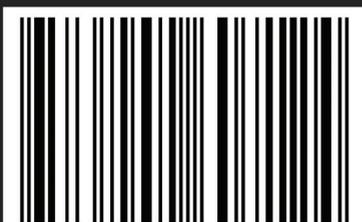


The boundaries of sustainable partnership. Part VIII

Today the Republic of Belarus is going through difficult times related to solving the tasks of economic recovery from the consequences of the world crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Responding to the current challenges and threats, the country is seeking reserves to put all economic entities on the trajectory of sustainable growth. Special attention in this regard is paid to the issues of support and development of exports, which is one of the main priorities of the Belarusian economy. After all, in its structure it traditionally accounts for more than half of the gross domestic product, which makes it one of the main sources of sustainable economic growth in the country. In the post-crisis period of development of world trade, Belarus has adopted a policy of increasing the share of science-intensive and high-tech products in its export structure and diversifying supplies to new markets. The proposed study discusses how this task can be achieved by relying on a multi-vector foreign economic policy.



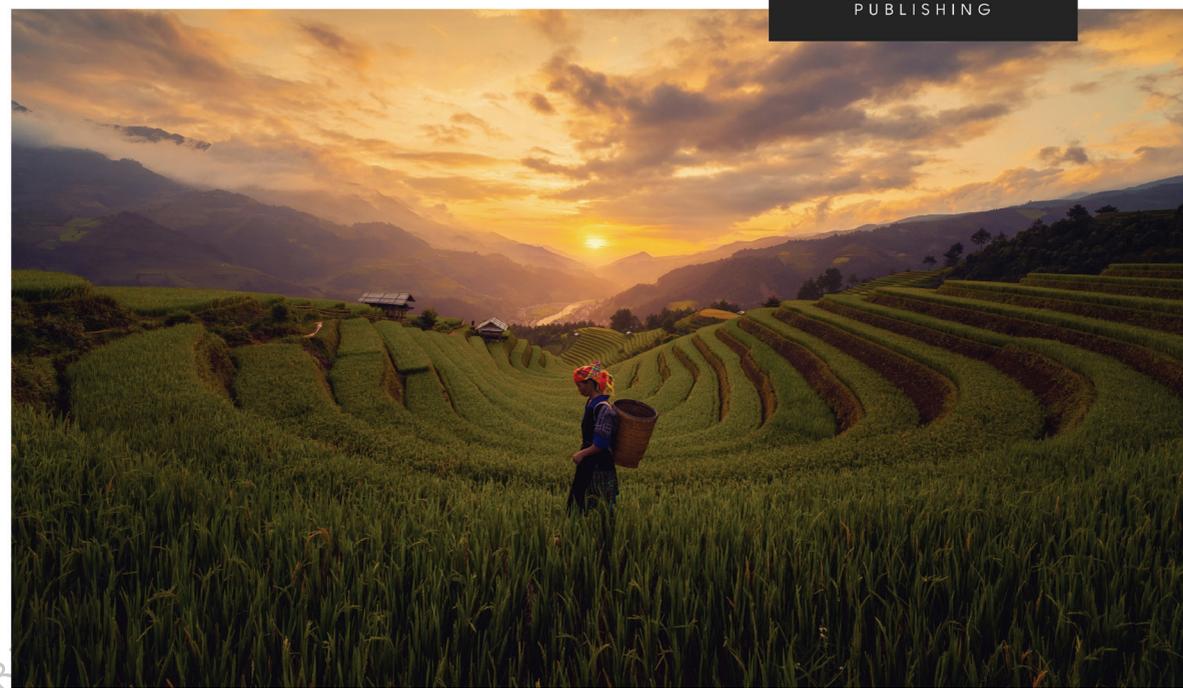
Professional experience in journalism - over forty five years. Now he is an associate professor of the International Journalism Department of the Journalism Department of the Belarusian State University. Areas of research: modern international relations; international journalism, international economics.



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Boris Zalessky

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The boundaries of sustainable partnership. Part VIII

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Belarus - Russia: regions continue cooperation

In September 2020, the seventh Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia is to be held in Minsk and Minsk region. The participants will be about five hundred people, while the program includes sessions of sections on various topics, including agriculture, construction and industry. In addition, the Business Cooperation Council will be held, "it is planned to sign agreements on cooperation between the regions, to conclude commercial contracts"¹. The very fact that this event will be held in the current difficult epidemiological situation testifies to the enormous creative potential of partnership between the regions of Belarus and Russia, "the expansion of which makes it possible to solve such important tasks as import substitution, promotion of export-oriented industries, bridging the technological gap with Western countries"².

It should be reminded that today the Republic of Belarus cooperates with the subjects of the Russian Federation in accordance with 78 agreements on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation with 71 Russian regions. In addition, "in the framework of interregional cooperation, about 400 agreements have been concluded between the regions of Belarus, Minsk and the subjects of the Russian Federation, as well as between Belarusian districts, cities and Russian municipalities"³. At the end of 2019, the top ten importers of Belarusian goods, which accounted for more than 70 percent of Belarus' exports to Russia, included Moscow Region, Moscow, Smolensk Region, St. Petersburg, Bryansk Region, Republic of Tatarstan, Kemerovo, Kaliningrad, Leningrad and Sverdlovsk Regions.

Among the Belarusian regions, actively cooperating with partners in Russia, it is worth mentioning **Vitebsk region**, which has 25 agreements on cooperation with Russian regions. More than a hundred documents have been signed by districts and cities of Vitebsk region with the relevant territorial subjects of Russia's regions. In 2019 the volume of export of Vitebsk enterprises to the Russian market came close to one billion dollars. It is noteworthy that these supplies have

¹ VII Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia is planned to be held in September [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vii-forum-regionov-belarusi-i-rossii-planiruetsja-provesti-v-sentjabre-393483-2020/>.

² Zalessky, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. View from Belarus / B. Zalesskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. -- C. 59.

³ Brewery, E. The embassy named top 10 Russian regions importing Belarusian goods / E. Brewery // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posolstvo-nazvalo-top-10-rossijskih-regionov-importirujuschih-belorusskie-tovary-388334-2020/>.

increased to the regions of six of the eight federal districts of Russia. The increase in this indicator by one and a half times and more was achieved in cooperation with partners from 16 regions of the neighboring country. "At the same time, exports to remote Russian regions grew most dynamically: to Magadan, North Ossetia-Alania and Khakassia - more than three times, to Amur, Irkutsk, Khabarovsk and Primorsky Krai - 2.5-2.8 times, to Krasnoyarsk Krai and Stavropol Territory - 1.5 times. After a break, shipments of Vitebsk goods to the Republic of Ingushetia, Kamchatka Krai and the Jewish Autonomous Region were resumed"⁴. Sales of peat to Russia developed well in this context - almost three times, supplies of veterinary medicines doubled, export of polyethylene, flax fiber, linen fabrics, metal structures, medical instruments grew markedly. Such enterprises as Vitebsk concern "Meat and Dairy Products", JSC "Naftan", LLC "Prodexim", UE "VIC Health of Animals", LLC "Production Association "Energokomplekt" became leading suppliers, LLC Allianceplast, OJSC Vitebsk Carpets, OJSC Vityaz, JLLC Natrix, OJSC Polotsk Glass Fiber, JLLC Soyuz-Cable, JLLC Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Metal Constructions.

Among the Russian regions, actively developing trade and economic relations with partners in Belarus, we can name **Kirov region**, trade turnover with which in the first quarter of 2020 came close to ten million dollars. At the same time, "Belarusian enterprises in January-March increased exports to Kirov region of Russia by almost a quarter compared to the first quarter of 2019"⁵. This trend was achieved through the supply of Belarusian machines and devices for lifting, moving, loading or unloading, wire made of unalloyed steel, vegetables, ready-made knitwear or textile products, paints and varnishes based on synthetic polymers in an aquatic environment, fur and fur raw materials. This year the shipment of new types of Belarusian tractors and tractors, the first lots of unalloyed glass of Gomelsteklo, metalware of Gomel Casting and Normal Plant to this Russian region began, as well as the shipment of lift equipment of Mogilevliftmash resumed.

In 2020, interaction between the regions of Belarus and Russia continues to develop using new formats of cooperation. For example, in spring this year Belarusian Cement Company opened its representative office in **Kaliningrad region** - trading house "BCK-Kaliningrad" to provide even more effective

⁴ Export of products of Vitebsk Oblast enterprises to Russian regions increased by 4.2% in 2019 [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-produktsii-predpriyatij-vitebskoj-oblasti-v-rossijskie-regiony-vyros-na-42-v-2019-godu-385596-2020/>.

⁵ Belarusian enterprises increased exports of goods to Kirov oblast of Russia by almost a quarter in the first quarter [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-v-i-kvartale-uvlechili-eksport-tovarov-v-kirovskuju-oblast-rf-pochti-na-393710-2020>.

partnership with construction companies of the region. The fact is that the Kaliningrad region is one of the most promising Russian directions for the Belarusian Cement Company, where almost all products of the holding are in demand. With the opening of the representative office "the work with both large clients and small firms which are more interested in the tariffed cement and deliveries of building materials in small batches, under the order becomes more active"⁶. Undoubtedly, this step will only strengthen ties between Belarusian producers and consumers in this Russian enclave and will allow cooperation between regions to reach a qualitatively new level.

