

For the purpose of sustainable development

Among the main priorities that are laid down in the program of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus until 2025 are named strong regions, which are understood as comfortable and safe living and working conditions, quality and affordable social infrastructure, high mobility, investments in new production and productive employment. At that, the regional development strategy implies the implementation of investment projects in the lagging regions - on the use of local resources and creation of new industries, and in the territories with preferential treatment - on the creation of high-tech export-oriented industries. It is clear that the more efficient are the jobs in the regions, the higher is the productivity there, the more attractive will be the life outside the capital. In this regard, the first task is to create the conditions for the emergence of enterprises with highly productive jobs and high wages in the regions. How are these issues already being addressed in practice? This is the subject of the proposed study.



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Collection of articles

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Cover image: www.ingimage.com

This book is a translation from the original published under ISBN 978-620-3-47207-3.

Publisher:

Scienza Scripts

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International Book Market Service Ltd., member of OmniScriptum Publishing Group

17 Meldrum Street, Beau Bassin 71504, Mauritius

Printed at: see last page

ISBN: 978-620-3-54933-1

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Focusing on long-term priorities

The Republic of Kazakhstan, chairing the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2021, guided by the long-term development priorities of this international organization, has outlined five key areas of its activities in the year of its presidency:

- 1) Give a new impetus to industrial cooperation in the form of joint ventures in industry, agro-industry and services;
- 2) eliminate remaining barriers in mutual trade between the member countries of this integration formation at the central, regional and municipal levels;
- 3) harness the potential of cross-border transport arteries and logistics hubs to build confidence across the Eurasian continent;
- 4) Make comprehensive digitalization the driving force of the development of the economies of the member states of the Union, giving a qualitative acceleration to the introduction of digital technologies in industry, agriculture, transport;
- 5) expand access to foreign markets, "actively develop trade and economic relations with third countries and integration associations¹.

The effective and full implementation of the Strategic directions of development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025, adopted by the heads of the EAEU member states at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in December 2020 and published in January 2021, is intended to facilitate the implementation of these tasks. This document contains 330 measures and mechanisms for the development of cooperation, grouped into 11 systemic blocks, the implementation of which should lead to the achievement of such results by 2025, such as:

¹ Appeal of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev to the heads of member states of the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/18-01-2021-1.aspx>

- 1) completion of the formation of a common market for goods, services, capital and labor;
- 2) increase the efficiency of regulation of the common market of the EAEU;
- 3) transfer to a qualitatively higher level of customs regulation and administration;
- 4) ensuring guarantees of quality and safety of goods;
- 5) formation of the EAEU digital space;
- 6) Creation of mechanisms for targeted promotion of economic development;
- 7) building a system of management of joint cooperative projects, development of high-performance sectors;
- 8) Stimulation of scientific and technological progress;
- 9) Increasing the efficiency of the EAEU institutions;
- 10) deployment of cooperation mechanisms in education, health, tourism and sports;
- 11) the establishment of the EAEU as one of the most significant centers of development of the modern world.

In order to implement these strategic directions, "it will be necessary to conclude 13 international treaties, adopt more than 60 normative legal acts, and make about 25 amendments and additions to the EEU Treaty and national legislation². It is assumed that all these measures will help to increase exports from the EAEU states to third countries by a quarter by 2025. This can be achieved if we follow the path of creating joint Eurasian companies to complement each other and produce competitive products. For now, "there are 17.5 thousand joint ventures in the EAEU with the union partners, including 2.4

2 Pivovar, E. Published the development strategy of Eurasian economic integration until 2025 / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/opublikovana-strategija-razvitija-razvitijskoj-ekonomicheskoj-integratsii-do-2025-goda-423997-2021/>

thousand in Belarus. The EAEU is interested in implementation of investment projects with the total estimated cost of about \$200 billion"³.

Another important segment of Eurasian integration is the implementation of digital projects, as the process of digital technology integration into all aspects of activities is a key condition for progress today. The Republic of Belarus is going to play a not insignificant role in the EAEU, where a sufficient infrastructure reserve for digital transformation has already been created and where the largest IT cluster in Eastern Europe - the High Tech Park - has been functioning for quite a long time. "In 2020, its exports exceeded \$2.5 billion, which is more than 20% of the total exports of services of Belarus"⁴

At the Digital Almaty Forum 2021 held in February 2021, the Belarusian side named the Eurasian Development Bank's "Travel without COVID" project among the joint digital projects on the territory of the EAEU that had been actually implemented for the benefit of the population. At the same time, the forum participants' attention was drawn to the fact that the other projects of the EAEU digital agenda are stalled. Few tangible results, including economic ones, have been achieved in three years. This is why the implementation of the Union's digital agenda has not yet led to the development of national segments. In this regard, it is now very important to set specific tasks, identify performers, develop clear rules for the information architecture, and synchronize the pace of work both in the EAEU member states and at the integration level, so that digitalization will bring the real economy, first and foremost, to a new level. In fact, this approach in this matter is demonstrated by Kazakhstan, which is chairing the EAEU in 2021. Suffice it to say that now among the priorities in the union is the project initiated by Kazakhstan to create wholesale distribution

3 Pivovar, E. Myasnikovich considers it necessary to develop industrial cooperation in high-tech industries in the EAEU / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-schitaet-neobhodimym-razvivat-v-eaes-promkooperatsiju-v-vysokotekhnologichnyh-otrasljah-427278-2021>

4_HTP exports in 2020 exceed \$2.5 billion - Golovchenko [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-pvt-v-2020-godu-prevysil-25-mlrd-golovchenko-427222-2021/>

centers, as well as the full-scale launch of the ecosystem of digital transport corridors, proposed by Belarus together with the union partners. In addition, one of the joint projects may become a "smart city," since all major cities in the EAEU have the same tasks to manage lighting, traffic flows, power, water and heat supply. According to the Belarusian side, "all these tasks can be solved with the help of multifunctional digital platforms.⁵ But this will require a lot of coordinated work to obtain a powerful synergistic effect.

Another important area of the Eurasian Economic Union's development over the next five years should be the intensification of economic cooperation with foreign countries and international organizations, which will allow coordinated work on the integration processes in the Eurasian space, including economic interaction "within the framework of the idea of the Greater Eurasian Partnership⁶. Recall that the idea proposed by the Russian side in 2015 of forming the Greater Eurasian Partnership is a network of dialogues between key players in Eurasia, not only among the largest national economies, but also regional economic associations connected by a flexible system of international legal norms, transport and logistics, energy, telecommunications and financial infrastructures, joint projects and institutions. This large-scale concept, which has already been called the most ambitious integration project of this century, implies the implementation of a number of basic principles that distinguish it from other Eurasian integration plans.

First of all, it does not pretend to compete with other regional integration structures, but only develops them for a future common Eurasian economic mechanism. The Greater Eurasian Partnership "does not act as a union of the

5 Belarus stands for the acceleration of digital projects in the EAEU - Golovchenko [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-vystupaet-za-uskorenie-realizatsii-tsifrovyyh-proektov-v-eaes-golovchenko>

6 Strategic directions for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025. - - M., 2020. - - C. 9.

Eurasian East against the European West⁷. The implementation of this project, the participants of which are already characterized by differences in the models of social, political and economic development, is not expected to impose a single set of values on anyone, but only to create the most comfortable conditions for all participants, not dividing them into leaders and outsiders, and providing a variety of flexible forms of connecting individual countries to the partnership. It is expected that the Greater Eurasian Partnership will affect not only the economy, but also other areas of interaction - science, education, culture and humanitarian field, and in parallel will contribute to the strengthening of food, energy and continental security, the solution of global problems such as climate change, the fight against pandemics, migration. Another distinctive feature of this project should be the principle of implementation from the bottom up, where it will be based on specific agreements between regional integration associations and individual countries. In particular, the planned pairing of the Eurasian Economic Union with the Chinese initiative "One Belt, One Road" fits harmoniously into this scheme. And not only that.

As early as the East Asia Summit in November 2020, it was stated that further development of various integration projects in the Asia-Pacific region will only contribute to strengthening economic cooperation. In this regard, such "regional and sub-regional associations as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization can cooperate in the interests of the entire region, harmoniously and effectively complement each other⁸.

7 Kortunov A. Eight principles of the Greater Eurasian Partnership / A. Kortunov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/vosem-printsipov-bolshogo-evraziyskogo-partnerstva/>

8 Asia has created the world's largest free trade zone [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/28129>

For its part, Kazakhstan, which is chairing the EAEU in 2021, declaring its approach to the consistent expansion of access to foreign markets and the active development of trade and economic relations with third countries and integration associations, has focused its attention not only on the systematic work to establish an equal, The EAEU has not only focused its attention on systematic work to establish an equal and pragmatic dialogue with the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), but also on the fact that "an effective strategy for cooperation with a new trade association - the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which accounts for a third of world trade"⁹ is to be developed.

Indeed, in mid-November 2020, at the ASEAN summit an agreement was signed on the formation of a potentially the world's largest free trade area type block between the ten countries of this association (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) and the five leading economies of Asia - Australia, China, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan. This agreement "brought together countries with a combined gross product approaching \$26 trillion (one-third of the world's GDP). (one-third of world GDP), <...> and the population exceeds 2.2 billion people" . It is clear that the development of mutually beneficial interaction with such a major partner on the world stage can be a powerful impetus for the EAEU to become one of the most significant centers of development in the modern world.

One of the Union's promising partners may also soon become the Sub-System of Economic Integration in Central America, formed back in October 1993. Its members include such countries of the region as Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and El Salvador. In February 2021, the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Secretariat for Economic

⁹ Appeal of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev to the heads of member states of the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/18-01-2021-1.aspx>

Integration in Central America (SIECA), which is the technical and administrative body of the Subsystem, signed a memorandum of understanding between the two organizations, aimed at intensifying trade and economic cooperation between the parties in areas such as mutual trade, technical regulation and standardization, industry and agro-industry, macroeconomics, to share experiences, develop recommendations, and develop a common approach to the economic development of the region. The EAEU believes that "Central American countries have great potential to increase cooperation. The signing of the memorandum is the first step to intensify trade and investment cooperation and, in the long term, to integrate into global value chains <...>. Since 2015 the mutual trade turnover has grown by 22.6%"¹⁰. In order to implement the provisions of the memorandum, the parties will soon form a joint working group.

