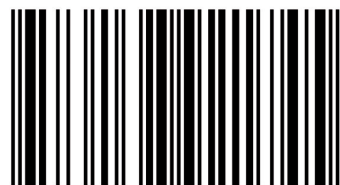


The boundaries of sustainable partnership. Part III

At the legislative level in the Republic of Belarus, cross-border cooperation is understood to mean: firstly, interaction with foreign countries at the regional and local levels in order to promptly solve border problems, attract foreign investments to improve border and transport infrastructure, create commercial organizations with foreign investments; secondly, develop and implement regional technical assistance projects financed by international organizations and programs in the region; thirdly, develop and implement regional technical assistance projects financed by international organizations and programs in the region. How are these areas of international cooperation implemented in practice in Belarus? The answer to this question is contained in the proposed study. This book has been translated with Artificial Intelligence.



Professional experience in journalism - forty five years. Now - Associate Professor of the International Journalism Department of the Journalism Department of the Belarusian State University. Areas of research: modern international relations, international journalism, international information exchange, export of media products and services.



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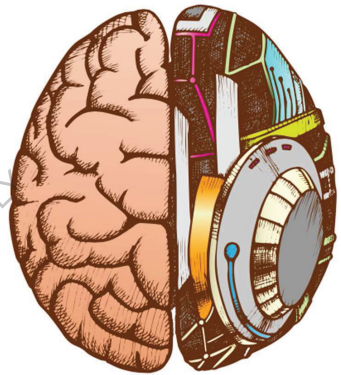
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Belarus: prospects for cross-border cooperation between regions and the media

In the Republic of Belarus, regional mass media traditionally have a strong impact on their audience. According to First Deputy Minister of Information of the Republic of Belarus P. Legkoi, "in terms of their influence on public consciousness and audience coverage they are not inferior to the republican ones¹. This largely explains the large-scale tasks that the Belarusian regional press faces today in terms of reflecting the peculiarities of the state policy of regional development in Belarus, one of the most important components of which is the deepening of **cross-border cooperation** with foreign partners, which implies, among other things, adequate development of the international segment of Belarusian regional journalism. At the same time, representatives of the media sphere should proceed from a number of basic provisions set out in policy documents.

It should be reminded that at the legislative level in the Republic of Belarus the following is understood as transboundary cooperation: firstly, interaction with foreign countries at the regional and local levels in order to promptly solve border problems, attract foreign investment to improve the border and transport infrastructure, create commercial organizations with foreign investment; secondly, development and implementation of regional technical assistance projects funded by international organizations and programmes; thirdly, development and implementation of regional technical assistance projects funded by international organizations and programmes.²

The National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the Period until 2030, which defines the goals, stages and directions of the transition of the Belarusian state to a post-industrial society and innovative development of the economy, identifies the regions of the country as the place where a solid foundation for further sustainable development has yet to be created based on the modernization of the system of economic relations and effective management to ensure a balance between their social, economic and ecologically safe regions. The strategic goal of the Belarusian regional policy is to develop each region in an integrated manner and to reduce the existing regional disparities, taking into account the effective use of its resource potential and competitive advantages in order to ensure

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

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

high standards of living for the population, conservation of nature and the positive contribution of regions to national competitiveness and security.

It is assumed that until 2030 the regional development policy in Belarus will be implemented in two stages. Within the framework of the first - until 2020 - it is planned to form and support regional development centers, reduce interregional differentiation in the living standards of the population, restructure the regional economy, create favorable conditions for the development of entrepreneurial activity, strengthen the resource base of local budgets, address the problems of regions lagging behind the national average, overcome infrastructure and institutional barriers in the socio-economic development of regions, and increase the efficiency of regional development.