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⁶ Belarusian Cement Company opened a representative office in Kaliningrad region [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskaja-tsementnaja-kompanija-otkryla-predstavitelstvo-v-kaliningradskoj-oblasti-385897-2020/>.

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Belarus - Uzbekistan: priority of cooperation - agriculture

The basic document of trade and economic interaction of Belarus and Uzbekistan is the road map of cooperation between the two countries, adopted in November 2018 and numbers 158 events. By May 2020, more than one third of them had already been implemented. This has immediately affected the Belarusian-Uzbek partnership relations: "Following the results of 2019, the volume of trade turnover between the two countries reached \$239 million and increased 1.5 times by 2018"⁷. This means that the parties intend to achieve the goal set by the two heads of state in 2018 - to increase the bilateral trade turnover to one billion dollars as soon as possible. "It is planned to solve the task in three or four years, updating all possible areas of cooperation."⁸ of which agriculture is one of the most promising.

The fact is that the main trend in the development of agro-industrial complex of Uzbekistan today is the formation of cluster system of production. In other words, the clusters should unite producers of agricultural raw materials and their processors into industrial enterprises. The Belarusian experience in this regard is viewed by Uzbek partners as very positive, so they demonstrate their high interest in establishing direct business contacts and partnerships with Belarusian producers and processors, the effectiveness of which is also demonstrated by figures.

In 2019, agricultural products and foodstuffs worth \$35 million were supplied to the Uzbek market from Belarus, more than twice as much as in 2018. The positive dynamics of mutual trade in this sphere has been preserved this year too, despite the restrictions caused by coronavirus spreading. "In the first 4 months of 2020, Belarusian exports of such goods [agricultural and food products] increased by 3.2 times. During this period, 16.1 million products were exported"⁹.

At the same time, cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan, of course, is not limited only to mutual supplies of food products, but also includes a wide range

⁷ Vladimir Dvornik held talks with Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Sardor Umurzakov [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9423>.

⁸ Zalessky, B. Point of reference - multi-vector. Part I / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. - - C. 347.

⁹ Markovich, E. Cooperation in the sphere of agroindustrial complex - priority direction of Belarusian-Uzbek interaction - Ambassador / E. Markovich // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-apk-prioritetnoe-napravlenie-belorusko-uzbekskogo-vzaimodejstviya-posol-394939-2020>.

of interaction, including the development of joint scientific approaches and modern technologies. In particular, "promising areas of cooperation in the agricultural sector include Belarus' participation in the construction of dairy complexes, organization of milk processing, creation of a joint venture to produce veterinary drugs, cooperation in breeding, training and retraining of Uzbek specialists on the basis of Belarusian agricultural educational institutions¹⁰.

The first Belarusian-Uzbek Agrarian Forum, which was held in February 2020 and attended by over seven hundred people, demonstrated this diversity of effective partnership relations. The business part of the Belarusian delegation alone included about 150 representatives of enterprises exporting agricultural and food products, scientific and educational institutions of the country. In particular, an active participant of the forum was Gomselmash, which in autumn 2019 signed an agreement with the Tashkent plant of agricultural machinery. "The document provides for the establishment of assembly production of combines in the capital of Uzbekistan"¹¹. The Uzbek side represented delegations from all regions of the country, as well as from relevant ministries and organizations of the agro-industrial complex. As a result, "Belarusian exporting enterprises signed more than 30 agreements and contracts with Uzbek partners" in the fields of the forum¹². In addition, the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation was adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan.

Simultaneously with the agrarian forum, an exhibition was organized in Tashkent, where only the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus presented more than 60 innovative developments and technologies for agriculture in Uzbekistan. Vegetable marmalade aroused great interest among the novelties of Belarusian scientists from the Scientific and Practical Centre of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on food. "The range includes marmalade from sweet corn, red carrot, ripe pumpkin, juicy tomato and spicy celery. The marmalade contains prebiotics and no artificial dyes."¹³ The Institute of Soil Science and

¹⁰ On the results of Vladimir Dvornik's visit to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9301>.

¹¹ "Gomselmash will present its potential at an agricultural forum in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-predstavit-svoj-potentsial-na-agrarnom-forume-v-uzbekistane-380486-2020>.

¹² More than 30 agreements and contracts were signed as a result of the Belarusian-Uzbek Agrarian Forum [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-30-soglashenij-i-kontraktov-podpisano-po-itogam-belorussko-uzbekskogo-agrarnogo-foruma-381350-2020/>.

¹³ The NASB presented more than 60 innovations for agriculture in Uzbekistan [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nan-belarusi-predstavila-v-uzbekistane-bolee-60-innovatsionnyh-razrabotok-dlja-selskogo-hozjajstva-381057-2020/>.

Agrochemistry demonstrated the assortment of complex mineral fertilizers with balanced ratio of nutrients of cultivated agricultural crops. The Institute of Experimental Veterinary Medicine named after S.N. Visheleskiy showed vaccines for prevention and treatment of viral and bacterial diseases of agricultural animals. Scientists from the Center for Identification Systems and Electronic Business Operations offered technologies for digital identification and traceability of animals and animal products. The Scientific and Practical Center for Potato Industry interested visitors with new potato varieties - "manifesto", "uladar", "palats" - resistant to a complex of diseases. As we can see, even this short list of novelties presented in Tashkent clearly showed what tempting prospects are opening up in the development of Belarusian-Uzbek partnership in agriculture in the near future.

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Belarus - Hungary: partnership vector - agriculture

In May 2020, the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Hungarian Commission on Economic Cooperation, a leading bilateral platform for bringing together positions and developing solutions to a wide range of pressing issues on the economic and humanitarian agenda, was held. During the meeting the parties discussed pressing issues of trade cooperation, as well as the state of partnership in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, energy, transport, science, education and tourism. For the first time in the practice of bilateral relations this event was held in the format of a videoconference for quite understandable epidemiological reasons, but it has not lost its relevance in terms of understanding the prospects of Belarusian-Hungarian cooperation, in the development of which several major trends can be highlighted.

On the one hand, "in 2019, trade turnover with Hungary increased by 1.3 times (\$253.7 million), exports - by 1.67 times (\$130.6 million), imports - by 5.8% (\$123 million)¹⁴. It should be assumed that the fact that in January 2019 the parties signed a number of important documents defining the contours of the promising areas of cooperation, including two of them - "the intergovernmental Belarusian-Hungarian agreement on the promotion and mutual protection of investments, as well as the memorandum of foreign policy agencies of the two countries on the promotion of interregional cooperation¹⁵" - played a role in such positive results of the cooperation between Belarus and Hungary last year.

On the other hand, the statistics of the first quarter of 2020 showed that the turnover of bilateral trade, although not much - about five percent, but still declined to \$51 million. At the same time, the dynamics of the Belarusian exports growth has been preserved. The volume of supplies from Belarus to the Hungarian market increased by almost four percent in the first three months of this year and amounted to \$23.8 million. More specifically, "modern Belarusian exports to Hungary are formed by almost 48% due to deliveries of railroad cars and components, by 13.1% - tractors and spare parts, by 12.3% - products of the timber industry and woodworking industry, by 2% - metals and their products, by 1.4%

¹⁴ On holding a meeting of the Belarusian-Hungarian intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c279e9b64ee4da42.html.

¹⁵ Zalesky, B.L. Belarus - Hungary: cooperation grows by investments and regions / B.L. Zalesky // Materials of the XV International scientific and practical conference "Modern scientific potential - 2019", February 28 - March 7, 2019. Economic sciences. : Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - - C. 18.

- potash fertilizers. Almost 23% are products of petrochemistry, processing industry and other goods"¹⁶. These figures quite clearly show that there are considerable growth reserves in the interaction between the two countries, which both in Minsk and Budapest would like to put into effect in the near future.

As early as 2020, agriculture could become one of the drivers of this growth, as the following facts show. At the end of 2019, the trade turnover of agricultural products and foodstuffs between Belarus and Hungary increased by almost 15 percent and exceeded \$17 million. An important detail: "Exports of Belarusian agricultural products have more than tripled over this period. Among the main export items are seeds and fruits of various oilseeds, molluscs"¹⁷. In the first quarter of 2020, a similar picture was observed: the turnover of agricultural products and foodstuffs grew by almost ten percent and Belarusian exports by twenty percent. At the same time, the parties continued to actively increase efforts to implement new joint projects in this area. In March 2020, during the visit to Belarus of P. Sijärto, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Economic Relations of Hungary, the parties "defined the main directions for further cooperation in the field of food supplies, investments, poultry farming"¹⁸.

And already in June 2020 the 1st Minsk poultry farm and the Hungarian company "Babolna Tetra" signed a framework agreement on cooperation worth about three and a half million euros. This document, which will last for three years, provides for breeding work with the poultry and obtaining breeding young eggs. Thanks to this project, from 2020 the Belarusian side "is practically free from import of breeding flocks of laying hens, and from 2023 will be able to fully provide the domestic market with its own breed of hens of egg direction"¹⁹. Besides, Belarus is interested in commodity deliveries from Hungary in those directions of agricultural sector which are very well developed in this country - corn, cattle, poultry. In particular, we are talking about the implementation of a joint project with Hungarian partners on geese breeding in the Gomel region "for the recovery

¹⁶ Ponomarev, A. Visit of Victor Orban - new stage of Belarusian-Hungarian cooperation / A. Ponomarev // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/vizit-viktora-orbana-novyj-etap-belorussko-vengerskogo-sotrudnichestva-7346/>.