Another country of the Americas, with which the EAEU will significantly intensify cooperation in 2021, is Cuba, with which a memorandum of understanding was concluded back in 2018 and which was granted observer status with the EAEU in December 2020 at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council. Many facts indicate that the level of development of trade and economic cooperation between the parties to the memorandum has serious potential for growth. In particular, "at the end of 2019, trade turnover between the EAEU and Cuba was \$214, 7 million, including exports - \$197.1 million and imports - \$17.6 million. In 2018, a record level of trade turnover between the EAEU and Cuba was recorded since 2010 - \$417.5 million"¹¹.

Continuing the topic of the bilateral format of EAEU international cooperation, we should note that in pursuit of the objectives set by the Strategic directions of Eurasian economic integration until 2025, the Eurasian Economic

10 Pivovarov, E. EEC and the Secretariat for Economic Integration in Central America signed a memorandum / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eeek-i-sekretariat-po-ekonomicheskoy-integratsii-v-tsentralnoj-amerike-podpisali-memorandum-430366-2021>

11 Pivovarov, E. Cuba appointed a representative in the Eurasian Economic Commission / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kuba-naznachila-predstavitelja-v-evrazijskoj-ekonomicheskoy-komissii-427078-2021/>

Commission is now conducting the necessary work to conclude agreements to create free trade zones with a number of other countries as well. In Asia, among the states interested in developing full-scale cooperation with the EAEU is Iran, with which an interim agreement leading to the formation of a free trade zone was signed in May 2018 and entered into force in October 2019. In December 2020, the heads of the EAEU member states decided to start negotiations on a free trade zone agreement with Iran by October 2022. Already in February 2021, participants in these negotiations focused their attention on transport and logistics projects that could "have a positive impact both on the growth of trade turnover between the EEU countries and Iran, and on increasing the level of transport connectivity of the entire large Eurasian region"¹².

In 2021, the EAEU intends to establish cooperation between business circles and significantly strengthen trade and economic ties with such South Asian country as Bangladesh. A memorandum on cooperation with Bangladesh was signed in 2019. The fact that the Bangladeshi economy "has shown significant growth over the past ten years, the average GDP growth is 8% per year, and even during the pandemic, the growth was 5.6%"¹³ shows a sufficiently high potential for the development of partnerships. And now it is important to determine where the parties have a mutual interest and where trade diversification can be achieved. In addition, studies have already begun on the prospects of forming free trade zones with Indonesia and Mongolia. And in the first half of 2021 the negotiation process "with Africa's largest economy - Egypt, as well as with India" resumes¹⁴.

12 Chairman of the EEC Board Mikhail Myasnikovich held a meeting with Mohammad Beger Galifab, Chairman of the Majlis of the Islamic Council of Iran [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/09-02-2021-01.aspx>

13 Possibilities of intensifying trade and economic cooperation between Bangladesh and the EAEU were discussed in the EEC [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/29-01-2021-3.aspx>

14 Pivovarov, E. EAEC intends to create free trade zones with Egypt, India, Indonesia and Mongolia / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eaes-nameren-sozdat-zony-svobodnoj-torgovli-s-egiptom-indiej-indonezije-i-mongolije-426578-2021/>

The EAEU is also expected to step up its activities in the entire post-Soviet space, as evidenced by the signing in February 2021 of the Action Plan for 2021-2022 to implement the memorandum on deepening cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which provides for joint projects and events, including those involving the business community. Recall that the memorandum, signed in 2018, provides for cooperation between the EAEU and the CIS "in the areas of customs regulation, traceability and marking of goods with identification means, state procurement, consumer protection, digital economy, tax policy and administration, foreign trade, competition policy and antitrust regulation, as well as sanitary, veterinary and phytosanitary quarantine measures"¹⁵. As for the bilateral relations, Uzbekistan's proposal to jointly build the Trans-Afghan railroad is of great interest to the EAEU. This is explained by the fact that "in 2020 the volume of railway transit through the states of the Union in the direction from Asia to Europe and back has increased by more than 60%, the efficiency of transportation has increased significantly. This indicates the prospects of this direction and the need for concerted efforts"¹⁶. In other words, contributing to the formation of the concept of transport connectivity in Greater Eurasia, the implementation of this project will allow both the EAEU member states and Uzbekistan to increase both the competitiveness of their businesses and the efficiency of trade, as well as create new jobs. This is the focus on long-term priorities in the Eurasian Economic Union.

15 EEC and CIS Executive Committee signed a cooperation plan for 2021-2022 [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/05-02-2021-07.aspx>

16 Pivovar, E. EEU will consider the initiative of Uzbekistan on the construction of Trans-Afghan railroad / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eaes-rassmotrit-initsiativu-uzbekistana-o-stroitelstve-transafganskoj-zheleznnoj-dorogi-431104-2021/>

Projects of the future are laid today

The Program of activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2025 sets a task to reach the level of innovative development of the leading countries in the region of Eastern Europe in five years. For this purpose, it is planned to create new points of growth of the Belarusian economy, including through the implementation of complex "projects of the future" - "new innovative projects in the areas: electrical industry, electric transport, bioindustry, pharmaceuticals, robotics, instrumentation, production of composite materials".¹⁷The project is also based on the development of a line of prototypes of fundamentally new equipment for Belarus and the organization of mass production on their basis.

Note that the solution to this problem must and will be based on certain experience from previous years. All the more so, there is something to build upon. Suffice it to say that over the last five years Belarus has increased production of innovative products by one and a half times, up to almost seven and a half billion dollars. The "share of exports of science-intensive and high-tech products increased from 30% in 2015 to 38% in 2020, the share of innovatively active organizations increased from 19.6% to 26%¹⁸. In addition, the country has already created a network of 17 technoparks, which cover all Belarusian regions and become the centers of attraction of innovative industries and developments.

The residents of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", where 68 companies from 14 countries were registered at the end of 2020, have great hopes in this regard. An important detail: 12 residents already belong

¹⁷ Program of activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2025. - Minsk, 2020. - - C. 25.

¹⁸ Belarus has increased the production of innovative products in five years by 1.5 times [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-za-pjat-let-uvlichila-proizvodstvo-innovatsionnoj-produktsii-v-15-raza-415135-2020/>

specifically to the sphere of science, innovation, new, absolutely unique developments. One such business entity is the innovative Chinese-Belarusian enterprise "Aviation Technologies and Complexes," whose products were presented at the Great Stone in December 2020 - unmanned aerial vehicles of multirotor and aircraft type, as well as multipurpose unmanned aerial complexes of hybrid type. It is no secret that the demand for such equipment in the world right now is very high. That is why the manufacturing company has already reached an agreement with the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry "to assist in the active promotion of Belarusian equipment and technologies in the field of remote control in foreign markets"¹⁹. Such innovative products, we can be sure, will not have any delays in sales in the near and far abroad. Another promising resident appeared here in December 2020 - the company "Solidpipe System", which will implement a project in the field of new materials related to the production and application of innovative protective coatings on components for equipment used in the mining industry. The point is that "this technology is unique for Belarus and the countries of the Eurasian region. The start of production is scheduled for 2021"²⁰

The Sino-Belarusian Center for Cooperation in Science and Technology, which will open here in December 2020, is intended to promote the development of innovative production in the Great Stone Industrial Park, where research laboratories, areas for incubation and acceleration of startups, a testing and small-scale production center, and a hall for demonstration of scientific and technological achievements will be located. It is noteworthy that "among those who will work in the opened center is the Chinese-Belarusian Innovation Center of Industrial Technologies, which was created by the National Academy of

19 In the "Great Stone" presented the company "Aviation Technologies and Complexes" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-prezentovali-kompaniju-aviatsionnye-tehnologii-i-kompleksy-421952-2020/>

20 The Great Stone resident implements a project in the field of new materials [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezident-velikogo-kamnja-realizuet-proekt-v-sfere-novyh-materialov-420268-2020/>

Sciences of Belarus and the Academy of Sciences of Guangdong province (PRC). In the first quarter of 2021, the Spark program will start working here, which will help develop research projects of the two countries²¹²²

As a whole, in 2021, the priority areas of work at the Great Stone include support for the implementation of resident investment projects, as well as the development of a high-quality development program for the industrial park and a feasibility study for facilities of its second phase, which provides for "further expansion of production sectors to attract investment, actively promoting the creation of a regional research cooperation platform"²³. To be more specific, during implementation of the second stage of the development of "Great Stone" and development of the area of almost one thousand hectares it is "planned to create a smart city - eco-friendly, with non-standard solutions, the introduction of advanced innovations in the field of telecommunications, information, mobile, pilotless technologies, artificial intelligence, quantum computing"²⁴. All these facts indicate that the plans associated with the Great Stone Industrial Park, as an innovative "project of the future," are quite real, specific and feasible, which is especially important in the current difficult conditions for the development of the Belarusian economy.

Strong regions, defined as "comfortable and safe living and working conditions, quality and accessible social infrastructure, high mobility, investments in new production and productive employment," are also among the main priorities of

21 The Sino-Belarusian center of cooperation in the field of scientific and technological achievements is opened in the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajsko-belorusskij-tsentri-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-dostizhenij-otkryt-v-421475-2020/>

22 Construction of the international exhibition center began in the "Great Stone" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/stroitelstvo-mezhdunarodnogo-vystavochnogo-tsentra-nachalos-v-velikom-kamne-421518-2020/>

23 Yan, G. Will Chinese business continue to invest in Belarus / G. Yan // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/prodolzhit-li-kitajskij-biznes-investirovat-v-belarus-jan-gan-o-novyh-tsentrakh-prijazhenija-7602/>

24 Declared investments of Great Stone residents are estimated at more than \$1.2 billion [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zajavlennye-investitsii-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-otsenivajutsja-v-bolee-chem-12-mlrd-421491-2020/>

the socio-economic development program of the Republic of Belarus until 2025²⁵. At the same time, the strategy of regional development implies the implementation of investment projects in the lagging regions - to use local resources and create new industries, and in the territories with preferential treatment - to create high-tech export-oriented industries. It is clear that the more efficient are the jobs in the regions, the higher is the productivity there, the more attractive will be life itself outside of the capital. In this regard, "the first task is to create conditions for the emergence in the regions of enterprises with highly productive jobs, with a certain level of wages²⁶²⁷. This is evidenced by concrete facts.