At the second stage - until 2030 - the policy of development of the regions of Belarus will be focused on "expanding local self-government in addressing socio-economic, environmental and ecological problems, reducing subsidization of areas and ensuring high living standards in all regions³. At the same time, the main long-term objectives will be to: improve the administrative and territorial division; deepen the specialization of the economies of the districts that reveal their potential and competitive advantages in the domestic and foreign markets for goods and services; advance the development of cities and districts that serve as the centers of territorial clusters; raise the social standards of living of the population as they grow; differentiate them taking into account the peculiarities of population settlement, primarily for rural areas. The Basic Provisions of the Programme of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 set a task - "by concentrating resources on key areas capable of ensuring maximum development of the territories, effective use of local resource potential and competitive advantages" to⁴ create economic growth centers in Belarusian regions, where modern production structures, engineering and social infrastructure facilities will be concentrated. Thus the most important direction of the regional policy is defined as development of the basic networks and objects of power, transport, telecommunication and other infrastructure according to the strategy of development of the concrete region. This is due to the fact that infrastructure development in conjunction with the location of production facilities will allow for the development of areas with difficult economic conditions and will reduce the gap in living standards and quality of life in cities of different categories and rural areas. And support for the most lagging regions will be expressed in the placement there of new organizations, branches and workshops of existing industries related to the servicing

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

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

of agriculture and forestry, processing of their products, production of products from local raw materials, development of services for the population and tourism. It is also important that key projects involving foreign investment and involving inefficiently used as well as vacant production facilities in the investment process are envisaged for the implementation of the strategic directions of regional development. In particular, "foreign investors will be attracted, including through active inter-regional Sino-Belarusian contacts, in order to implement projects important for regional development, create tourist and social infrastructure facilities. An additional source of financing for such projects will be loans from China"⁵.

In total, more than 60 centres for economic growth are planned to be established in the regions of Belarus, which should cover two thirds of the country. In the process of their formation three complementary vectors will be taken into account: firstly, creation of these centers in those districts and cities where there is a potential for this; secondly, creation of jobs outside the centers of economic growth within one hour availability; thirdly, creation of comfortable conditions throughout the country, which will require a developed modern infrastructure. In this regard, investment activities will have to be based on the coordination of three policies: scientific and technological, industrial and regional. To implement them, Belarus has set a task to develop a plan of industrialization of the regions, the foundation of which will be made up of three main blocks: "The first is to identify priority economic activities, technological niches, corresponding to them specific projects that will be offered to businesses to choose for implementation. The second is the placement of selected projects based on district specialization and taking into account their personnel, production and raw material potential. At the same time, balanced development of regions should become one of the main conditions. The third is the formation of a package of stimulating measures at the national and regional levels for the implementation of projects"⁶. If to speak more specifically about the prospects of development of the Belarusian regions, the following picture is drawn here.

In **Brest region** the priority development should be given to mining industry, agro-industrial complex, mechanical engineering, woodworking and furniture production, transport and logistics, tourism. The centers of economic growth will be the cities of Brest, Baranovichi, Pinsk and adjacent districts, as well as Berezovsky, Pruzhansky, Ivatsevichi, Kobrinsky and Luninets districts. Among the major investment projects

⁵ Programme of Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 // Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: http://www.government.by/upload/docs/program_ek2016-2020.pdf

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

here: modernization of CJSC "Pinskdev Holding Company" aimed at increasing the output of plywood and bent-glued parts up to one hundred thousand cubic meters per year; continuing construction of a mining and processing plant on the basis of Sitnitskoye deposit; creation of "Beldan" IOO - an agro-industrial organization for slaughtering and processing of bacon pork with the capacity of 80 heads per hour; providing a full cycle of production of lead batteries in JLLC "Exaid Technologies"; reconstruction of the palace and park ensemble "Soveiki" by forces of NWO "LadaGarant".

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

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

As for **Grodno region**, there will be a fundamentally new industry for the whole Belarus - nuclear power, as well as chemical production, agro-industrial complex, woodworking, tourism. The centers of economic growth will be not only Grodno, but

also Grodno, Lidsky, Ostrovets, Mostovsky, Smorgonsky, Volkovysky, Slonimsky districts. Speaking about the main investment projects, among them we would like to mention the completion of technical re-equipment of phthalic anhydride production with the increase of capacity up to 48 thousand tons per year in JSC "Lakokraska", construction of a shop for production of nitric acid in JSC "GrodnoAzot", implementation of the project in Skidel on production of pharmaceutical forms - pills and capsules in JSC "Novalok", reconstruction of the hotel and restaurant complex "Grodno".