¹⁷ Markovich, E. Belarus in 2019 increased export of agricultural products to Hungary more than three times / E. Markovich // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-2019-godu-uvelichila-eksport-produktsii-apk-v-vengriju-bolee-chem-v-tri-raza-393476-2020/>.

¹⁸ Belarus and Hungary plan to expand cooperation in the agricultural sector [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vengrija-planirujut-rasshirjat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-apk-381906-2020/>.

¹⁹ Markovich, E. Belarus and Hungary will cooperate in poultry farming / E. Markovich // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vengrija-budut-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-ptitsevodstva-393454-2020/>.

of regions affected by the Chernobyl disaster²⁰. At least, at the talks held on this issue in June 2020, the issues of financing this project, as well as where this production will be organized and who from the Belarusian side will take part in it, have already been discussed.

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²⁰ Markovich, E. Belarus is interested in realization of the joint project on geese cultivation with Hungary (in Russian) / E. Markovich // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-realizatsii-sovmestnogo-s-vengriji-proekta-po-vyraschivaniju-gusej-393464-2020/>.

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Belarus - World Bank: Engaging with the epidemic

In April 2020, the Belarusian government adopted a resolution approving a draft loan agreement between Belarus and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, according to which the Belarusian side will attract in 2020-2021 a loan from this financial institution, a member of the World Bank Group, "in the amount of €90 million for 11 years to finance emergency response to the epidemiological situation"²¹. These funds are only a part of the assistance that Belarus intends to receive from external creditors to fight the coronavirus. In general, we are talking about two or two and a half billion dollars. In order to implement these intentions, the Belarusian side has intensified cooperation with a number of international organizations, including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and European Investment Bank. At the same time, the talks with the IMF concern about \$900 million. "The World Bank is negotiating for about \$300 million, while the European Investment Bank is negotiating for about \$300 million"²².

In that regard, the presence of the World Bank on that list is noteworthy, as it is convinced that a return to global economic growth requires a rapid and flexible response to an emergency, and that 100 States, which account for more than two thirds of the world's population, have already provided assistance in combating the Coronavirus pandemic. And over the next 15 months, the bank will provide "developing countries with \$160 billion in grants, loans and investments to combat the impact of the pandemic"²³. In May 2020, the World Bank approved a financial support package of 90 million euros to Belarus to meet the urgent needs of the country's health care system in medical equipment, medical devices, training personnel to manage cases of severe COVID-19 infection. The allocated funds will also be used "for activities to raise public awareness about social distancing and hygiene measures. In addition, public health laboratories and epidemiological surveillance services will be assisted in the early detection and

²¹ Belarus will attract €90 million from IBRD to respond to the epidemiological situation [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-privlechit-90-mln-evro-ot-mbr-dlja-reagirovanija-na-epidsituatsiju-388653-2020/>

²² Belarus counts on \$2-2.5 billion from external creditors to overcome the consequences of COVID-19 [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-na-2-25-mlrd-ot-vneshnih-kreditorov-na-preodolenie-posledstvij-covid-19-388808-2020/>.

²³ There may be 60 million people in extreme poverty due to the pandemic - the World Bank [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/world/view/v-krajnej-nischete-iz-za-pandemii-mogut-okazatsja-60-mln-chelovek-vsemirnyj-bank-391536-2020/>.

recording of COVID-19 cases"²⁴. Equipment and products for the detection of COVID-19 will also be procured, including test systems, personal protective equipment and laboratory reagents. All this assistance will significantly complement the World Bank's existing long-term support to the Belarusian health system, including the existing project "Modernization of the Healthcare System of the Republic of Belarus" and the planned project to optimize the network of hospitals and provide long-term care. It is worth recalling here that the World Bank's current investment portfolio in Belarus includes nine projects worth almost \$950 million. These figures are likely to change upwards in the near future.

First, in May 2020, the Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank approved a one hundred million euro loan to support the higher education system in Belarus in the form of a project that involves the modernization and equipping with modern equipment of educational and laboratory facilities in 18 institutions of higher education, as well as major repairs and reconstruction of buildings of some of them. In addition, under this project, Belarusian educational institutions - universities and colleges - will be able to participate more actively in international programs and initiatives. A National Agency for Quality Assurance of Education will be established in Belarus, which will meet the requirements of the Bologna Process, a pan-European initiative aimed at reforming higher education. As a result, "during the implementation of the project from 2020 to 2025, about 300 thousand students and teachers will be annually created better conditions for education <...>. This is intellectual capital, which can ensure the transformation of the country's resource economy into a knowledge economy"²⁵. Secondly, according to the Head of the World Bank in Belarus A. Kremer, this international organization is now considering the possibility of financial support for Belarusian small and medium businesses to "support the country's efforts to finance small, micro and medium enterprises, to support households through social programs"²⁶.

All these facts testify to the fact that the interaction of the Republic of Belarus with the World Bank, which began back in 1992, is now gaining new relevant and effective formats of cooperation. This is probably due to the fact that the attitude

²⁴ The World Bank approved €90 million for Belarus to fight against COVID-19 [Electronic Resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vsemirnyj-bank-utverdil-vydelenie-belarusi-90-mln-evro-dlja-borby-s-covid-19-391910-2020/>.

²⁵ The World Bank provides €100 million to modernize higher education in Belarus [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/vsemirnyj-bank-vydeljaet-100-mln-evro-dlja-modernizatsii-sistemy-vysshego-obrazovanija-v-belarusi-391733-2020/>.

²⁶ The World Bank is considering the possibility of financial support for small and medium-sized businesses in Belarus [Electronic Resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vsemirnyj-bank-rassmatrivaet-vozmoznost-finpodderzhki-malogo-i-srednego-biznesa-v-belarusi-392356-2020/>.

of the Belarusian side to this international organization is based on a rather simple but very important statement: "The World Bank is the least politicized financial and economic structure"²⁷.

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²⁷ Zalessky, B. International Relations and Media. Peculiarities of multi-vector international cooperation in the period of global challenges / B. Zalesskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2016. -- C. 359.

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Belarus: anti-crisis component - export

Sustained economic growth at a rate of three to four percent per year - this is a specific task set today in the Republic of Belarus to ensure stable socio-economic development of the country for the medium term. For its successful resolution, a number of conditions must be met - "to ensure efficient operation of each enterprise, equal and sustainable development of the country's regions; to create conditions for attracting foreign and domestic investments; to increase exports, including to new markets"²⁸. The presence of the export theme in this list of the most important conditions can be explained by the fact that "export is the basis of the open Belarusian economy, as it provides for the receipt of foreign currency in the country, profits for enterprises, and taxes to the budget of the Republic of Belarus"²⁹. Among the Belarusian enterprises active in the current difficult conditions on foreign markets, we should mention, first of all, the world's largest manufacturer of quarry dump trucks and transport equipment for mining and construction industry, which occupies about a third of the world market of quarry dump trucks of particularly high load-carrying capacity, the **Belarusian Automobile Plant**, whose exports in 2020 are developing along several main vectors at once.

Vector one - **regions of Russia**. Thus, in April 2020, another batch of 180-ton dump trucks BELAZ-75180 was shipped to the **Murmansk region** to the Kirov branch of JSC "Apatit" in accordance with the agreement signed in September 2019. In February 2020, three 130-ton trucks have already arrived in this Russian region. In total, in the next three years, at least 50 mine dump trucks will go there, which will be involved in the development of apatite-nepheline deposits in Khibiny. It is expected that 180-ton dump trucks "will be later modified into intelligent and will acquire new technical characteristics. The additional equipment installed will allow them to be operated over a long distance. An

²⁸ Speech by Kochanova at the opening of the second session of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus of the seventh convocation [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/vystuplenie-kochanovoj-na-otkrytii-vtoroj-sessii-soveta-respubliki-natsionalnogo-sobranija-belarusi-385692-2020/>.

²⁹ Zalessky, B.L. Export Culture and Mass Consciousness / B.L. Zalessky // Zhurnalistyka-2016: mill, problems and prospects: materyalyalyaly 18th Mizhnar. sovuk.-prakt. konf., prysveschanai 95-godzhu BDU, 10-11 years old. 2016, Minsk / Radkal.: S.V. Dubovik (ad. red.). - Edition. 18. - Minsk : AAT Paligrafkambinat Name I. Kolasa", 2016. - - C. 234.

experimental site for the operation of mining equipment in unmanned mode is planned to create in the Nyorpakhskoe quarry East mine"³⁰.

In the same April 2020 six more dump trucks of the Belarusian manufacturer started to work in **Krasnoyarsk krai** at Achinsk alumina refinery, which is a part of JSC Rusal Achinsk. Renewal of the mining transportation equipment fleet at the Mazulsky mine will allow to increase labour productivity and reduce expenses for the technological process of raw material extraction. Typical detail: in 2020 Rusal, one of the world's largest aluminium producers, plans to purchase several dozens of Belarusian machines, as "this machine has high performance characteristics, it is more economical in terms of fuel and lubricants consumption. The driver's cabs have an improved view and control system, equipped with comfortable seats and climate systems"³¹.