Suffice it to say that as of January 1, 2021 440 economic entities were registered as residents in the FEZ. And now projects involving investments from more than 30 countries totaling about seven billion dollars are being implemented there. Only in 2020, 43 new residents were attracted to Belarus' FEZ, about half of them with foreign capital, with a total volume of declared investments of about two hundred million dollars. And according to other indicators, the dynamics of these territorial complexes can not but please. "Compared with 2019, there has been an increase in foreign direct investment on a net basis by 1.5 times (up to \$307 million), industrial production and sales revenues by 10% <...>, exports of goods by 2.2% (up to \$5.9 billion). Depending on the FEZ residents formed up to 85% of investments, up to half of the export of goods and a third of the volume of industrial production of the regions" ²⁸

25 Main provisions of the draft program of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/osnovnye-polozheniya-proekta-programmy-sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo-razvitiya-respubliki-belarus-na-202.html>

26 GDP growth and regional development - Minister of Economy about plans for the five-year period [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rost-vvp-i-razvitiye-regionov-ministr-ekonomiki-o-planah-na-pyatiletku-428671-2021/>

27 Zalesky, B. With an Emphasis on Cooperation. Chronicle of International Cooperation in the Post-Soviet Space / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. - - C. 104.

28 Residents of free economic zones in 2020 formed almost 5% of GDP of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-svobodnyh-ekonomicheskikh-zon-v-2020-godu-sformirovali-pochti-5-vvp-belarusi-428975-2021>

So, only in the FEZ "Gomel-Raton", where at the beginning of 2021 there were 70 economic entities, including 32 companies with foreign capital from 16 countries of the world, acting as residents, almost 110 million dollars of direct foreign investment was attracted for implementation of investment projects in 2020, which was almost half of total investment volume in the region. And this has given the appropriate result. FEZ residents sold most of their products outside of Belarus. The volume of those supplies exceeded one billion dollars. All in all the goods were delivered to the markets of 63 countries of the world. "The largest share in the export goes to Russia (48.1%), Ukraine (18.6%), Poland (7.8%), China (6.1%), Lithuania (6.6%) <...>. The foreign trade turnover of goods in 2020 was \$1.7 billion"²⁹ with a surplus of more than \$600 million. At the same time in 2020 in the FEZ opened more than 700 new jobs, and the total number of people employed here today is almost thirty thousand people.

Residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest", which forms about 40 percent of total exports of Grodno region, have also achieved a trade surplus of \$438 million in 2020. This is due to the supply of wood and paper products, furniture, food, as well as machinery and equipment, computer, electronic and optical equipment, electrical equipment, vehicles, finished metal and textile products, chemical products and fertilizers. In total, products of FEZ residents were exported to 65 countries in 2020. Even to such rather exotic countries as Zimbabwe, Peru, and Somalia. But Russia, Poland and Ukraine remained the main markets. Nevertheless, "in 2020, there was a significant increase in supplies of Belarusian products to the United States (growth rate - 337%), the United Arab Emirates (229%), Estonia (210%), Egypt (209%), Canada ³⁰(194%), and the Netherlands (185%) . It is also characteristic that supplies to the European Union increased to

29 Residents of FEZ Gomel-Raton increased production by 13.1% in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-uvelichili-objem-proizvodstva-produktsii-na-131-v-2020-godu-429328-2021/>

30 Residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" exported products to 65 countries in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2020-godu-eksportirovali-produktsiju-v-65-stran-429156-2021>

almost \$200 million, accounting for one fifth of all exports of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents.

In the FEZ "Minsk" residents' exports increased by 11% to nearly \$1.5 billion in 2020, while the inflow of foreign direct investment on a net basis increased 3.7-fold - to \$68 million. In addition, in 2020, here, "a little more than 1 thousand people were hired for additional jobs.³¹, and in the future it is planned to implement projects in mechanical engineering, instrumentation and green technology, so that by 2025 to create in the FEZ about four thousand more highly productive jobs.

FEZ "Vitebsk" is also one of the real tools of economic development of the Vitebsk region in an innovative way. Today 56 investment projects are being implemented here in 16 sectors with the participation of investors from 15 countries, including Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia, Poland, Great Britain, the United States, Israel, Cyprus and Estonia. In 2020, they exported their products for more than 550 million dollars, which amounted to almost one third of the volume of deliveries to foreign markets of the entire Vitebsk region. This made it possible to obtain a positive balance of foreign trade: goods - more than 177 million dollars, services - more than 13 million dollars. "At the same time FEZ "Vitebsk" is the only free economic zone in the field of services with the excess of exports over imports. The total amount of services rendered to foreign partners was \$24.4 million³².

These high indicators would not have been possible without the reliance on an active investment policy, which is characteristic of this FEZ. Suffice it to say that in 2020, the inflow of foreign direct investment here increased by another 16 percent and exceeded 30 million dollars. Thanks to this, 235 new

31_Exports by residents of FEZ Minsk in 2020 amounted to almost \$1.5 billion [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-rezidentov-sez-minsk-v-2020-godu-sostavil-pochti-15-mlrd-429290-2021/>

32 Residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" in 2020 increased production by 17% [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-v-2020-godu-uvlechili-objem-proizvodstva-produktsii-na-17-429730-2021>

jobs were created here, more than one and a half times the level declared in the business plans. An important detail: in 2020, six new businesses have registered in the FEZ as residents, with a total volume of declared investments - more than 35 million dollars, which will create here at least another hundred jobs. Five of them are companies with foreign capital. "Businessmen from Russia, Canada, Ireland and Azerbaijan intend to realize projects on organization of production of food cans, protection means and products of special purpose, match straws, to build photovoltaic stations for energy supply of residents' activity, and also to establish production of plastic lubricants of wide operation temperature range"³³.

Three more enterprises received the status of FEZ resident in two incomplete months of 2021. The first of them in the beginning of January was LLC "STS-Beton" with an investment project on development of building materials production. The new resident specializing in the production of cement and concrete, plans to expand the range and master the production of new products for the construction industry after purchasing new equipment. "This will allow to increase volume indicators, as well as to enter new markets, including exporting products."³⁴.

In the middle of January the FEZ registered Hidropress LLC with a project to develop the production of special hydraulic presses. The company operating in Polotsk and specializing in the development and production of special hydraulic presses for enterprises of general engineering, railroad, military-industrial complex, plans to update the machine park, replenish it with new machines, which will give the opportunity to master the production of new types of products of its own design. "Among the novelties will be the equipment for the production of pipeline fittings for oil and gas industry, as well as a large

33 Vityaz JSC is recognized as the best resident of FEZ Vitebsk by the results of 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/oao-vitjaz-priznano-luchshim-rezidentom-sez-vitebsk-po-itogam-2020-goda-429541-2021/>

34 The new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will develop the production of construction materials [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-vitebsk-budet-razvivat-proizvodstvo-stroitelnyh-materialov-422919-2021/>

hydroforming press, which is in demand for the production of shells for the rocket and space industry. Besides, production of the equipment for utilization of 200-liter barrels from fuel and lubricants in field conditions will develop further³⁵. It is commonly known that the environmental problem related to the 200-liter barrels is typical of the Arctic zone. That is why its solution will allow the new FEZ resident to almost completely export its products.

In mid-February, a private enterprise "New Century Spring" appeared in the FEZ with a project to modernize import-substituting production of components for agricultural machinery. The new resident is an associate member of the Russian association Rosspetsmash, which unites manufacturers of agricultural, construction and road machinery, trailers and semi-trailers. The investment project to be implemented in the free economic zone will make it possible to increase the total output 1.5 times, expand the assortment of manufactured teeth springs, tensile and compression springs for machine building enterprises, as well as create additional opportunities for diversifying exports and increasing supplies to foreign markets. And this despite the fact that today this company already exports more than half of its production to partners from Russia.

In addition, "as promising for registration in the FEZ "Vitebsk" are considered two more investment projects to create a wood processing park and organization of the enterprise for the production of bio-coal, which investors from China and Sweden are interested in implementing"³⁶. For these and other promising projects to be successful, the FEZ is taking active steps to develop additional energy facilities, a water supply facility and the construction of railroad access roads on the territory of the Zhurzhevo sector on the outskirts of

35 The new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will develop the production of special hydraulic press equipment [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-vitebsk-budet-razvivat-proizvodstvo-spetsialnogo-gidropressovogo-oborudovanija-424231-2021/>

36 The new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will develop the production of components for agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-vitebsk-budet-razvivat-proizvodstvo-komplektujuschih-dlja-selhozmashin-429288-2021/>

Vitebsk, where "the development of the engineering and transport infrastructure of the site will allow to attract at least \$165 million in foreign investment and organize around 1,000 jobs for projects already implemented or in preparation for registration in the current [2021] year"³⁷. It should be assumed that the implementation of all these plans will mean that FEZ "Vitebsk" will reach a qualitatively new level of innovative development.

Another important mechanism for implementation of the innovation development strategy in Belarus should be the implementation of investment projects on creation of 13 clusters and technoparks on unused and inefficiently used production areas of state enterprises. As a reminder, a technopark is understood today as a form of territorial integration of science, education and production in the form of an association of scientific organizations, design and engineering offices, educational institutions, production enterprises or their subdivisions. In other words, "the purpose of creating a technopark is to concentrate specialists of common activity profile on one territory. Scientists can conduct research there, teach in educational institutions and participate in the process of implementation of the results of their research into life"³⁸. Organizations acquiring the status of a technopark resident receive additional opportunities for development in the form of tax and rent privileges, use of special equipment and production facilities of technoparks, legal and business consulting services.

In Belarus, the first project "to create a science and technology park was implemented in Mogilev. The founders of CJSC "Mogilev Technology Park" are the city and regional executive committees, as well as universities of the city"³⁹. Its registration took place in March 2011. Today the network of innovation

37>About Br40 mln is planned to be invested in the construction of infrastructure facilities of FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/okolo-br40-mln-planiruetsja-investirovat-v-stroitelstvo-objektov-infrastruktury-sez-vitebsk-429858-2021>

38 Xiaojuan, L. Formation of Belarusian model of technopark development / L. Xiaojuan // Economics and Banking. - - 2018. - - №2. - - C. 54.