In **Minsk voblast**, chemical production, pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals, automotive and agro-industrial complex, transport and logistics, as well as tourism should get ahead of the development. Economic growth centers will be established in Zhodino, Borisov, Minsk, Smolevichi, Soligorsk, Dzerzhinsk, Molodechno, Slutsk, Pukhovichi, Logoy, Nesvizh, Myadel and Volozhin districts. The key investment projects of the Minsk Region will be the construction of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Velikiy Kamen", mining and processing plant Slavkalyi in Lubansky district, a plant for the production of cars NVAO Belzhi, milk processing plant Nesvizh Baby Food LLC, transport and logistics complex in the free economic zone "Minsk", as well as the reconstruction of the ampoule production in OJSC "Borisovsky Plant of Medicines".

The Mogilev region will develop through chemical production, production of rubber and plastic products, construction materials, foodstuffs, woodworking with economic growth centers in Mogilev, Bobruisk, as well as in the regions - Mogilev, Bobruisk, Osipovichi, Shklovsk, Bykhov, Goretzky. In the area it is assumed: to reconstruct the production facilities for rubber products in Krichev with the increase of model footwear production from polyvinyl chloride up to 250 thousand pairs per year; to build a complex for the production of polyester products in JSC "Mogilevkhimvolokno"; to expand the production of chicken broilers in the branch "Servulux Agro" of NVAO "Servulux"; Upgrade casting and machining equipment at the Bobruisk Machine-Building Plant, OJSC; continue the implementation of the Programme for Social and Economic Development of the South-East Region of the Mogilev Region, under which twelve projects are planned to be implemented by 2020 to create new organizations and production facilities in the sphere of small and medium-sized business, six - in industry, more than thirty - in agriculture.

Finally, the priority development in **Minsk** will be given to mechanical engineering, high-tech areas - microelectronics, instrumentation, computing and telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, as well as medicine and services. The largest project implemented with the participation of foreign capital in the Belarusian capital

should be the construction of an experimental multifunctional complex "Minsk-Mir", which "involves the construction of more than 2 million square meters of housing, 600 thousand square meters of space for administrative and public business purposes, including an international financial center⁷. This will create a strategic platform for doing business in the Republic of Belarus, will contribute to the development of the domestic financial market and related services - tourism, banking, insurance, outsourcing - which will provide an additional incentive to attract foreign investors. "The investment in the project will amount to about \$3.5 billion."⁸

In mechanical engineering, a number of capital enterprises will be brought to a new level through comprehensive modernization. Among them: OJSC "Minsk Motor Plant Holding Management Company" - thanks to mastering the production of high-precision, high-strength cast iron and the development of small diesel engines with a capacity of up to 75 horsepower; OJSC "Minsk Automobile Plant" - the management company of the holding "Belavtomaz" - through the reconstruction of the production of cabins for MAZ family vehicles; Open Company "Factory of automobile trailers and bodies "MAZ-Kupava" - by means of introduction of technology of hydrocarbonic foaming at manufacture of isothermal panels of vehicles; Open Society "the Minsk bearing factory" - on the basis of technical re-equipment and the further development of roller-spherical manufacture of bearings; Open Society "Factory of hydrotechnical transfers" - on the basis of the organization of manufacture of gear boxes.