Another Russian region where the second 130-tonne mining dump truck BELAZ-75131 has been shipped since the beginning of 2020 this spring is the **Sverdlovsk Oblast**, where the Uralasbest mining and processing company already operates eleven 130-tonne Belarusian trucks, each of which transports up to one and a half thousand tons of rock per shift. How important it is for the Russian side, such figures say. BELAZ trucks operate "on the basis of the Bazhenov deposit, whose explored reserves will last for more than 150 years. The deposit is being developed using the open pit method. The quarry is 8 km long, 2.5 km wide and 350 m deep"³².

Vector two - the countries of the **Eurasian Economic Union**. In particular, **Armenia**, where three 90-ton dump trucks BELAZ-75585 were sent in spring 2020. They replenished the machinery park of Sotq mine, a gold mine, the largest in Armenia on pure gold production, the reserves of which are estimated at more than 120 tons. It should be noted that 130-ton Belarusian machines are already working with high efficiency here. The new dump trucks were equipped with diesel engines with a capacity of up to 1200 horsepower. "To improve the

³⁰ BELAZ supplied another batch of dump trucks to the Russian "Apatity" [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavil-ocherednuju-partiju-samosvalov-rossijskomu-apatitu-386828-2020/>.

³¹ Nemankova, Yu. BELAZ dump trucks started their work in Krasnoyarsk krai (in Russian) // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/karjernye-samosvaly-belaz-pristupili-k-rabote-v-krasnojarskom-krae-386202-2020/>.

³² Nemankova, Yu. Another 130-ton dump truck BELAZ will start working at Russian "Uralasbest" / Yu. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ocherednoj-130-tonnyj-samosval-belaz-nachnet-rabotu-na-rossijskom-uralasbeste-385689-2020/>.

reliability of the main bearing elements of the dump truck new high-strength steels were used, and in the most stressed places - cast elements"³³.

Vector three is the **far arc** countries, whose share in the export of the Belarusian Automobile Plant has increased almost one and a half times since the beginning of 2020 and amounted to 40%. Thus, in April, eight 130-ton dump trucks BELAZ-75131 began to work at a coal mine, located on the island of Kalimantan in **Indonesia**. All the wishes of the Indonesian partners and the climatic conditions of operation were taken into account. And these are such tropical options as "appropriate rubber, air conditioning, special cooling system"³⁴. The Belarusian Automobile Plant is actively working to increase its presence on the African continent in **Algeria**, where in spring 2020 it shipped another batch of five BELAZ-78221 frontal loaders. The company's plans include "participation in specialized exhibitions and direct negotiations with interested consumers of mining equipment in the region"³⁵.

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³³ Nemankova, Yu. BELAZ sent to Armenia mining dump trucks / Yu. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-otpravil-v-armeniju-karjerye-samosvaly-385547-2020/>.

³⁴ Eight BELAZ dump trucks have started working in Indonesia [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vosem-karjernih-samosvalov-belaz-pristupili-k-rabote-v-indonezii-387074-2020/>.

³⁵ Nemankova, Yu. Party of BELAZ loaders is shipped to Algeria / Yu. Nemankova // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/partija-pogruzchikov-belaz-otguzhena-v-alzhir-385911-2020/>.

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Belarus: goal - stable increase in exports

Export growth, including to new markets, in the current difficult epidemiological situation in the world is one of the main conditions for sustainable economic growth of the Republic of Belarus and "ensuring stable socio-economic development of the country for the medium term"³⁶. Among the Belarusian enterprises actively operating in foreign markets, even in such difficult conditions as we see today, is the **holding "Gomselmash"** - producer of grain and forage harvesters, cobblers and potato harvesters, mowers and other agricultural equipment, which is already operating in the fields of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Chile, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Argentina, China, South Korea, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. In the first quarter of 2020, the holding companies shipped more than 400 units of machinery to their customers. "At the same time, 278 self-propelled combines and machine sets were delivered outside Belarus. Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Moldova are on the list of countries where the machines were shipped. <...> In total, shipments for the same period of 2019 increased by 373%".

Minsk Tractor Works is another enterprise that is actively promoting its products on foreign markets. Thus, since the beginning of 2020, more than 250 tractors have been shipped to Pakistan alone. This is an eloquent indication that "even despite the crisis in many Asian countries and the restrictive measures imposed due to the difficult epidemiological situation, supplies remain at the planned level"³⁷. In total, since 1955, Minsk tractor manufacturers have shipped more than 120 thousand of their vehicles to this country of South Asia. The company does not forget about other export destinations as well. In particular, in the first quarter of this year, about five hundred vehicles and tractor kits were shipped to European markets. The following fact shows a lot: "Export of MTW OJSC products to African countries in the first quarter of 2020 increased by 70%"³⁸. For one of the countries of this continent - Sudan - in April this year was formed another "party of more than 100 tractors <...>. This is the second shipment

³⁶ Zalesskiy, B.L. Anti-crisis component - export / B.L. Zalesskiy // Materiały XVI Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Europejska nauka XXI wieku - 2020", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - - C. 22.

³⁷ Since the beginning of the year, MTW has supplied more than 250 tractors to Pakistan [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-s-nachala-goda-postavil-v-pakistan-bolee-250-tractorov-388294-2020/>.

³⁸ Nemankova, Yu. Export of MTZ products to African countries increased by 70% / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-produktsii-mtz-v-strany-afriki-vyros-na-70-386540-2020/>.

in 2020"³⁹. These figures complement this picture very convincingly. "Since the beginning of the year, the company has increased deliveries to Russian regions by 20%. Exports of Belarusian agricultural machinery to Uzbekistan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia have also increased"⁴⁰. Supplies to Tajikistan, where more than a hundred tractors and tractor kits were shipped in the first three months of this year, have doubled. To a large extent, this trend is explained by the fact that "since January 2020, spare parts and components imported into Tajikistan for further assembly of agricultural machinery are not subject to VAT and customs duties"⁴¹. And only in the first quarter of this year, the products of Minsk Tractor Works were shipped to markets of more than thirty countries, including 22 foreign countries.

In the first quarter of 2020, **Minsk Automobile Plant** also increased its deliveries to non-CIS countries almost two and a half times. An important component in achieving this indicator was the fact that at the beginning of this year, the enterprise, together with Borisov-based Pojsnab LLC, signed a contract for the supply of 73 units of fire and rescue equipment to the Mongolian Emergency Situations Agency. And MAZ has already "started to execute the contract for the supply of chassis and is assembling passenger vehicles for export to Mongolia. The joint project will be implemented during this year"⁴².

In spring 2020, the **Amkodor-DOMZ** unitary enterprise, located in Dzerzhinsk, Minsk region, seriously updated its export plans, having shipped the first batch of its products to the Russian region - the Republic of Karelia in April. There, these seven bridge cranes with lifting capacity from 3.2 to 16 tons will be used to implement an investment project to which the Karelian government attaches great importance - "to create on the area of the former Onega Tractor Plant high-tech import-substituting production of full cycle production of forestry equipment: harvesters and forwarders of medium and heavy class"⁴³. Characteristic detail: the

³⁹ Nemankova, Yu. MTZ will deliver the second party of machinery to Sudan (in Russian) / Yu. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-postavit-vtoruju-partiju-tehniki-v-sudan-386164-2020/>.

⁴⁰ MTW has good export performance: supplies to Russia increased by 20%, and to Africa by 70% [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://ont.by/news/u-mtz-horoshie-pokazateli-po-eksportu-na-20-vyrosli-postavki-v-rossiyu-na-70-v-afriku>

⁴¹ MTW increased export of products to Tajikistan by 2 times [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-uvlichil-eksport-produktsii-v-tadzhikistan-v-2-raza-387386-2020/>.

⁴² Nemankova, Yu. MAZ in the first quarter increased export to non-CIS countries almost 2.4 times / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-v-i-kvartale-uvlichil-eksport-v-dalnee-zarubezhje-pochti-v-24-raza-387079-2020/>.

⁴³ "Amkodor-Honey in Karelia got the first batch of bridge cranes [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amkodor-onego-v-karelii-poluchil-pervuju-partiju-mostovyh-kranov-388008-2020/>.

bridge cranes sent to Karelia are new generation equipment, which is controlled from the floor by radio signal, which provides high safety standards for staff. It is also important that this spring a second batch of equipment is planned to be sent to Karelia from Belarusian Dzerzhinsk.

Another Belarusian company, which has significantly strengthened its position on the Russian market in the first quarter of 2020, is **SZAO BELGI**. Here for the first three months of the current year 5059 cars have been assembled, and 5230 cars in total have been sold. Thus "deliveries to the Russian market have increased in 2,5 times, for the first quarter there were exported 2705 cars"⁴⁴. In 2020 the company plans to sell 28 thousand cars in total, 18 thousand of which will be sent to Russia.

All these facts testify to the main thing: whoever does not give up in the most difficult conditions wins in the end, contributing to overcoming the consequences of the adverse epidemiological situation in the world.

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⁴⁴ "BELGI" in the first quarter increased export to Russia 2.5 times / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beldzhi-v-i-kvartale-uvelichil-eksport-v-rossiju-v-25-raza-386430-2020/>.

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Great Stone Industrial Park as a "magnet" for innovation.