39 Pinyagin, Y. Technoparks as an Element of the Country's Innovation Infrastructure / Y. Pinyagin, L. Xiaojuan // Bankauskii Vestnik. - - 2016. - - №12. - - C. 52.

infrastructure already covers all regional centers, as well as Novopolotsk, Pinsk, Gorki, Borisov and Lyakhovichi districts, and includes 17 technology parks, 7 technology transfer centers and the Belarusian Innovation Fund. An important detail: residents of Belarusian technology parks over the past five years has increased production in six times - up to nearly 200 million Belarusian rubles in 2020. At the same time, "the number of residents of technoparks during this period has increased 2.2 times, and the total number of their employees - 2.7 times. In 2016-2020, 2566 jobs were created in technoparks, with a plan of 1536"⁴⁰. The main areas of activity of residents of Belarusian technoparks today are such as instrumentation and mechanical engineering, electronics, information technology and software development, medicine, pharmaceuticals and production of medical equipment, as well as "optics, laser technology, energy, energy conservation, bio- and nanotechnology"⁴¹. And good results have already been achieved in a number of these areas.

Thus, at the beginning of 2021 there were 61 residents registered in the technoparks of Belarusian universities. The volume of products produced in them in 2020 exceeded 17 million Belarusian rubles, including innovative products - more than 10 million rubles. The peculiarity of these technoparks is that each of them is included in the educational process and each has its own specialization, depending on the region of location and scientific focus. "In particular, the technopark "Unitehprom BSU" specializes in the production of veterinary drugs and pharmaceuticals, the scientific-technical park BNTU "Polytechnic" on the creation and manufacture of medical devices"⁴² innovative production in the light industry. In addition, in the Vitebsk region "a medical-

40 Residents of Belarusian technoparks for 5 years increased production by 6 times [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-belorusskih-tehnoparkov-za-5-let-uvelichili-vypusk-produktsii-v-6-raz-428037-2021/>

41 Subjects of innovation infrastructure of the Republic of Belarus / ed. by A.G. Shumilin. - Minsk: GU "BellSA", 2018. - - C. 3.

42 Technoparks of Belarusian universities produced products worth Br 17 million in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tehnoparki-vuzov-belarusi-za-2020-god-proizveli-produktsii-na-br17-mln-425772-2021/>

pharmaceutical cluster on the basis of 10 organizations, including two universities and a technopark, was formed. The core of the cluster is Vitebsk Medical University, where specialists in pharmaceuticals are trained. And this is a model for the future⁴³.

Another interesting example is the science and technology park of the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, the total profit of its residents "in 2020 has increased 2.5 times - to more than Br 800 thousand⁴⁴. And it was only in 2018 that an unused building of one of Grodno's enterprises on Gospodarča Street was reconstructed for this technopark. Soon 14 companies became its residents, half of which were founded by university students and professors. Now the construction works on its second phase are being completed in the technopark. For this purpose the former industrial enterprise workshop building of over six thousand square meters has been rearranged and office and production premises with all the infrastructure necessary for the work of the innovative enterprise have been placed there. It is noteworthy that part of this space has already been reserved by companies working in the field of electric transport, bioengineering and energy efficiency. And this indicates good prospects for the development of not only the technopark, but also the region where it is located.

43 Report of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus Roman Golovchenko at the VI All-Belarusian People's Assembly "On the policy of economic growth" [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9740>

44 Opinion: creation of technoparks on unused spaces - an example of advanced development of the regions [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mnenie-sozdanie-tehnoparkov-na-neispolzuemyh-ploschadjah-primer-operezhajuschego-razvitiija-regionov-428389-2021>

Food export plans Tense but achievable

The Republic of Belarus has approved the state program "Agrarian Business" for 2021-2025. It envisages achieving goals such as increasing the competitiveness of agricultural products and foods, developing environmentally safe agriculture, ensuring good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle for the population, and "increasing export potential"⁴⁵. The program contains nine subprograms relating to such areas as: 1) crop farming; 2) seed farming; 3) livestock farming; 4) breeding; 5) fish farming; 6) reclamation; 7) engineering flood control measures to protect agricultural land; 8) ensuring general conditions for the functioning of the agro-industrial complex; 9) support for small farms. Subject to their successful implementation, "it is projected to increase exports of food products and agricultural raw materials in 2025 by 21.3 percent by 2020 (up to \$7 billion)"⁴⁶. This is quite realistic to achieve, provided that the raw material base of agricultural production is strengthened, existing industries are modernized and new competitive industries are developed, the digitalization of industries and subsectors of the agro-industrial complex is increased and the breeding and genetics for the needs of sustainable agriculture are developed. And the immediate task for 2021 is "to increase exports of agricultural products by 4.3 percent compared to 2020. This will amount to a little over \$6 billion"⁴⁷.

Belarusian exporters intend to move forward in this direction, relying on several basic priorities. First, it is important to maintain the gains achieved in

45 Food security and increasing exports - identified areas of agrarian business development [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prodbezopasnost-i-naraschivanie-eksporta-opredeleny-napravlenija-razvitiya-agrarnogo-biznesa-427294-2021/>

46 State program "Agrarian business" for 2021-2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=C22100059&p1=1&p5=0>

47 Belarus expects to increase agricultural exports to \$7 billion in 2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-v-2025-godu-narastiti-eksport-selhozproduktsii-do-7-mlrd-427628-2021/>

traditional markets, which include Russia and Kazakhstan. Suffice it to say that the share of the Russian market in Belarusian exports of agricultural products in 2020 was almost three-quarters of the total volume. Secondly, it is necessary to actively develop food supplies to the Chinese market, which in 2020 alone almost doubled due to the export of beef, poultry meat, powdered milk, dried milk whey, ice cream, cheese, butter, as well as sugar, starch, potato chips and fish products. And this is far from the limit.

Third, special attention should be paid to the diversification of sales markets, developing exports to other countries of the world as well. It should be noted that in 2020 Belarusian agricultural products and food products were supplied to 116 countries of the world. At the same time, 20 new markets were opened. "They include Kuwait (started to supply flour confectionery and candy), Nepal (protein substrates), Algeria and Madagascar (flour), Congo (corn seeds), Mali (corn grits), Morocco (beet pulp), Namibia (milk powder), Somalia (sugar), Sierra Leone (egg processing products), Equatorial Guinea (poultry), South Sudan (whole milk powder). The list also includes Paraguay, St. Lucia, Djibouti, Ireland, Cyprus, Malta, Portugal, Croatia⁴⁸ agricultural exports in 2020 increased to \$796 million and is already almost 14 percent.

All in all, in 2020, food exports from Belarus increased by 4.3 percent and exceeded \$5.8 billion. This allowed our country, for example, to gain a foothold in the top five global exporters of a number of dairy products - butter, cheese, powdered milk, whey. The Belarusian side seeks "not to export raw materials, but to process grain, milk and meat in the country and supply high value added products abroad so that these goods get on the shelves of stores and buyers form a strong loyal opinion about Belarusian goods⁴⁹

48 Belarus in 2020 begins supplying agricultural products to 20 new markets [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-2020-godu-nachala-postavki-selhozproduktov-na-20-novyh-rynkov-427631-2021/>

49 Exports of Belarusian agricultural products in 2020 grew by 4.3% [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduktov-v-2020-godu-vyros-na-43-427620-2021>

A good example of such an approach to the development and consolidation of its position in foreign markets is demonstrated, in particular, by Rogachev INC. The main trends of the enterprise's foreign economic development in 2020 were: increase of supplies to the already developed markets - Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Ukraine, Israel, USA, as well as entry to new markets - UAE, Singapore, South Korea and Afghanistan. This also happened because in 2020 "the range of products supplied to the foreign markets was expanded, where consumers appreciated the condensed milk with the addition of cocoa, coffee and chicory".⁵⁰The company's products were sold to foreign markets in 2020, where consumers appreciate condensed milk with cocoa, coffee and chicory.

Another interesting example in this context is the Turovsky Dairy Plant, which "now accounts for 80% of its production for foreign consumers. Deliveries to other countries brought the company almost \$87 million - 20% more than in 2019⁵¹. In total, dairy products from Turow in 2020 were supplied to 16 countries. Mongolia, Turkmenistan, and Iraq became new markets. In 2021 the plant plans to increase export volumes by more than a quarter. These plans are based on the active re-equipment of the enterprise. In 2020, the plant increased its cream cheese production capacity, installed whey processing and thickening lines. In 2021, the cheese extraction line is planned to be modernized.

50 Rogachev ICC expanded exports in 2020 through deliveries to new markets in four countries [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rogachevskij-mkk-v-2020-godu-rasshiril-eksport-za-schet-postavok-na-novye-rynki-chetyreh-stran-427607-2021>

51 Turovsky Dairy Plant in 2020 produced one-third more cheese and generated \$110 million in revenues [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turovskij-molochnyj-kombinat-v-2020-godu-proizvel-na-tret-bolshe-syrov-i-vyruchil-110-mln-427862-2021/>

Peculiarities of multi-vector partnership of the stock exchange

Deepening integration with the Russian Federation in the next five years will remain the most important task of the Belarusian government in terms of the development of foreign economic activities and international cooperation. To this end, it provides for the implementation of plans of joint activities by sectors of the economy, as well as "on trade, economic, scientific, technical and socio-cultural cooperation with the regions of the Russian Federation"⁵². And today many market participants in our country take active measures to actualize activity in this direction. Among them is the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE), for which the Russian vector of interaction has a serious potential.