In the field of microelectronics and instrumentation it is planned to implement projects on the development of a branch of the Scientific and Technical Center "Belmicrosystems" JSC "Integral" - the managing company of the holding "Integral", the creation of a promising technology of enclosing integrated circuits and integration into the production of industrial, special and dual-purpose products, the development of epitaxial structures and the development of bipolar technology on wafers with a diameter of 150 mm. By 2020, it is planned to implement a pilot project aimed at establishing in the Belarusian capital an innovation-industrial cluster of high technologies in the field of complex medical equipment, safety systems, non-destructive testing equipment and analytical instrumentation, which will unite high-tech instrumentation organizations in Minsk, as well as scientific organizations and educational institutions with a strong research base and significant human resource potential. The implementation of this pilot project by 2020 should "ensure revenues from the sale of goods (works and services) in the amount of \$450 million, create 1,000 new jobs, increase the share of innovative products shipped in the total volume of

⁷ Program of Social and Economic Development of the City of Minsk for 2016-2020 [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=125510=D917o00834911=15=0>

⁸ It's the same place.

shipped products to 90 percent⁹. In general, in the five years to 2020 the economy of the Belarusian capital "will attract at least \$38.1 billion of foreign investments, including more than \$4.8 billion of direct foreign investments (FDI) on a net basis"¹⁰.

The deepening of cross-border cooperation of Belarusian regions should be seamlessly integrated into the development of international cooperation and external economic relations of the Republic of Belarus as a whole, the most important criteria of which are sustainable growth rates of exports of goods and services and the achievement of a positive balance of foreign trade in goods and services. In this regard, until 2020 the attention of the regions of Belarus will be focused on: expanding and diversifying trade and economic ties with various countries, regional unions and international economic organizations; developing economic integration within the Eurasian Economic Union; maintaining good-neighbourly relations and close cooperation with the Russian Federation; expanding comprehensive cooperation with the countries of the European Union, including within the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative; further intensifying trade with the countries of the European Union, including in the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative; and intensifying trade with the Russian Federation. In the second phase - until 2030 - it is the deepening of cross-border cooperation in all areas of trade, economic, scientific, technological and environmental activities that should become an essential factor in sustainable development. This will contribute to the creation of flexible commercial structures with the attraction of external investments for the improvement of infrastructure; improvement of cross-border trade, tourism; effective cooperation in the cultural, social and environmental spheres; formation of a common socio-cultural space; development of joint cross-border regional policies. Under these conditions, it is the regional media that should become the most important part of mass communication in order to play its social and political role in the consolidation of society in terms of addressing the large-scale development tasks of the regions of Belarus in the next 12-15 years.

⁹ Program of Social and Economic Development of the City of Minsk for 2016-2020 [Electronic Resource]. -- 2017. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=125510=D917o00834911=15=0>

¹⁰ Minsk plans to attract at least \$38 billion of foreign investment in 2016-2020 [Electronic Resources4res]. -- 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-planiruet-privlech-v-2016-2020-godah-ne-menee-38-mlrd-inostrannyh-investitsij-252054-2017/>

Belarus: Eurasian regional interaction and media

Today the Belarusian regional press is faced with large-scale creative tasks to cover all stages of the implementation of the state policy of regional development in Belarus, "one of the most important components of which is the deepening of cross-border cooperation with foreign partners, which implies, among other things, adequate development of the international segment of Belarusian regional journalism¹¹. At the same time, the interaction of Belarusian regions with foreign partners should be seamlessly integrated into the development of international cooperation of the Republic of Belarus as a whole, the most important criteria of which are sustainable growth rates of exports of goods and services, as well as achievement of a positive balance of foreign trade in goods and services.

In this regard, the Belarusian regional mass media have a very broad thematic spectrum, which in the near future should be fully reflected in the pages of urban, district and regional newspapers. We will highlight in this regard those areas that emphasize the geography of interregional cooperation and which are discussed in the National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2030¹²: expansion of comprehensive cooperation with the regions of the European Union and especially within the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative, as well as with the regions of the countries of the "Neighbourhood Belt" - Poland, Lithuania, Latvia; deepening of cooperation with the regions of the countries participating in the mega-project "One Belt, One Way". But perhaps, so far, the most real development of large-scale economic integration is observed with the regions of the Eurasian Economic Union countries (Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan) and especially with the Russian subjects of the federation within the Union State.