Among the main directions of trust-based all-round strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China, the scientific and innovation vector plays an important role. At the same time, three priority components can be identified in this segment of bilateral interaction. "The first is in the field of scientific research, where the parties participate in the implementation of major joint projects. The second is in the area of innovation activities, where a network of joint innovation centres and research laboratories is being established and developed. The third is in the field of education, where joint training and mutual internships are conducted for specialists, teachers and students"⁴⁵. The Sino-Belarusian industrial park Veliky Kamen (Great Stone) is particularly oriented towards innovation, which makes it possible to create competitive industries, sustainable engineering and transport infrastructure, and digital construction in order to turn the park into a "smart city". At the same time, the pace of innovation movement has noticeably accelerated in spring 2020. These are just a few examples to confirm this observation.

In May 2020, the first stone was laid in the Great Stone at the site of future construction by the Chinese corporation Sinomach of the zone of scientific and technological cooperation and development or the project "Torch". Recall that in June 2014, the Belarusian government signed an agreement with this corporation on strategic partnership, on the basis of which large-scale investment projects are currently being implemented in Belarus. As for the "Torch" project, this zone will "aim to create conditions for attracting Chinese and European technologies, their introduction and testing in the park and further export to Europe and China"⁴⁶. It is planned to construct office buildings and premises for scientific research, where "four research and development projects are planned to be implemented - in optical technology, mechanics, electronics and new materials. There are also plans to erect a laboratory, office covorkings, complex construction of educational institutions and high-tech pilot commercial facilities".⁴⁷ [3]. Not only research institutes and enterprises of the Sinomach Corporation, but also enterprises of the

⁴⁵ Zalessky, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / B. Zalesskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. -- C. 115–116.

⁴⁶ About the development in the "Great Stone" park of the zone of scientific and technical cooperation and development SINOMACH [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/cf39e9ad1f75824a.html>

⁴⁷ Sinomach Park "Torch" [Electronic Resource] will be built in "Great Stone". - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-postrojat-park-sinomach-fakel-390613-2020/>.

Chinese Zhongguancun Technopark and structures of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus will take part in this project.

The reference in this context to Zhongguancun Technopark shows the very serious attitude of the Chinese side to the Torch in the Great Stone project. The fact that this technopark, founded in 1988 in the northwestern part of Beijing, is considered the Chinese analogue of Silicon Valley, is the first in China, one of the largest in the capital and consists of 16 scientific zones. It was here that "the first Chinese vacuum cylinder, the first computer, the first switch, etc., appeared. In total, more than 5000 products were developed, which filled the void in the history of Chinese high technology"⁴⁸. Now, many multinational corporations have their research and development offices concentrated here. This technology park in China has high hopes of "fulfilling the ambitious strategy of Made in China 2025, which will make the country technologically independent and will make it a leader in many fields. The Chinese authorities will spend about \$300 billion to implement the program"⁴⁹. Speaking of this technopark, one cannot help mentioning such a figure: from January to November 2019, revenues here grew by almost 14 percent. At the same time, "the income of the leading high-tech enterprises in the technopark reached 5.43 trillion yuan (about 779 billion U.S. dollars) during this period"⁵⁰.

Returning to the innovation affairs in the "Great Stone", it should be noted that in May 2020 another significant event took place here, showing that one of the promising facets of the development of the Sino-Belarusian industrial park is digitalization. An unmanned electric bus developed on the basis of the technology of Singaporean scientists was tested here for the first time. "The maximum speed that a prototype can develop is 40 km/hour. <...> It has a cruising range of about 180 kilometres. It will take no more than 4 hours to fully charge"⁵¹. On the territory of the "Great Stone" it is planned to test the technology of operation of the novelty, after which, to all appearances, commercial operation of this unmanned vehicle will be possible in the near future.

⁴⁸ Wei, V. Silicon Valley of China / Wei // Models, systems, networks in economy, technology, nature and society. -- 2013. -- C. 18–21.

⁴⁹ Krasilnikova, Yu. Beijing launches the program of attracting the foreign IT-specialists (in Russian) / Yu. -- 2018. - URL: https://hightech.fm/2018/02/28/beijing_lures_talent

⁵⁰ During the first 11 months of 2019, the Beijing Zhongguancun Technopark registered a 13.8% increase in revenue [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: http://russian.news.cn/2020-01/07/c_138685700.htm?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fyandex.by%2Fnews.

⁵¹ The first unmanned electric bus was tested in "The Great Stone" [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervyj-bespilotnyj-ekstrobus-protestirovali-v-velikom-kamne-390612-2020>.

Finally, in the same May 2020, a new resident was registered in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park - LLC "Scientific and Technical Company for Wooden Structures Crownhomes", which will create in the "Great Stone" "center for the production of production lines for woodworking industry based on the principles of industry 4.0"⁵². This production, which is based on innovative technologies, is expected to be launched in 2022.

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⁵² The new resident of the "Great Stone" will produce products for woodworking [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-vypuskat-produktsiju-dlja-derevoobrabotki-390684-2020>.

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Vitebsk region: European vector of cooperation

During his recent working trip to Vitebsk region, the Belarusian head of state A. Lukashenko noted positive changes in economic activity in the northern region of Belarus, stressing that "this is only the beginning"⁵³. Active policy of international economic cooperation, which promotes "the attraction of investments in the creation of export-oriented and import-substituting industries," should be mentioned among the current trends of development of Vitsebsk voblast⁵⁴. After all, the industrial potential of the region is open and oriented to foreign markets. As a result, "for the majority of products, exports account for over 50% of the output. <...> Russia accounts for 47%, other CIS countries for 5%, and non-CIS countries for 48% of the products sold" . At the same time, the range of interaction with foreign partners is quite wide: transport and logistics, energy, construction and production of construction materials, agriculture, food production, trade, pharmaceuticals. Apparently, in 2020 the European vector of partnership relations of Vitebsk region will receive new impulses of development.

In particular, the Netherlands is going to stake on strengthening cooperation with Vitebsk region this year. This European country already has experience of cooperation with this region of Belarus. Suffice it to say that last year the trade turnover between the parties amounted to \$92.4 million. It was based on deliveries to the Dutch market of oil products, linen fabrics, rapeseed oil, glass fabrics, woodworking products, as well as imports of Dutch fruits and vegetables, flowers, vegetable seeds, medicines. The following facts are also important: "In 2019, the volume of foreign direct investment from the Netherlands amounted to almost \$1 million. Two enterprises with capital from this country operate in Vitebsk"⁵⁵.

Another European country, whose business representatives are interested in working in Vitebsk region in 2020, is **Sweden**. This interest arose not on an empty place. In 2019, the trade turnover of the northern Belarusian region with this Scandinavian country increased by 65% and exceeded \$16 million. The key

⁵³ Working visit to Vitebsk region [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/rabochaja-poezdka-v-vitebskij-rajon-23609/.

⁵⁴ Zaleskiy, B.L. FEZ "Vitebsk": course - on international cooperation / B.L. Zaleskiy // Materials for XV International Scientific Conference, Present Research and Development - 2019, 15 - 22 Januari 2019: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - - C. 30.

⁵⁵ Shcherbitskiy, A. The Netherlands will stake on strengthening of relations with Vitebsk region - diplomat / A. Shcherbitskiy // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/niderlandy-sdelajut-stavku-na-ukreplenie-svjazej-s-vitebskoj-oblastju-diplomat-382019-2020>.

positions of export to the Swedish market were lumber, fuel wood and furniture. Linen products, goods made of plastic, and seeds of trees were also well sold there. As for investment cooperation, two enterprises with Swedish capital have already been registered in Vitebsk region, and the volume of direct Swedish investments into the economy of Vitebsk region amounted to almost 19 million dollars. In particular, a well-known concern IKEA has been cooperating with the region for quite a long time, which in 2020 is implementing a strategic program to increase production capacity here. This is explained by the fact that by 2021 the concern intends to increase the supply of Belarusian-made goods up to 300 million euros. At the same time, "IKEA experts develop the design of products themselves, and then combine efforts with suppliers of raw materials and manufacturers of goods. Furniture, textiles and accessories made to order in Belarus are sold in IKEA stores around the world⁵⁶. And that is not all. According to the head of the Swedish diplomatic mission in Belarus K. Johannesson, "now the two Swedish companies are holding specific negotiations to enter the market of the region⁵⁷. And in general, according to the parties, the limit of bilateral cooperation is far from being reached. After all, apart from woodworking, there are many other areas of cooperation for joint work.

In March 2020, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Republic of Belarus, J. Perkins, stated that there was a great potential for cooperation between Great Britain and Vitebsk Oblast. At the same time, she referred to the economy and trade as the main areas of such cooperation. It should be noted that in 2019 the foreign trade turnover of Vitebsk Oblast enterprises with British partners exceeded \$7 million. According to the parties, this figure may be significantly increased in the near future due to diversification of supplies from both sides. So far, the Belarusian exports have been based on lubricating oil additives, linen fabrics, fiberglass. It is also worth recalling that seven organizations with British capital are already operating in the region. Culture is another area of cooperation that may get interesting development in cooperation with British partners. More specifically, we are talking about the intention to create a platform for cooperation

⁵⁶ IKEA wants to increase the purchase of goods in Belarus from €150 to €300 million in 2 years [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://ncpn.by/ikea-%D1%85%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%82-%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%B8%D1%82%D1%8C-%D0%B7%D0%B0-2-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%BF%D0%BA%D1%83-%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0/>.