Recall that as of December 1, 2020, 2482 residents of Russia used the services of the BUTB. And this despite the fact that at the same time "24815 companies were accredited here, including 4904 companies from 63 countries"⁵³. But the experience of interaction with Russian partners in 2020 showed that even in the regions bordering Belarus - Smolensk, Bryansk, and Pskov regions - they do not yet fully understand the opportunities that this e-commerce mechanism offers. When this perception changes for the better, the result is not long in coming. A good example in this context is the record export sales in January 2021 at BUTB Cement, which increased tenfold at once, to \$5.3 million. This growth was "due to the increased attention to the exchange by Russian trading and construction companies <...>. After Ukraine introduced an anti-dumping duty and effectively closed its market to Belarusian cement,

52 Program of activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2025. - Minsk, 2020. -- C. 44.

53 Zalessky, B.L. Prospective Mechanism of Electronic Commerce on the Way to Maximum Realization of Potential / B.L. Zalessky // Socio-Humanitarian Studies. -- 2020. -- №5. -- C. 20.

Russia became a priority⁵⁴. And now at least eight Russian companies regularly take part in these cement export auctions at BUTB.

Perhaps for this reason, too, with the arrival of 2021, the BUTB has seriously stepped up its activities in the Russian direction. For example, in February they reached an agreement with the Trade Representation of the Russian Federation in Belarus on joint actions to increase trade turnover between Belarusian and Russian regions. For this purpose it is supposed to use the business contacts of the trade mission to inform the Russian business about the possibilities of the Belarusian-Turkish Trade Mission as an effective platform for trade and purchase activities. Besides, the parties will combine their efforts in organizing and holding events aimed at stepping up cooperation between Belarusian and Russian business entities to make the BUOTB a primary entry point into the Belarusian market for all Russian business representatives. After all, registration on this trading floor "automatically opens access to 25 thousand companies from 64 countries, which, by the way, is actively used by foreign participants. A recent example is a company from the Kaliningrad Region, which sold rapeseed oil worth over 1 million euros through our trading platform. The buyer was a Lithuanian company"⁵⁵. Indeed, this work on expanding business contacts with Russian regions is already beginning to yield results. During only one week in February 2021 eight companies from Russia were accredited at the BUTB. This proves that strengthening of cooperation with Russian regions has really become one of the priority tasks of the BUTB this year, and a variety of interaction tools are used for its solution.

54 Cement exports through the BUTB in January increased 10-fold [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-tsementa-cherez-butb-v-janvare-vyros-v-10-raz-428027-2021/>

55 BUTB and the Trade Mission of the Russian Federation intend to promote an increase in trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-torgovoe-predstavitelstvo-rf-namereny-sodejstvovat-uvlicheniju-tovarooborota-428409-2021/>

Thus, in the first decade of February 2021, the possibilities to increase mutual trade turnover between Belarus and Udmurtia were discussed at an online conference with the participation of representatives of the government of this Russian region. It should be noted that in 2020, "the trade turnover between Belarus and Udmurtia amounted to \$184.5 million, or 112.5% of the level of 2019⁵⁶. During the discussion the parties agreed that even these relatively good indicators can be significantly improved by the implementation of the exchange trade, which can become an effective tool to increase the volume and expand the range of goods demanded in the Belarusian and Udmurt markets. If we take the part that for the last several years Udmurtia has become one of the most export-oriented regions of Russia and today ranks first in the neighboring country by the growth rate of non-energy export, then we can be sure that in the nearest future representatives of Udmurt business will become permanent participants of trading at BUTB.

In the second decade of February 2021 an online conference dedicated to the expansion of cooperation between the BUTB and the business community of the Volgograd region was held. The participants of this discussion noted the steady trend observed since the end of 2020 to increase the number of exchange trade residents from Russia. It is not only export of Belarusian goods to the Russian market and purchase of Russian products by Belarusian companies, but also more frequent "transit transactions between companies from Russia and third countries. That is, the exchange is used as a tool for insuring foreign trade risks⁵⁷. And this, of course, expands its opportunities in terms of attracting business partners, among which, we believe, there will soon appear many more representatives of Volgograd Region's business.

56 Belarus and Udmurtia intend to increase trade turnover through more active use of exchange trade [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-udmurtija-namereny-uvelichit-tovarooborot-za-schet-bolee-aktivnogo-ispolzovanija-birzhevoj-427781-2021/>
57 BUTB expects to expand cooperation with the business community of the Volgograd region [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasschityvaet-na-rasshirenie-sotrudnichestva-s-delovymi-krugami-volgogradskoj-oblasti-429055-2021/>

While developing partnership relations with the regions of the Russian Federation, the BUOTB at the same time plans to seriously expand cooperation with the business community of European countries in 2021 due to the huge and unrealized potential in this vector of partnership. This can be judged on the basis of the trading in January 2021, which resulted in the 27% growth of saw-timbers export through the BUUTB, exceeding 30 million dollars. At the same time, "the main markets were Germany, Latvia and Lithuania. Companies from these countries purchased Belarusian lumber products for a total of \$24.4 million⁵⁸. Representatives of such European countries as Great Britain, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia and Estonia were also among the largest buyers of this type of products, with which wooden billets for export were in the highest demand. Suffice it to say that during the first exchange trading on the BUTB in 2021 over one and a half million wooden utility poles worth more than one million euros were sold to the United Kingdom alone, which immediately exceeded the amount of exports to this country in 2020. An important detail: previously these products were supplied to the British market in much smaller quantities and mainly through intermediaries in the Baltic States. The results of this January trading session clearly confirmed the high export potential of timber products made in our country, as well as the trend observed last year, when "the amount of exchange transactions for exports of rounded and debarked wood products in 2020 amounted to 4.2 million euros. The main markets were Germany, Latvia Lithuania and Poland"⁵⁹ .

Planning to expand the geography of sales of the same wood products in the European vector in 2021, the BUTB is already working on the possibility of exporting Belarusian lumber, for example, to France. Thus, in February 2021

58 In January lumber exports through the BUTB increased by 27% [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-janvare-eksport-pilomaterialov-cherez-butb-vyros-na-27-429846-2021/>

59_A British company bought more than 1 million euros worth of wood products through the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/britanskaja-kompanija-kupila-cherez-butb-produktsiju-derevoobrabotki-bolee-chem-na-1-mln-evro-424714-2021/>

they outlined the prospects of using the mechanism of exchange trading with the French importer of timber - Bois Import SA. The fact is that this company has been buying lumber, including Belarusian lumber, from the Baltic countries for a long time. However, the coronavirus pandemic made adjustments to this arrangement, forcing to look for alternative markets. So Belarus came to the attention of French buyers, where about half of all manufactured lumber - about two million cubic meters - is already sold for export through the mechanism of exchange trading. It is clear that this opens up a lot of opportunities for importers from France. Especially since the French company was also invited "not to limit itself to lumber, but to consider buying other wood products as well, including wood pellets. Six new pellet plants were built and put into operation in Belarus in 2020. Six more are planned for construction this year [2021]⁶⁰. As a result, the annual volume of exports from Belarus could reach about 250 thousand tons of pellets.

The fact that the possibility of sales of Belarusian fuel pellets or pellets through BUTB in 2021 to European countries may seriously increase can be judged by the interest of European businessmen in the online conference Nordic Pellets Conference 2021, organized by the Swedish bioenergy association Svebio in late January 2021. The event brought together leading bioenergy experts and biofuel producers from Denmark, France, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. They were brought to this conference by the fact that today in the European Union there is a steady growth in demand for pellets. This, in turn, contributes not only to the increase of own production capacity of European producers, but also imports of such products from other countries, including Belarus. At the same time, BUTB is confident that "given the low capacity of the domestic market, almost the entire volume of pellets produced in Belarus can be supplied abroad, which will make our country one of

60 BUTB is working on the possibility of exporting Belarusian lumber to France [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-prorabatyvvaet-vozmozhnost-eksporta-beloruskih-pilomaterialov-vo-frantsiju-430040-2021>

the largest exporters in the region⁶¹. After all, the use of the BUTB platform by European companies will allow them to buy any required volume of products directly from Belarusian producers, both under one-time and annual contracts. The demand for this type of e-commerce is evidenced by the statistics of 2020, when only lumber was sold for 260 million dollars, and companies from 30 countries were the buyers.

Vegetable oils and fodder additives are another type of product in demand in European countries, exports of which increased 2.3-fold in 10 months of 2020 and reached \$26 million, accounting for more than 40 percent of exports of agricultural products through the BUTB. "Increased demand for Belarusian vegetable oils in the Baltic States contributed to the growth of export supplies: oilseeds products worth \$14.7 million were sold there, with Lithuania being the leader in purchases with \$6.2 million in transactions."⁶² At the same time in just a month and a half beet pulp and molasses were sold through the BUTB for almost two million dollars, the main buyers of which were again the countries of the European Union. Finally, in January 2021, the export of rapeseed oil through the BUOTB grew almost tenfold, "reaching \$8.4 million"⁶³. And here the leaders in terms of the amount of transactions are Latvia, Estonia and Switzerland. The very dynamics of growth in sales in the European direction suggests that the opportunities to expand Belarusian exports in this foreign track are far from exhausted.

Finally, another priority for the development of the BUTB in 2021 is to increase the share in the exchange turnover of companies from the "far arc"

61 BUTB is ready to promote exports of fuel pellets to Northern Europe [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-gotova-sodejstvovat-eksportu-toplivnyh-granul-v-severniju-evropu-426052-2021/>.

62 Vegetable oils and feed additives accounted for more than 40% of agricultural exports through the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rastitelnye-masla-i-kormovye-dobavki-obespechili-bolee-40-eksporta-selhozproduksii-cherez-butb-415013-2020/>

63 Rapeseed oil exports through the BUTB in January increased almost tenfold [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rapsovo-go-masla-cherez-butb-v-janvare-vyros-pochti-v-10-raz-426697-2021/>

countries - Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America. This can be explained by the significant potential that exists in the interaction with these partners, and the successful implementation of which promises considerable benefits to both Belarusian exporters and foreign importers. First of all, the People's Republic of China should be mentioned among the countries of the "far arc", the development of business contacts with representatives of which is particularly intense at the BUTB today. Suffice it to say that "at the end of the first two months [of 2021], China outperformed almost all of the major markets that Belarus is currently trading with in terms of the volume of exchange transactions⁶⁴.

