015. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/vstrecha-s-vitse-prezidentom-respubliki-zimbabwe-emmersonom-mnangagvoj-11803/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-vitse-prezidentom-respubliki-zimbabwe-emmersonom-mnangagvoj-11803/).

<sup>175</sup> Zimbabwe is considering buying a large batch of Belarusian equipment [Electronic Resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zimbabwe-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-priobretenija-krupnoj-partii-belorusskoj-tehniki-5848-2015/>.

Automobile Plant - tractors, semitrailers. In particular, the willingness to purchase about two hundred trucks of Minsk Automobile Plant was announced by the Zimbabwean company "Ajara Trucking", noting that "Zimbabwe's demand may reach 1 thousand units. MAZ trucks are planned to be used in the mining industry to transport fuel, grain and fertiliser<sup>176</sup>. And the Belarusian Automobile Plant, together with Sohra, is currently working on the delivery of six dump trucks and two loaders. All in all, more than 70 BelAZ trucks are already successfully operating in various quarries there. It should also be noted that export financing for the supply of Belarusian equipment in Zimbabwe is planned to be implemented with the participation of the Pan-African Bank The Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank, to which the Belarusian Development Bank "in 2018 opened a credit line of \$ 70 million for the relevant needs<sup>177</sup>.

Interesting opportunities are also opening up for the Belarusian side in terms of implementing joint projects with partners from Zimbabwe in the field of geological exploration and mining. In particular, "Belarus expects to start commercial production of minerals in Zimbabwe in March 2019<sup>178</sup>. A total of five joint Belarusian and Zimbabwean enterprises have already been established in that country. Belarusian geologists have been working in southern Africa for a year and a half and have found there "fairly large deposits of minerals<sup>179</sup>.

If we talk in general about the prospects for cooperation between the two countries, among the areas in which Minsk and Harare are going to cooperate most actively are agriculture, construction, energy, as well as scientific and educational spheres. With regard to agriculture, in January 2019 the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Land, Agriculture, Water Resources, Climate and Rural Settlements of Zimbabwe. This document can and should become a prologue to a number of projects. In particular, "we are talking about the establishment of joint ventures in Zimbabwe for the production and processing

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<sup>176</sup> Sergeeva, V. The company from Zimbabwe is ready to purchase about 200 MAZ trucks / V. Sergeeva // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/kompanija-iz-zimbabwe-gotova-zakupit-okolo-200-gruzovikov-maz-333067-2019/>

<sup>177</sup> Development Bank will credit the supply of Belarusian equipment in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/bank-razvitija-prokredituet-postavki-belorusskoj-tehniki-v-zimbabwe-333485-2019/>

<sup>178</sup> In March Belarus intends to start commercial mining in Zimbabwe [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-marte-namerena-pristupit-k-promyshlennoj-dobyche-poleznyh-iskopaemyh-v-zimbabwe-333402-2019/>

<sup>179</sup> In the same place.



of meat and milk<sup>180</sup>. One of them may become a meat and milk production and processing enterprise with the participation of Machulishchi agro-industrial complex, which has already sent its proposal to the Zimbabwean side. "The cost of the project, if the contract is signed, will exceed \$26 million"<sup>181</sup>.

In the energy sector, "the participation of Belarusian companies in the construction of hydrotechnical facilities, turnkey construction of power plants on solar panels"<sup>182</sup> may become promising. And a concrete step towards strengthening bilateral Belarusian-Zimbabwean scientific cooperation was the Memorandum of Understanding on Science, Technology and Innovation between the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of Zimbabwe signed in January 2019 in Minsk. This document provides for the establishment of a bilateral commission that will deal with the formation of potential joint scientific projects. Although the Zimbabwean market is a new one for Belarus, there are already some of the most promising areas of scientific cooperation in which proposals have been made. They include joint projects "in agriculture, medicine, machinery and equipment, energy"<sup>183</sup>.

Speaking about the intentions of the parties to develop cooperation in the field of education, we should immediately mention the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Education of Belarus and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of Zimbabwe, signed in January 2019, which concerns cooperation in the field of secondary special education, higher education, science and technology. It should be noted that "similar memorandums in their areas of cooperation have been concluded with the participation of the Belarusian State University and the Republican Institute of Vocational Education

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<sup>180</sup> Matveev, V. Cooperation with Belarus will provide opportunities for development of the Zimbabwean economy and export potential / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusiju-dast-vozmozhnosti-dlja-razvitiya-ekonomiki-i-eksportnogo-potentsiala-333049-2019/>.

<sup>181</sup> Matveev, V. Matveev // [Electronic Resource]. New contracts for delivery of Belarusian equipment in Zimbabwe are under development. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prorabatyvajutsja-novye-kontrakty-na-postavku-belorusskoj-tehniki-v-zimbabwe-333019-2019/>.

<sup>182</sup> Negotiations with President of Zimbabwe Emmerson Mnangagwa [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-prezidenta-respubliki-zimbabwe-emmersona-mnangagvy-20303/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-prezidenta-respubliki-zimbabwe-emmersona-mnangagvy-20303/)

<sup>183</sup> Belarus and Zimbabwe plan to establish a commission on cooperation in science and technology [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/society/view/belarus-i-zimbabwe-planirujut-sozdat-komissiju-po-sotrudnichestvu-v-nauke-i-tehnologijah-333035-2019/>.

of Belarus"<sup>184</sup>. These memorandums are based on the fact that "developing trade and economic relations between Belarus and Zimbabwe need to be accompanied by appropriate staff training"<sup>185</sup>. According to statistics, only six Zimbabwean students are currently studying at Belarusian institutions of higher education. It is clear that there could and should be many more in the near future. The agreement on mutual recognition of education documents by Belarus and Zimbabwe, which is being prepared today by the parties, should contribute to this dynamic.

As we can see, the range of partnership relations between Belarus and Zimbabwe has expanded significantly over the past few years, which puts the urgent issue of establishing the Belarusian-Zimbabwean intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation in the practical plane of the bilateral relations agenda, which could "better stimulate the implementation of the plans"<sup>186</sup>. It should be assumed that 2019 will be the starting point in the activities of this much needed today's formation.

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<sup>184</sup> Belarus and Zimbabwe signed a package of documents on cooperation in various spheres [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-zimbabwe-podpisali-paket-dokumentov-o-sotrudnichestve-v-raznyh-sferah-333033-2019/>.

<sup>185</sup> Belarus and Zimbabwe are preparing an agreement on mutual recognition of educational documents [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/society/view/belarus-i-zimbabwe-gotovjat-soglashenie-o-vzaimnom-priznanii-dokumentov-ob-obrazovanii-333074-2019/>.

<sup>186</sup> Negotiations with President of Zimbabwe Emmerson Mnangagwa [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-prezidenta-respubliki-zimbabwe-emmersona-mnangagvy-20303/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-prezidenta-respubliki-zimbabwe-emmersona-mnangagvy-20303/)

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