⁵⁷ Shcherbitskiy, A. Swedish business shows interest to Vitebsk region - Ambassador / A. Shcherbitskiy // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/shvedskij-biznes-projavljaet-interes-k-vitebskoj-oblasti-posol-381082-2020/>.

between European architects, artists of Vitebsk and the Museum of History of the Vitebsk People's Art School. And in this regard we are discussing "the idea of a project that can be implemented in 2020-2021 in the city [Vitebsk] - a 10-day plenary-air symposium"⁵⁸.

All these facts show that Vitebsk region really has a lot of potential for cooperation with European countries. And 2020 can give a serious acceleration to this cooperation, as the parties have a mutual desire to implement various joint projects.

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⁵⁸ Shcherbitsky, A. Vitebsk region and Great Britain have great potential for cooperation - Perkins / A. Shcherbitsky // [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskaja-oblast-i-velikobritanija-imejut-bolshoj-potentsial-dlja-sotrudnichestva-perkins-383129-2020/>.

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Gomel region: online format as an effective tool for international cooperation of regions

Over the last decade and a half or two years, Gomel Oblast in Belarus has accumulated considerable experience of working at the international level with foreign partners. At the same time, various forms of partnership development are used here. For example, it is the Gomel Economic Forum, which for 15 years has "proved to be a new format of work with foreign investors at the regional level and an effective tool for the development of international inter-regional ties"⁵⁹. Secondly, it is the international exhibition "Spring in Gomel", which for 20 years of its existence has already become a kind of business card of the Gomel region. Suffice it to say that "in 2019 on the area of more than 5 thousand square meters there were presented products of 300 Belarusian and foreign companies".⁶⁰ And then foreign delegations from 32 countries visited the exhibition.

In 2020, responding to the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic and the closure of most countries' borders, and following the principle that "in the new realities, every effort should be made to further strengthen the region's social and economic development and the well-being of its inhabitants".⁶¹ In the south-eastern part of Belarus we decided not to cancel the XXI International Exhibition "Spring in Homel", but to hold it in a new online format. At the same time, the reasoning was as follows: on the one hand, the companies-participants will not be able to hold a dialogue in the virtual exhibition in the usual format, but on the other hand, they will receive some cost savings associated with the organization of a visit to Gomel, flights. And as a result, "touch points can be found in the video conference mode as well. When the borders open, all markets will return to an active live dialogue"⁶².

⁵⁹ Zalesky, B.L. Economic Forum as a tool for the development of international relations in the region / B.L. Zalesky // Materials for the XV International Scientific Practical Conference, Ninovite insights into the European science - 2019, 15 - 22 juni 2019. Public administration. : Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG. - C. 11.

⁶⁰ Business contacts, craft festival and gastrofest online - the exhibition "Spring in Gomel" [Electronic resource] opened. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/delovye-kontakty-prazdnik-remesla-i-gastrofest-onlajn-otkrylas-vystavka-vesna-v-gomele-392199-2020/>.

⁶¹ The new format "Spring in Gomel" will allow exploring the potential of the region from anywhere in the world - Nightingale [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-format-vesny-v-gomele-pozvolit-iz-ljuboj-tochki-mira-izuchit-potentsial-regiona-solovej-392149-2020/>.

⁶² Online projects stimulate enterprises to strengthen their position on Internet sites - Filonova [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/onlajn-proekty-stimulirujut-predpriyatija-ukrepljat-pozitsii-na-internet-plattformah-filonova-392234-2020/>.

The exhibition, which opened at the end of May 2020, gathered more than 250 companies from 13 countries on its electronic platform, which presented their products in eleven different areas, including food industry, mechanical engineering, wood and metalworking, construction, mechanical engineering, chemical and petrochemical, light industry, banking, legal and insurance services. The project was also joined by 13 chambers of commerce and industry, six free economic zones of Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Serbia, as well as the Indian Chamber of International Business and the Croatian Chamber of Economy. At the same time, the virtual version of the exhibition included three main sites.

The first - "Business Spring" - offered webinars, presentations of products and services of enterprises and companies, online negotiations. In particular, there was a "round table" with representatives of chambers of commerce and industry and business unions of six countries and five webinars on topical business topics, attended by over 70 Belarusian and foreign enterprises and organizations. In addition, the first international online forum R2R (Region-to-Region) organized by the Samara Chamber of Commerce and Industry was held in parallel with these events. Over 50 representatives of exporting enterprises and chambers of commerce and industry from Belarus, Russia and other countries participated in the forum. An important detail of this event is that "in the course of negotiations it was decided that the Gomel Branch of the BelCCI would participate in the summer sessions of the forum with representatives of the regions of France, the Netherlands and Iran in July this year⁶³. The second venue, "Gomel Spring", became a place of creativity, where craftsmen demonstrated their works. In total 74 participants' business cards with contacts and links in social networks were placed here, as well as photos of creative works in ten directions: woodwork, children's toys, clothes, decor, ceramics, natural cosmetics, interior items, accessories, jewelry, farm food and ecological products. The third site - "Delicious Spring" - presented restaurants, cafes, bars and retailers. Their electronic business cards included information and photos of the interior and dishes, which demonstrated the atmosphere of each of the ten participants in this online gastrofest.

In addition, as part of the online exhibition, Gomel region presented dozens of investment projects so that potential investors anywhere in the world could easily get acquainted with the tempting proposals of the Belarusian region in the fields of industry, energy, construction, agriculture, chemical industry, woodworking,

⁶³ More than 250 companies from 13 countries participate in the exhibition "Spring in Gomel" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/boleee-250-kompanij-iz-13-stran-uchastvujut-v-virtualnoj-vystavke-vesna-v-gomele-393173-2020>.

tourism. "Among the proposed projects are the creation of an enterprise for processing wild products in the Pripyat Polesie region, as well as the shock freezing of fruits and vegetables, the construction of a workshop for processing pond fish, the opening of production facilities for bottling drinking and mineral water, mushroom and oyster mushroom cultivation, production of potato flakes⁶⁴. The interest of foreign investors may be aroused by other proposals: construction of a gypsum plant on the basis of "Brinevskoye" deposit in Petrikovsky district; creation of a mixed type grape snail farm and an enterprise for assembly of wind power plants in Gomel district; implementation of the project on production of electric energy from biogas in Svetlogorsky district; organization of production of fuel pellets from peat in Lelchitsky district, where 44 peat deposits with total reserves of about 170 million tons are concentrated.

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⁶⁴ From robots to the house on wheels: dozens of investment projects offer online Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ot-robotov-do-doma-na-kolesah-desjatki-investproektov-predlagaet-onlajn-gomelskaja-oblast-392685-2020/>.

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Free Economic Zone "Grodnoinvest": foreign investments as a factor of export development

One of the necessary conditions to ensure sustainable growth of the Belarusian economy in the current difficult situation of global instability is "improvement of the investment climate, increase in the inflow of direct foreign investments into the country's economy, development of infrastructure, including through the mechanism of public-private partnership, increasing the efficiency of investment activity"⁶⁵. The figures show how these tasks are being addressed in the Republic of Belarus in 2020. In the first quarter of this year, foreign investors invested almost three billion dollars in the real sector of the country's economy. "The main investors of Belarusian organizations were economic entities of Russia (35.7% of all incoming investments), Cyprus (15%) and Austria (8.4%). Foreign direct investment inflow amounted to \$2.1 billion, or 75.1% of all incoming foreign investments"⁶⁶. The time that has elapsed since the beginning of this year shows that there are many examples of successful investment tasks in Belarus that contribute to the socio-economic development of the country as a whole.

Among those who are now particularly active in the investment direction, we should mention the free economic zone "Grodnoinvest", the residents of which for the first three months of this year have attracted a record volume of foreign direct investment on a net basis - 59.8 million dollars - out of a total of 157 million dollars of foreign capital. "The main investor countries were Russia (over \$45 million), Austria (\$39 million) and the Netherlands (\$34 million). Investments came from 15 countries including UAE, Germany, USA and Great Britain"⁶⁷. In total for 18 years of its existence FEZ "Grodnoinvest" attracted more than \$ 900 million of foreign investments from forty countries, including Japan, Cyprus, Turkey, Canada, Poland.

The growing investment attractiveness of this production site, of course, could not appear in an empty place. To a great extent it can be explained by attention of FEZ administration to the issues of free economic zone infrastructure

⁶⁵ Zaleskiy, B. Point of growth. Peculiarities of sustainable development under the global challenges / B. Zaleskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. - - 132 c.

⁶⁶ Foreign investors invested \$2.8 billion in the economy of Belarus in the first quarter [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/inostrannye-investory-vlozhili-v-i-kvartale-v-ekonomiku-belarusi-28-mlrd-390601-2020/>.

⁶⁷ Residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" attracted a record volume of FDI on a net basis in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-v-i-kvartale-privlekli-rekordnyj-objem-pii-na-chistoj-osnove-389251-2020/>.

development. Such statistics is very eloquent: starting from 2015, about nine million Belarusian rubles was invested in their infrastructure from the Fund for the Development of Free Economic Zones. For example, a transformer substation was built on the site of the FEZ near Grodno, in the "Novaya Gozha" district, which provided power to new businesses of residents and created the necessary reserve for potential investors. In Lida, on the industrial site in the area of "Severny", the water supply, sewerage, communication and electricity networks were laid.