In this context, it is quite significant that at the beginning of March 2021 the 5,000th foreign company accredited for participation in trading on the BUOTB was the Chinese trading and manufacturing company Wenzhou Ruijun Steel Co. Ltd, which in addition became the 36th company from China on the exchange. The enterprise is going to use this exchange platform to supply Belarus with rolled steel and other ferrous metal products. At the initial stage it will be sales of pipes, and then, depending on the dynamics of sales and market conditions, the range of products will be gradually expanded. Probably, approximately as it happens at the BUTB with woodworking products.

We would like to remind you that special trading sessions on selling lumber for export with delivery in containers to the destination on the Chinese market have been held at BUTB since December 2020. "As a result, the volume of supplies of domestic lumber products to China has increased significantly and in January-February amounted to almost \$5 million in monetary terms. This is largely contributed by the fact that almost every month two or three new Chinese companies are added to the bidding for timber products on the BUTB.

64_The 5,000th non-resident company accredited on the BUTB [Electronic Resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovalas-5-tysjachnaja-kompanija-nerезident-431246-2021/>

This⁶⁵ has a positive effect on forming a highly competitive environment here and allows timber processors from Belarus to sell lumber on more favorable terms. In particular, during the first exchange trade of timber products for the Chinese market in January 2021 over 11 thousand cubic meters of sawn timber was sold for about two and a half million dollars. Due to the price increase during the trading session, the exporters from Belarus received additional proceeds of more than \$90 thousand. And "the entire volume of the lumber for sale was purchased with delivery to Qingdao - the largest seaport in Shandong province. This increases the attractiveness of Belarusian goods for Chinese buyers, while domestic exporters get an opportunity to expand the geography of sales and increase revenues⁶⁶

It is also important in terms of development of the Chinese vector on the BUTB is the fact that in 2021 there started export deals on such perspective for Chinese buyers items as rapeseed oil, milk powder and sugar. As for rapeseed oil, immediately after the start of its delivery to the Chinese market through the exchange platform, according to the results of the first two trading sessions, the deals were made to the total amount of about one and a half million dollars. This allowed China to take the second place in terms of the amount of transactions with these products, displacing the leaders of the year 2020 - Latvia, Estonia and Switzerland. At the same time there were prerequisites for a further significant increase in other export indicators. "First of all it is the growth of the number of companies from China accredited at the exchange.⁶⁷, which contributes to an increase in the level of competition during the bidding.

65_Belarusian lumber worth \$2.6 million sold to China through BUTB [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskie-pilomaterialy-na-26-mln-prodany-v-kitaj-cherез-butb-431434-2021/>

66_Belarusian lumber worth \$2.4 million sold to China in exchange trades [Electronic resource]. -- 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskie-pilomaterialy-na-24-mln-prodany-v-kitaj-na-birzhevyyh-torgah-425850-2021/>

67_Rapeseed oil exports through the BUTB in January increased almost tenfold [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rapsovoogo-masla-cherез-butb-v-janvare-vyros-pochti-v-10-raz-426697-2021/>

In January 2021 the first batch of dried milk was also sold to the Chinese market through the BUTB. "Two lots with the volume of 300 and 100 tons were put up for trading. The total amount of transactions made at the end of the trading session amounted to \$ 940 thousand"⁶⁸. This happened after world food prices began to rise in the second half of 2020, which greatly increased the attractiveness of Belarusian dairy products not only in China, but also in other countries of the "far arc. This is evidenced, in particular, by the return of one of the world's largest agro-traders, the Singaporean company Olam International, to the BUTB at the end of 2020. And it shows that the prospects for the export of dairy products from Belarus to the Asian continent through the mechanism of exchange trade are very significant today.

Egypt is another "far-abroad" country, whose representatives are beginning to work actively on the BUTB. In early March 2021, Egyptian company Sama Al-Jazeera for Import and Export made its first deal to export Belarusian products to that North African country by purchasing a trial batch of Belarusian lumber. The company's strategic goal is "to become the largest importer of Belarusian timber products to Egypt and other North African countries in the future. The first step in this direction has already been taken"⁶⁹. Its next step in cooperation with BUTB may become the role of a stockbroker on this electronic trading platform. And then the market of almost the entire African continent may give new colors to Belarusian producers-exporters. With the help of such an export mechanism as the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange.

68 A shipment of milk powder sold to China for the first time through the exchange [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/partiju-suhogo-moloka-vpervye-prodali-v-kitaj-cherez-birzhu-424904-2021/>

69 The first deal with a company from Egypt was made on the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervuju-sdelku-s-kompaniej-iz-egipta-sovershili-na-butb-431073-2021>

For sustainable regional development

With the arrival of 2021, the implementation period of the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020, which is an important tool for the development of interaction between the European Union and partner states in Eastern Europe to ensure integrated and sustainable regional ties, came to an end. Recall that this program, and the first program period was implemented back in 2004-2006, "for the past 17 years supports the development processes in the border areas of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine through the co-financing of a variety of projects"⁷⁰. All projects are non-profit and contribute to improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of the eastern provinces of Poland, as well as some western regions of Belarus and Ukraine. More precisely, this program applies to the following areas in the three countries: Poland - Krosno, Przemysl, Rzeszow, Tarnobrzanski, Chelmsko-Zamoyski, Pulawski, Lubelski, Biala, Ostrolecko-Siedlcki, Lomzynski, Bialystok and Suwalski poviets; Belarus - Grodno, Brest, Minsk, Gomel regions and the city of Minsk; Ukraine - Lviv, Volyn, Transcarpathian, Rivne, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk regions. Under the four thematic objectives of this program - "Heritage", "Accessibility", "Security" and "Borders" - three types of projects were implemented in 2014-2020: large infrastructure, regular and microprojects. In 2020 alone, 139 projects were underway at once, 12 of which were completed.

In particular, 85 kilometers of local roads connecting cities and villages were built or reconstructed under the "Accessibility" thematic objective, and repairs were carried out in the Grodno and Brest regions, the Lublin, Mazovia, and Podkarpackie voivodeships, as well as in the Lviv and Volyn regions. Just in January 2021, two new traffic circles were opened in the Polish city of Biala Podlaska, built in accordance with the project "Improvement of transport

70 Program [Electronic resource]. - -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.pbu2020.eu/by/pages/135>

accessibility in Brest and Biala Podlaska". And the Brest Road Maintenance Company under the same project "reconstructed seven intersections in Brest, equipping them with an adaptive traffic control system. Subsequently, an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) was developed, which reduces travel time by regulating the mode of traffic"⁷¹ . To be absolutely precise, we are talking about the installation of "smart traffic lights" and embedding sensors in the roadway, which transmit information to special controllers, at the intersections in Brest of Moskovskaya Street with Partizanskaya and Respublika avenues, Gavrilova and Pionerskaya streets, as well as Warsaw highway with October Revolution, Krasnoznamenskaya and Makhnovicha streets.

As for the thematic objective "Borders", the main result of the joint work were two additional control lanes and new pavilions for customs and passport control at the border crossing "Kuznica Bialostocka - Bruzgi". "These activities were among other parallel tasks increasing the efficiency of the border. As a result of the completion of these two projects, throughput has increased by almost 76%, which significantly speeds up border controls."⁷² . In addition, a number of other projects were implemented by the customs authorities of the countries participating in the programme. First, a major infrastructure project called "Construction of an X-ray scanning vehicle control system at the road BCP Berestovitsa", which involved the construction of an inspection and examination complex, "including an X-ray scanning system, a protective building for it and a building for staff, engineering systems, training of experts for work, organization of rapid inspection of vehicles, sharing experiences of using scanners with Polish partners"⁷³ . And several regular projects, including "Improving Customs Control at the Domachevo Road Checkpoint" and "Strengthening the Capacity of the Canine Service of the Customs Offices of the

71 New traffic circles in Biala Podlaska [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.pbu2020.eu/by/news/1961>

72 Results of 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.pbu2020.eu/by/news/1952>

73 Program of Cross-Border Cooperation Poland - Belarus - Ukraine for 2014-2020. [Electronic resource]. - - 2014. - URL: <https://www.customs.gov.by/ru/2014-2020-ru/>

Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Poland. The first of them, aimed at increasing the security of the Belarusian-Polish border and improving the quality of customs control operations, involved the installation of weighing equipment, which resulted in reduced time for such operations and accelerated crossing capacity at the border. The second project, aimed at preventing the illegal movement of illegal drugs, psychotropic substances and tobacco products and preventing illegal migration, involved the purchase of six vehicles equipped with cages for the transport of working dogs for the Grodno and Brest customs offices and the Minsk-2 customs office.

All these facts show that the completed Cross-Border Cooperation Program "Poland - Belarus - Ukraine" for 2014-2020 helped its participants to solve a lot of specific issues of interaction between the border regions. Apparently, the same pragmatic approach will be incorporated in the new cross-border program for 2021-2027, which is already being actively discussed by the parties concerned. In particular, Belarusian Brest and Polish Biala Podlaska are working on the possibility of implementing joint projects in three areas at once: the possibility of converting public transport to electric transport, projects on energy conservation, energy and thermal rehabilitation of social facilities, as well as "treatment and further use of rainwater"⁷⁴.

74_Brest and Biala Podlaska are working on joint projects in green economy [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brest-i-bjala-podljaska-prorabatyvajut-sovmestnye-proekty-v-zelenoj-ekonomike-424871-2021>

For the purpose of sustainable energy of settlements

In the Republic of Belarus today there is a significant increase in work at the local level on sustainable energy development and adaptation to climate change. Suffice it to say that 53 Belarusian cities have already declared their readiness to join the Covenant of Mayors on climate and energy, a major European initiative for cooperation in the field of climate change, which appeared in 2008, and "as of 2020, more than 10,000 cities and communities with a population of about 320 million people have joined it"⁷⁵. Recall that by signing this agreement, "local governments make a voluntary commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 30% by 2030"⁷⁶. It is clear that each city is approaching the goal in its own way.