In Smorgon, at the expense of the same Fund for the Development of Free Economic Zones in 2019 began a large-scale project to reconstruct Industrial Avenue, which connects the city with the industrial site of the Free Economic Zones, where the production of such residents as the Kronospan Group, Smorgon Aggregate Plant, Europlastics Invest, Shinaka Furniture Bel are located. The project should result in a 4-lane highway with stop pavilions and small architectural forms, outdoor lighting, electricity and water supply, rainwater drainage and outdoor communication systems. All this is done for one purpose: "The new infrastructure will make the site more attractive for potential investors and participants of the Furniture Cluster in FEZ "Grodnoinvest"⁶⁸.

Here it is necessary to explain that today "in Grodno region an effective furniture cluster has been formed, which includes more than 20 enterprises for the production of packaging of wood products, wood boards, furniture and much more⁶⁹. It should be noted, however, that wood processing accounts for about half of all investments in FEZ. Therefore, one should be surprised by the fact that in 2019, residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" attracted \$436 million of investment, which accounted for a fourth of all free economic zones in Belarus. As a result, this one of the youngest Belarusian FEZs has become a leader in terms of attracted investments from foreign investors.

In turn, implemented investment projects contributed to the fact that residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" in 2019 increased exports of their products by eight percent and brought their volume to \$ 940 million. The majority of these supplies in the post-Soviet space went to Russia and Ukraine, while in the European Union - to Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia. "This made it possible to increase the

⁶⁸ FEZ "Grodnoinvest" has invested about Br9 million [Electronic resource] in infrastructure development for five years. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-grodnoinvest-zapjat-let-investirovala-v-razvitie-infrastruktury-okolo-br9-mln-387801-2020/>.

⁶⁹ In 2019 residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest attracted \$436 million of investments [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2019-godu-privlekli-436-mln-investitsij-385388-2020/>.

share of FEZ in the total volume of industrial exports of Grodno region to 42%. In general, the trade turnover of FEZ residents has exceeded one and a half billion dollars with a surplus of over 380 million dollars"⁷⁰.

This is the path to success: from attracting foreign investment to increasing export supplies.

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⁷⁰ Zalesskiy, B.L. Free economic zone "Grodnoinvest": point of growth - export / B.L. Zalesskiy // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Modern scientific potential - 2020", February 28 - March 7, 2020. History. Law. Economic sciences. Public administration. : Sheffield. Science and education LTD. -- C. 28–30.

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Brest Free Economic Zone: prospects are encouraging

In 2021 "Brest" free economic zone (FEZ) will celebrate its 25th anniversary. Today it is located on more than ten thousand hectares. Its borders include land plots located not only in Brest and the Brest district, but also in such cities as Baranovichi, Pinsk, Kobrin, Gantsevichi. As of mid-February 2020, over 70 residents from two dozen countries were registered here, including 47 - with the participation of foreign capital, where more than 21 thousand people are already working. In 2019, 107 million dollars of investments were attracted to the FEZ, and the volume of its residents' exports to 75 countries reached almost 730 million dollars. These positive trends continue in 2020, the first quarter of which saw foreign direct investment of almost \$50 million on a net basis in the FEZ, which is four times the target. The dynamics of FEZ development today is such that all the performance indicators of the previous year in 2020 here are only going to surpass. There are prerequisites for this. Thus, if in 2018, due to the opening of new businesses residents in FEZ created 721 jobs, and in 2019 - 890, in 2020 they are planned to open at least one thousand. With such development potential, five new residents with Polish and German capital come here at once, whose areas of activity are focused on light industry, woodworking, cosmetics, production of metal products, assemblies and units for automotive industry.

It should be noted that at the end of April 2020 FEZ "Brest" included two more land plots with total area of more than one hundred hectares, located in Ivatsevichi and Ivatsevichi district and intended for implementation of investment projects with foreign capital participation. Already in June 2020 a new FEZ resident was registered here - Polipol Furniture Bel LLC, which is part of the well-known European market holding Polipol Produktions Verwalfund GmbH, which has been producing upholstered furniture for 30 years. Its ten factories, which employ over seven thousand people, are located not only in Germany but also in other European countries. At the industrial site in Ivatsevichi, the new resident intends to build a workshop for the production of upholstered furniture and a number of other related facilities. "The project will be implemented for six years. During this time the company intends to invest more than 25 million euros in furniture production and create more than 1 thousand jobs. At the same time, 90% of the production will be exported"⁷¹. An important detail: LLC "Polipol Furniture Bel"

⁷¹ The new resident of FEZ "Brest" intends to invest more than 25 million euros in furniture production [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-brest-namaren-investirovat-v-proizvodstvo-mebeli-bolee-25-mln-evro-394124-2020/>.

has become the seventh company in the FEZ with German capital. On the whole, German entrepreneurs take the first place in terms of investment, as their share is more than a third in the total investment portfolio of the FEZ.

Other new residents come here with interesting projects. Thus, half a million euros is planned to invest in the organization of production of lumber - boards, timber, various building structures - an enterprise with the Belarusian capital "Savantdrev" LLC, registered as a FEZ resident in May 2020. At the production site near Krasnogvardeyskaya Street in Brest, it is planned to produce fuel pellets or pellets from wood waste, which are very popular in the European Union countries. That is why "Savantdrev" expects to supply up to 85% of its products to the foreign market⁷². A full-scale production cycle will begin here in 2021. The new enterprise will create at least 15 jobs.

In the same May 2020, Lady X, LLC was registered in the FEZ, which plans to place its production facilities on the unused areas of the Baranovichi Automatic Line Plant. The Belarusian company plans to "invest about €2 million in the project to produce collectible clothing. <...> When reaching the design capacity in 2024, the number of employees will reach 260 people". In addition, previously registered residents should start working in FEZ. In particular, "BTV-Agro" LLC has built the first mushroom growing complex for JLLC "Bonchet", which produces mushrooms. Jobs will also be created there. The issue of organization of automobile wiring and camper production in FEZ territory is being worked out⁷³.

The Italian industrial district, whose infrastructure is planned to be completed here in 2020, also has a contribution to make to meet the challenges of the LEZ. The idea of creating such a district in the industrial zone "Airport" was voiced about ten years ago, when a Memorandum of Understanding on the development of the industrial district in Brest voblast was adopted in June 2011 in Trieste, which provided for "creation of the most favorable conditions for attracting Italian investors and implementation of projects in Belarus"⁷⁴. Today not only Italians, but also any investor willing to organize and develop their business here, taking advantage of the free economic zone, can come to the territory of the district. Therefore, there are already two enterprises with investments from Germany, as

⁷² The new resident of FEZ "Brest" will take up woodworking [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-brest-zajmetsja-derevoobrabotkoj-392514-2020/>.

⁷³ In FEZ "Brest" it is planned to create 1 thousand jobs [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-sez-brest-planirujut-sozdat-1-tys-rabochih-mest-380116-2020/>.

⁷⁴ Zalessky, B. Belarus - Europe: partnership potential. Policy of multi-vector policy in the conditions of global challenges / B. Zalesskiy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2016. - - C. 43.

well as companies with Israeli, British, Polish and Russian capital. "In 2018 a new production of energy-saving elements for commercial refrigeration equipment was launched at the Airport site by the Italian-Belarusian company Friza Industrie. Today the joint venture has one of the highest export growth rates among the FEZ enterprises"⁷⁵. All these examples undoubtedly inspire optimism when assessing the prospects of the FEZ "Brest".

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⁷⁵ FEZ "Brest" is completing this year the creation of infrastructure in the Italian industrial district [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/regions/view/sez-brest-zavershaet-v-etom-godu-sozdanie-infrastruktury-v-italjjanskom-promyshlennom-okruge-380751-2020/>.

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Concern Bellegprom: export as a factor of development

Concern Bellegprom today unites 72 Belarusian enterprises of textile, clothing, knitwear and leather and footwear industries, "43 of them - with a share of state ownership. These are all major entities: 43 thousand out of 62 thousand people employed in the light industry work for the concern's enterprises"⁷⁶. Despite the current difficult economic conditions due to the global economic instability, the concern manages to preserve the image of Belarusian goods on the international arena, as the facts testify. In the first quarter of 2020, the concern's enterprises exported almost 60% of its output - almost \$110 million. At the same time, "light industry goods were supplied to 41 countries"⁷⁷. This made it possible to ensure a positive balance of trade in goods in the amount of about \$50 million.

The high rate of development of the export component in 2020 is demonstrated by the enterprises of the knitting industry, which are part of the Bellegprom concern. Thus, in the first three months of this year, their exports increased by almost ten percent to \$36.5 million. Such economic entities as JLLC "Conte Spa", JSC "Brest Stocking Mill", CJSC "Vesnyanka", JSC "BSF", JSC "Kupalinka", JSC "March 8", JSC "Bobruisktriccottage", JSC "Clothing Factory "Yunona", JSC "Moteks", JSC "Fashion Center", FE "Romgil-Tex" showed good growth. The increase in these exports is largely due to the expansion of their geography. From January to March 2020, Bellegprom's knitwear industry enterprises were shipped to 20 countries. At the same time, the positive dynamics was noted in sales markets in Russia, Germany, Moldova, Poland, Azerbaijan, Lithuania and Latvia. And for a number of countries, export volumes increased several times at once. "Knitted goods shipments to Kazakhstan increased 2.6 times, to Uzbekistan - 3.2 times <...>. Shipments of garments to Uzbekistan grew more than 9-fold, Kyrgyzstan more than 3-fold, and the UK 2.4-fold"⁷⁸.