For example, in the Belarusian city of Kostyukovichi, Mogilev region, in August 2020 they implemented the project "Construction of a photovoltaic system. Decentralized power supply of the gymnasium from the environmental point of view. It was initiated and financed by partners from the German twin city Ditzbach, with which Kostyukovichi cooperate in various fields: education, health, sports, culture, tourism, ecology. As part of the already mentioned project "135 photovoltaic panels with a total capacity of 35.8 kW were installed on the roof of the gymnasium. There is also a monitoring system to track electricity generation, collecting and storing data on the operation of the plant for at least a year for each day, month"⁷⁷. A new solar power plant (SPP), which began operation in 2020 near the village of Asmolovichi, Mstislav

75 Arikas, D. European cities' initiatives on energy and climate / D. Arikas, M. Gratz, E. Ferrer, A. Chumakova, N. Andreenko. - Baltic Environmental Forum Germany, 2019. - - C. 4.

76_More than 50 Belarusian cities are ready to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-50-belorusskih-gorodov-gotovy-vzjat-na-sebja-objazatelstva-po-snizheniju-vybrosov-parnikovyh-424013-2021/>

77 A photovoltaic power plant will be built on the roof of a gymnasium in Kostyukovichi [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://climate.ecopartnerstvo.by/ru/news/664>

District, is also located there, in the Mogilev Region. Here, 4,752 solar panels were installed on an area of about four hectares. "The nominal capacity of each of the panels is 335 watts. As a result, the cumulative installed capacity of the new solar power plant was 1.6 MW"⁷⁸. In addition, the highest wind power plant in Belarus with a height of 142 meters was also erected in the area of Asmolovichi in 2020.

Note that the presence of these environmentally-oriented facilities in the Mstislavl district is not a coincidence. The city of Mstislavl itself signed the Covenant of Mayors on Climate and Energy in 2017. Since then, a wide variety of events have been held here that promote a culture of energy conservation and the responsibility of the younger generation for the state of the environment. In particular, in the summer of 2020, as part of the organized Energy Days, everyone could take part in the online marathon of the Sustainable Development Goals "EcoMy Mstislavl". Its participants posted their materials related to energy saving, ecology, and sustainable development of the region on the global network. In pre-school institutions and recreation camps of the raion there were interactive lessons "How to Live Ecologically on Earth", a competition "Share with Us" was held, and film screenings of "Energy Saving Schools" were organized - about modern ways and methods of saving and conserving energy at home, at school and at work. Environmental campaigns were held at schools in the district: "We Cleaned Up Here! How about you?". Near the gymnasium in Mstislavl, an alley "Education for a Sustainable Tomorrow" was planted with young thuas, next to which were signs with information about each of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Energy Days ended with the Mstislavskoe Ring bicycle ride, which was held for the third time and gathered about a hundred participants of different ages from all over the district. These facts show that by participating in all these events, the inhabitants of the

78 A new solar power plant started operating in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://climate.ecopartnerstvo.by/ru/news/664>

Mstislav region could be convinced by their own example that the main objective of the Covenant of Mayors Climate and Energy initiative is sustainable energy development at the local level and taking concrete measures for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and that "residents have an important role in the work of the district to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, who can make a valuable contribution to the common cause by their personal behavior"⁷⁹.

Another effective tool that is also actively used in Covenant of Mayors cities is the European Mobility Week, an international campaign aimed at greening urban transport systems, changing people's transport behavior, and using public spaces more intelligently, which traditionally takes place annually from September 16 to 22, culminating in "Car Free Day". This week's events typically involve more than 50 countries around the world. The 2020 theme, "Emission-Free Movement for All," focused on "reducing greenhouse gas emissions and making emission-free infrastructure and transportation accessible to all categories of citizens"⁸⁰. The popularity of this theme in our country is evidenced by the fact that a record number of Belarusian cities - more than 80 - joined this campaign in 2020. Thus, only in Minsk, during this week, organized a bicycle race, offered free travel for motorists on public transport, as well as opened the first eco-route of cyclists in Belarus, which connected the three environmental trails of the Belarusian capital - "Bird City," "Silver Log" and "Chizhovka. Its special feature was "the possibility of cycling and bird watching".⁸¹, as well as familiarization along the route with information boards about local birds.

79 Mstislavl for an environmentally friendly way of life! And the Energy Days confirm it [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://climate.ecopartnerstvo.by/ru/news/616>

80 __European Mobility Week [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://rosavtotransport.ru/ru/activities/european-mobility-week/>

81_A new eco-route, a bike ride and free fare - what the European Mobility Week will be like in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-ekomarshrut-veloprobeg-i-besplatnyj-proezd-kakoj-budet-evropejskaja-nedelja-mobilnosti-v-minske-406811-2020/>

The priority of the partnership is agriculture

The results of 2020 show that in the relationship between Belarus and Kazakhstan, the key area of cooperation was the interaction of agro-industrial complexes, the implementation of joint projects in agriculture, and the further development of joint projects in the field of agricultural engineering. This is largely due to the fact that even in conditions of restrictions related to the spread of coronavirus infection, the agro-industrial complex of both countries continued to grow in 2020. This is evidenced by the data of the Eurasian Economic Commission that "the production of agricultural products in the territory of the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2020 grew by 2.3% and amounted to 114.3 billion US dollars. Kazakhstan (by 5.6%) and Belarus (by 4.9%) recorded the highest production growth among the EAEU countries⁸².

Positive trends in the growth of interaction between the two countries in the agro-industrial complex were also recorded at the second meeting of the joint Belarusian-Kazakh working group on the development of promising areas of bilateral cooperation in agriculture, which was held in Minsk in February 2021. The meeting focused on the issues of trade in foodstuffs, crop and livestock production, veterinary medicine, breeding and selection, given the fact that "in 2020, trade turnover of agricultural products and food between Belarus and Kazakhstan increased 1.2 times against 2019 and reached \$ 307.2 million. Export was amounted to \$ 289.9 million (more than 20% growth)⁸³. The parties noted the serious potential for further stable growth of trade turnover and consolidation of positive trends in mutual trade.

82 On the meeting of the Ambassador of Belarus with the Minister of Agriculture of Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c66dcb28873a0b75.html>

83 _Export of Belarusian agricultural products to Kazakhstan in 2020 increased by more than 20% [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduktii-v-kazahstan-v-2020-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-na-20-430100-2021>

From the Belarusian side, these prospects are seen in the supply of equipment for the construction of dairy farms, introduction of new technologies, expansion of procurement of agricultural equipment, retraining of personnel for the agro-industrial complex. Kazakhstan is particularly interested in the Belarusian experience in the development of the dairy and sugar industries, as well as in other areas of agricultural production. The nature of this interest lies in the fact that "the coronavirus has shown how much demand there is for all agricultural products now. New niches are opening up"⁸⁴.

In particular, the parties are pinning great hopes in 2021 on the continuation of cooperation between the Belarusian Gomselmash OJSC and Kazakhstan's largest company for the production of agricultural machinery, AgromashHolding KZ, which in 2020 increased its output by 1.7 times. The joint assembly of grain harvesters by these enterprises on Kazakh soil began back in 2007. "In 2019, the organization produced 429 harvesters and tractors, and in 2020 - 730 units of equipment"⁸⁵. Including the first harvester ESSIL KZS-790, which has already passed tests in the Karaganda region and showed good results. The new machine has increased engine power and cleaning area, and the threshing is combined: drum and rotor. In 2021 it is planned to start serial production of this model. In addition, the production of self-propelled mowers will also increase, which is explained by the growing demand for them among farmers of Kazakhstan. Recall also that back in the summer of 2020, more than 70 machine sets of the model KZS-10 MAX were sent from Gomel to Kazakhstan. "The innovations introduced on this model of harvester, relating mainly to more comfortable work of machine operators, liked the agrarians of

84 Kazakhstan is interested in the Belarusian experience in the development of the dairy and sugar industries [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kazakhstan-zainteresovan-v-belorusskom-opyte-razvitiija-molochnoj-i-saharnoj-otraslej-430102-2021>

85 "Gomselmash and AgromashHolding KZ will expand the range of agricultural equipment in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-i-agromashholding-kz-rasshirjat-linejku-agrotehniki-v-2021-godu-424825-2021/>

Kazakhstan. This prompted them to order another 30 such harvesters."⁸⁶ . And in the second half of December 2020, this additional batch of 30 sets of machines was sent to the Kazakh partners.

Among the events that should have a positive impact on the development of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan in agriculture in 2021, let us mention a few more. First, an interesting result can be given by the idea, which in November 2020 was discussed at the meeting of the Belarus-Kazakhstan Business Council, which was attended by representatives of more than 160 enterprises of the two countries. Given the fact that one of the most important issues in the development of relations between the two former Soviet republics is holding exhibitions, "Belarus and Kazakhstan are considering the possibility of holding an agricultural exhibition Belagro in Kazakhstan"⁸⁷. This could be another concrete step towards enhancing bilateral cooperation and increasing mutual trade turnover. Second, back in November 2020, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) offered Kazakhstani companies to buy Belarusian meat and dairy products and sugar on the exchange trades. At the same time, BUTB could provide assistance to Kazakh companies in selling their products on the Belarusian market. As a follow-up to this proposal, in January 2021, the FTUB agreed to intensify cooperation in electronic trade with the "Astana" Universal Commodity Exchange, which "will create a single database with commercial offers of Belarusian and Kazakh companies and will facilitate the growth of mutual trade"⁸⁸.

86 "Gomselmash additionally shipped 30 KZS-10 MAX machine sets to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-dopolnitelno-otguzil-v-kazahstan-30-mashinokomplektov-kzs-10-max-421382-2020/>

87 Utyupin: the possibility of holding the exhibition "Belagro" in Kazakhstan is being considered [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/utyupin-rassmatrivaetsja-vozmozhnost-provedenija-vystavki-belagro-v-kazahstane-417045-2020/>

88 BUTB and Kazakhstan's Astana Exchange intend to develop cooperation in the field of electronic commerce [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kazahstanskaja-birzha-astana-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-elektronnoj-torgovli-425206-2021>

From legal agreements to to concrete projects

The eighth meeting of the joint intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan was held in early March 2021 in Tashkent. It discussed issues related to the development of trade and economic, investment and cooperation ties, the strengthening of relations in the scientific, educational and socio-humanitarian spheres, interregional cooperation, information technology, and tourism. Recall that diplomatic relations between the two former Soviet republics were established in January 1993. In 2020, the Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover grew by another 17 percent and exceeded 280 million dollars with the share of supplies from Belarus - more than 237 million dollars. "The main items of Belarusian exports last [2020] were trucks, tractors and truck tractors, meat and meat products, sugar and dairy products, medicines, vaccines, blood serums"⁸⁹. Noting these positive trends, the parties at the meeting of the intergovernmental commission nevertheless focused their attention on those issues, the solution of which would help to bring bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level. One of the urgent priorities was to expand the legal framework of the Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation, which had totaled more than 70 agreements by March 2021. The eighth meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission contributed to its further expansion.

In particular, the agreement on cooperation, which defines the main directions of interaction for the next five years, was signed in Tashkent by the National Metrology Institutes of Belarus and Uzbekistan. The document deals with the close partnership of the parties in the development and implementation of programs to create national and working standards. "Another direction is participation in the development of interstate documents on the uniformity of

⁸⁹ Belarus aims to further develop bilateral relations with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9736>

measurements to solve the problems of harmonization of national legislation and the development of common principles of activity in this area"⁹⁰ . In addition, the program of cooperation for 2021-2023 was adopted by the State Committee for Standardization of Belarus and the Agency "Uzstandart", which planned to conduct comparisons of state standards, calibration of measurement standards and working instruments, as well as participation of laboratories in proficiency testing programs. All of this, together with the planned establishment of a permanent group, should help to resolve issues related to technical barriers to trade between the two countries. Another important perspective aspect of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in this area is that the Eurasian Economic Union currently has a draft agreement on the procedure and conditions for removing technical barriers in mutual trade with third countries in a high degree of readiness. In this regard, the Belarusian Gosstandart "is working on the possibility and makes a proactive proposal that the first pilot project on this agreement after its entry into force will be implemented with Uzbekistan"⁹¹

Ten more documents on cooperation were signed in early March 2021 by the higher education institutions of the two countries. They added to the already very extensive legal base of interaction between educational institutions and scientific organizations, which already had about two hundred direct agreements. Thanks to them, joint faculties and Belarusian-Uzbek educational programs, including dual degree programs, have been successfully operating today. A joint Belarusian-Uzbek interindustry institute of applied technical qualifications was opened in Tashkent. The issue of creating an Uzbek-Belarusian University of Materials Science is under consideration. The

90 Institutes of Metrology of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/instituty-metrologii-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-431178-2021/>

91_Gosstandart of Belarus and Uzstandart Agency signed a cooperation program for 2021-2023 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gosstandart-belarusi-i-agentstvo-uzstandart-podpisali-programmu-sotrudnichestva-na-2021-2023-gody-431298-2021/>

following figures are quite eloquent: "In the 2020-2021 academic year, educational institutions in Belarus will admit about 2,000 Uzbek students. The export of educational services to Uzbekistan last year [2020] amounted to \$1.7 million, an increase of almost 14% compared to the previous year⁹². We must assume that the emergence of another ten documents on cooperation between the universities of the two countries will only contribute to further expansion of the Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the educational sphere.

Another important result of the work of the intergovernmental commission was the first meeting of the Belarusian-Uzbek business council in Tashkent, which gathered over 170 representatives of business circles of the two countries, who were able to discuss "specific cooperation projects in agriculture, mechanical engineering, logistics, food industry, chemical and pharmaceutical production, science and education and information technologies⁹³. The potential for implementation of these projects is very eloquently demonstrated by the example of Minsk Motor Plant, whose representatives brought more than four million dollars worth of contracts to the Uzbek capital. This is largely due to the fact that "MMZ's commodity distribution network in Tashkent is represented by BURAN-SAVDO, SIGMA, INDUSTRIAL MARKETING, FUTURE GENERATION MARKETING. In 2019-2020 MMZ sold more than 1 thousand engines to the primary and secondary markets of Uzbekistan"⁹⁴. So, there are serious prospects for the development of economic relations between the two countries.

92_Universities of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed 10 documents on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/vuzy-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-10-dokumentov-o-sotrudnicestve-431140-2021>

93 More than 170 representatives of business of Belarus and Uzbekistan took part in the meeting of the Business Council [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-170-predstavitelej-biznesa-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-prinjali-uchastie-v-zasedanii-delovogo-soveta-431374-2021>

94 MMZ plans to sign contracts for more than \$4 million during the intergovernmental commission in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mmz-vo-vremja-mezhpravkomissii-v-uzbekistane-planiruet-podpisat-kontrakty-bolee-chem-na-4-mln-431277-2021/>

To promote innovation and development

In 2021, the People's Republic of China launched the 14th Five-Year Economic and Social Development Plan to 2025, which will take new steps in reform policy and form a new architectonics of mutually beneficial international cooperation to "comprehensively enhance the country's opening up to the outside world, promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, foster innovation and trade development, promote high-quality development of the joint construction of the One Belt One Road project". In doing so, the Chinese side will aim to create new advantages in international cooperation and competition, as it believes "international economic cooperation and exchanges are still an objective requirement for global economic development. Openness to the outside world is the main state policy of the country"⁹⁵. As for Belarus, the Chinese side expresses its confidence that the two countries should continue to mutually use the advantages of their economies, which complement each other to a great extent, develop the existing potential for interaction, including within the framework of the "One Belt, One Road" project and the China-Belarus Industrial Park "Great Stone", and expand cooperation "in such areas as epidemic control, trade and economy, education, science and technology, culture, interregional relations"⁹⁶.

Recall that by today the Republic of Belarus has built fairly strong and open relations with the People's Republic of China, which are now characteristic of only three countries - Russia, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom. This is confirmed by such figures. "The People's Republic of China is Belarus' second largest foreign trade partner after Russia, with an annual turnover of \$5 billion.

95 . Qimin, C. China in 2021-2025 intends to implement a new development plan / C. Qimin // [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/kitaj-v-2021-2025-godah-nameren-realizovat-novyj-plan-razvitiya-7479/>

96_Xiaoyun, S. Taking the Bull by the Horns / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. - – 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/vzjat-byka-za-roga-sovety-posla-knr-kak-pravilno-vstretit-kitajskij-novyj-god-7657/>

<...> About 500 Belarusian exporters have already gained a foothold in this competitive market. More than 100 agricultural enterprises have been accredited. Twenty-four projects worth nearly \$4.5 billion have already been implemented in Belarus using China's resources⁹⁷.

Undoubtedly, the flagship project in this context is the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone", in less than six years of its existence has already invested 650 million dollars, where 68 residents from 14 countries are already registered with a declared investment of 1.2 billion dollars, of which about half have started operations. As a result, "a supercapacitor, truck cranes, laser equipment, drones, Euro-6 engines and heavy-duty gearboxes, a pilot 5G communication zone and a multimodal container terminal are just a few examples of the projects currently implemented in the park"⁹⁸. In 2021 there are plans to attract another 17 new residents here. In this regard, high hopes are pinned on the project to create a multimodal rail terminal with the participation of Germany, China and Switzerland, which will begin construction in the near future, as well as the arrival here of the American company Ivy Global, which is considering opening a "pharmaceutical plant to produce a wide range of drugs, including to combat COVID-19"⁹⁹ in "Great Stone". In the same year, "when the second phase of development of the park will begin, there are also plans to build a second residential complex for 173 apartments and a second substation¹⁰⁰.

97_Yaroshenko: Belarus has built strong and open relations with China [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/jaroshenko-belarus-vystroila-prochnye-i-otkrytye-otnosheniya-s-kitaem-428410-2021>

98 Investments in the "Great Stone" during the implementation of the project amounted to \$650 million - Yaroshenko [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/investitsii-v-velikij-kamen-za-vremja-realizatsii-proekta-sostavili-650-mln-jaroshenko-428432-2021/>

99_American company Ivy Global is considering opening a pharmaceutical plant in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amerikanskaja-kompanija-ivy-global-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-otkrytija-v-velikom-kamne-farmzavoda-426540-2021/>

100_Great Stone Industrial Park expects to attract about 17 residents in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/industrialnyj-park-velikij-kamen-rasschityvaet-v-2021-godu-privlech-okolo-17-rezidentov-423412-2021/>

Continuing the theme of construction, we should note that in 2021 the construction of a national soccer stadium and an international standard swimming pool in Belarus using Chinese grant aid will also come to the fore, with completion of these projects in 2023, as well as the beginning in the first half of 2021 of the third stage of social housing on Belarusian soil using Chinese grant aid again. We would remind you that during the first two phases of the project 38 houses for 3,286 apartments were built in six regions and in Minsk, improving the living conditions of more than ten thousand people. During the third phase "it is planned to build 1166 social housing apartments in 20 houses. The total built-up area will amount to approximately 66 thousand square meters. The apartments will be provided to citizens who are registered as being in need of better housing conditions and are entitled to receive social housing"¹⁰¹.

Finally, with regard to the coronavirus pandemic, the two countries joined forces from the very beginning to fight it, giving each other help and support. As a result, "40 tons of humanitarian medical supplies were sent from Belarus to China. From China - two shipments of emergency medical supplies worth about 32.6 million yuan, provided by the Chinese government, as well as 110 tons from the twin regions and partner companies"¹⁰². Given the current situation with repeatedly observed outbreaks of epidemic, the parties intend to continue to work together actively to confront this global challenge, confirming with concrete actions the existing level of trusting all-round strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation.

101_China is going to build 20 more social houses in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitaj-sobiraetsja-postroit-v-belarusi-esche-20-sotsialnyh-domov-426882-2021/>

102 Qiuyan, C. Covid not a hindrance - trade between Belarus and China turned out to be stress-resistant / C. Qiuyan // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/kovid-ne-pomeha-torgovlja-belarusi-i-kr-okazalas-stressoustojchivoj-7641/>

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3. Pivovar, E. Myasnikovich considers it necessary to develop industrial cooperation in high-tech industries in the EAEU / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-schitaet-neobhodimym-razvivat-v-eaes-promkoooperatsiju-v-vysokotehnologichnyh-otrasljah-427278-2021>

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5. Belarus stands for the acceleration of digital projects in the EAEU - Golovchenko [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-vystupaet-za-uskorenie-realizatsii-tsifrovyyh-proektov-v-eaes-golovchenko>

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15. EEC and CIS Executive Committee signed a cooperation plan for 2021-2022 [Electronic resource]. - - 2021. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/05-02-2021-07.aspx>

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