It should be noted that the concern intends to further develop the export component with even more concentration of efforts, increasing supplies even along the vectors that were previously occupied. This is explained by the fact that

⁷⁶ Lugina, T. What projects our light industry can be proud of / T. Lugina // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/svoya-rubashka-blizhe-k-telu11.html>.

⁷⁷ Nemankova, Yu. Enterprises of "Bellegprom" exported 58.3% of production in the first quarter (in Russian) // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellegproma-v-i-kvartale-eksportirovali-583-produktsii-389618-2020/>.

⁷⁸ Export of Bellegprom's knitwear enterprises in the 1st quarter grew by 8.4% [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-trikotazhnyh-predpriyatij-bellegproma-v-i-kvartale-vyros-na-84-391971-2020>.

"the Asian presence in the EU markets is decreasing, so it is necessary to actively seek new partners, occupying the existing niches"⁷⁹. That is why Bellegprom today counts even on the growth of exports to the European Union and neighboring countries. In particular, it is planned to start supplying protective masks to Germany and Russia in the near future. At least, appropriate agreements with partners in these countries have already been reached, as well as "contracts with the Baranovich cotton production association and the Fashion Center" have been concluded⁸⁰. At the same time, one million protective articles are expected to be sent to Germany alone.

Of course, the implementation of a number of investment projects that will modernize existing production facilities and improve the quality of products should contribute to all this. In particular, the investment project on organization of production of cloth fabrics is carried out at JSC "Kamvol" - the only one in Belarus and the largest enterprise in the post-Soviet space with the finished production cycle, where pure wool and semi-wool suit and dress fabrics, pure wool, semi-wool, polyacrylonitrile knitted and woven yarn are produced. "In 2019 the enterprise has increased deliveries to Russia in 1,3 times, to Ukraine - in 1,5 times, to Uzbekistan - in 3,2, to Moldova - in 1,3 times, to Azerbaijan - in 16 times. In total, the company's products are exported to 17 countries"⁸¹. And in the first quarter of 2020, JSC "Kamvol" began to cooperate with several other major partners - distributors in Russia, Armenia and Uzbekistan. Plans to enter the American and Canadian markets are also being developed here. This is the topic of recent negotiations between specialists of the Belarusian enterprise and representatives of international trading houses Alliance Apparel Group Inc. from the USA and Les Entreprises Presidentielles Inc. from Canada, specializing in the production of clothing made of wool, cotton, linen fabrics, yarn and synthetic fibers.

Solid investments are also being made at the Orsha flax mill, where work is being done to organize in-depth processing of short flax fiber with the production of sanitary and medical products and to increase processing of this raw material by 30-40 percent. The task has been set to process the entire harvest of flax trunks in

⁷⁹ Bellegprom's textile companies are planning to look for new partners and increase exports to the EU [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tekstilnye-predpriyatija-bellegproma-planirujut-iskat-novyh-partnerov-i-naraschivat-eksport-v-es-391599-2020>.

⁸⁰ "Bellegprom plans to export protective masks to Russia and Germany [Electronic Resource] in May. - - 20120. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellegprom-planiruet-v-mae-eksportirovat-zaschitnye-maski-v-rossiju-i-germaniju-389972-2020/>

⁸¹ "Kamvol plans to enter the US and Canadian markets [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kamvol-planiruet-vyjti-na-rynki-ssha-i-kanady-389583-2020/>.

the country and sell for export finished goods made of flax, which, indeed, are popular abroad. Thus, a store of Belarusian flax products has recently opened in the Japanese capital, where the partners of Orsha flax mill joined the main task in their country at the moment - to preserve the health of the population. And "Belarusian linen fabric is used to produce protective masks, which are in demand among residents of Tokyo and other cities. Due to the natural properties of linen, masks made of this fabric are not only convenient, but also more comfortable for everyday wear"⁸². And this is not the only example that shows the tempting prospects of Belarusian exports in the light industry.

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⁸² Yesin, R. About Belarusian flax in Japan, search of new goods for export and strengthening of electronic trade (in Russian) / R. Yesin // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/esin-o-belorusskom-lne-v-japonii-poiske-novyh-tovarov-dlja-eksporta-i-usilenii-elektronnoj-torgovli-7276/>.

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Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: towards maximum realization of potential

June 2020 marked the fifteenth anniversary of the first trading on the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE), when the Belarusian UE "Bellesexport" and the Polish company International Paper Kwidzyn S.. A. concluded the first exchange transaction on sale of balance timber in the amount of \$ 189 thousand. In the past decade and a half "3.2 million deals for the total amount of \$21 billion were made here, while the volume of exports amounted to \$5.8 billion"⁸³. These figures show that by now the BUTB has become one of the largest commodity exchanges in Eastern Europe, the main function of which is to assist Belarusian companies to export their products and provide assistance to foreign companies to enter the Belarusian market. This fact also says a lot. The market pricing mechanism and the high concentration of supply and demand on this exchange platform have allowed Belarusian bidders to earn additional revenues and save \$1.5 billion since 2005. It should be reminded that today almost 24 thousand companies, including about five thousand non-residents from 63 countries, accredited to the BUTB, participate in electronic trading on five commodity items: 1) metal products; 2) timber products; 3) agricultural products; 4) industrial and consumer goods; 5) promising exchange commodities. At the same time, round timber, ferrous metal products, and oilseed meals are in particular demand in the domestic Belarusian market, while in foreign trade transactions, their participants prefer lumber and dairy products. These trends are characteristic for the development of BUTB in 2020 as well.

In particular, since the beginning of this year the amount of export exchange transactions with forest products has reached 90 million euros, and the geography of sales has covered 23 countries. At the same time, woodworking products worth more than seven million euros were sold at stock exchanges in May alone. Interestingly, the buyers were "companies from the Baltic States and Germany, while wood chips were divided among Polish, Lithuanian and Estonian traders"⁸⁴. Among the new promising markets in 2020, China was also clearly identified,

⁸³ Transactions worth \$21 billion have been concluded on BTB over 15 years [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sdelki-na-21-mlrd-zakljucheny-na-butb-za-15-let-393174-2020>.

⁸⁴ The woodworking products were sold for more than EUR 7 million at the export auction of BUTB [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/produktsiju-derevoobrabotki-bolee-chem-na-7-mln-evro-prodali-na-eksportnyh-torgah-butb-391644-2020/>.

where the last three trading sessions resulted in the sale of four million euros worth of sawdust.

A similar pattern is observed here for dairy products. Suffice it to say that for the first four months of this year the amount of exchange transactions only with raw cow's milk on BUTB was two and a half times higher than in 2019. Such high dynamics, to all appearances, is explained not only by the efficiency of the exchange mechanism itself, but also by attractive conditions created at the exchange for sellers and buyers of dairy raw materials. First of all, bidders - milk producers and processors - do not incur any serious costs, as accreditation, training and electronic digital signature on BUTB are free, and the exchange fee is only ten kopecks per transaction. Secondly, trading sessions here "are held via the Internet, which, given the current epidemiological situation, is a definite plus <...>. All this attracts new participants to the marketplace."⁸⁵.

Indeed, the coronavirus pandemic, which has already affected the economies of most countries on the planet, requires all market participants to find new forms of working with business partners in order to ultimately succeed. The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange is no exception in this respect. Thus, literally in May 2020, the first Belarusian-Canadian-British webinar or online seminar Timber: Doing Business in Belarus was held here, with more than forty participants from Canadian and British business circles. It should be noted that 63 companies from the UK and six from Canada have already been accredited to the BTB. The discussion held in the format of a videoconference on the specifics of exchange trade in forest products and the key advantages of the Belarusian exchange platform, including control over the execution of transactions, transparent pricing, the absence of intermediaries, the possibility of using trade finance instruments, led to the fact that "a number of British and Canadian companies have expressed interest in being accredited to the BTB to participate in exchange trading of lumber and chips"⁸⁶.

It should be noted that the format of the online seminar is used in BTB today and for training their promising business partners. To this end, the first training webinar for specialists of Uzbek Republican Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange was held here in May 2020, with which the BTB signed an agreement

⁸⁵ In January-April, 2.5 times more raw milk was sold through BTB than for the whole of 2019 [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-janvare-aprele-cherez-butb-prodali-v-25-raza-bolshe-syogo-moloka-chem-za-ves-2019-god-391283-2020/>.

⁸⁶ British and Canadian businesses are interested in purchasing Belarusian lumber at exchange trading [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/britanskij-i-kanadskij-biznes-zainteresovan-v-zakupke-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-na-birzhevnyh-torgah-391809-2020>.

on strategic cooperation back in September 2018. Thanks to this modern format of cooperation, Uzbek partners were able to get better acquainted not only with the structure and specifics of the Belarusian system of public procurement, but also with the opportunities for foreign suppliers of goods, works and services in procurement procedures. It should be assumed that the information received by the Uzbek side will not only contribute to the intensification of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in the field of electronic procurement, but also "will serve as a guide to action for Uzbek companies planning to operate in the Belarusian market"⁸⁷.

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⁸⁷ Belarus and Uzbekistan are developing cooperation in the field of electronic procurement [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-razvivajut-vzaimodejstvie-v-oblasti-elektronnyh-zakupok-390898-2020/>.

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