As for the Eurasian Economic Union, from the very beginning of its existence in terms of developing integration measures, it was considered that the level of regional cooperation is an indicator of the relevance and effectiveness of measures of supranational regulation, because historically there has been an economic basis for the implementation of integration measures to stimulate regional development and interregional cooperation, as well as the potential for expanding cooperation in various

¹¹ Zalesky B. Media reflection of the peculiarities of cross-border cooperation of the regions of Belarus / B. Zalesky // Zhurnalistyka-2018: stan, problems i prospects: mateyryalyaly 20 th Mizhnar. nauk.-prekt. can., Minsk, 15-16 pages. 2018 / Redk.: V.M. Samusevich (adk. red.) [iinsh.]. - Minsk : BDU, 2018. - -- C. 291.

¹² National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2030. - Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus. - Minsk, 2017. - -- C. 137.

areas and spheres of the economy at the level of regions of the EAEC member countries. As a result, "consideration of regional aspects allows for more effective implementation of measures to stimulate new areas of mutual trade, the construction of industry production chains, the formation of transport corridors and planning the location of infrastructure facilities and in the future to ensure social development and improve living standards"¹³.

If we talk about the bilateral format of inter-regional cooperation within the Eurasian Economic Union, the unconditional leader and impetus for the development of the entire Eurasian integration here is the interaction of the regions of Belarus and Russia within the framework of the Union State. Suffice it to say that by mid-2018, the Belarusian regions maintained "direct trade and economic relations with 80 regions of the Russian Federation, of which 70 - on the basis of long-term cooperation agreements."¹⁴and the top ten major trading partners included Moscow and St. Petersburg, the Republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, the Perm Region, as well as the Bryansk, Kaluga, Moscow, Smolensk and Tyumen Regions.

The growing potential of Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation was particularly demonstrated by the results of the Fifth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which took place in Mogilev in October 2018 and covered such main thematic areas as: agrarian policy, unification and harmonization of legislation, digital economy, youth policy, international activities and economic security. It should be noted that today, to a large extent, it is from the point of view of the Belarusian and Russian media that the Forum of Regions is defined as "a key project of regional cooperation between Belarus and Russia, an effective platform for a partnership dialogue on economic integration and interregional cooperation"¹⁵. And this is not an unfounded statement. Suffice it to say that at the mentioned forum in Mogilev contracts were signed for more than half a billion dollars.

The fact that 76 more documents were added to the legal framework of the Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation within the framework of the fifth forum also speaks volumes. In particular, the Mogilev Regional Council concluded agreements on cooperation and development of relations with the legislative assemblies of the Kaluga Region and the Krasnodar Territory. The Grodno Oblast Council will cooperate with the Kaliningrad Oblast Duma in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural

¹³ Main directions of the EAEC economic development until 2030. - Eurasian Economic Commission. - - M., 2015. - - C. 42.

¹⁴ Myasnikovich, M. Rabota na Result / M. Myasnikovich // Priority directions of regional cooperation as a key factor of the allied construction: inform.-integratsiyu project / comp. Gusev, B. Zalesky. - Minsk: Biznesosset, 2018. - - C. 5.

¹⁵ Myasnikovich, M. Regional Forum has become an effective platform for dialogue on integration and interregional cooperation issues / M. Myasnikovich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.sovrep.gov.by/ru/interview-ru/view/forum-regionov-stal-effektivnoj-ploschadkoj-dlja-dialoga-po-voprosam-integratsii-i-mezhregionalnogo-256/>

spheres. The Gomel Regional Council and the Legislative Assembly of the Nizhny Novgorod Region, as well as the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee and the Government of the Novosibirsk Region have defined similar areas for cooperation. But we are also talking not only about the integration of the regional or regional level, but also about the fact that "small cities are involved in this process, which cooperate quite actively, and not only in the field of humanitarian relations, and building economic ties"¹⁶. As a result, it turns out that today, at the interregional level, cooperation between the Belarusian regions and the absolute majority of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation has already been established. But how is it fully reflected in the pages of the regional press of Belarus? The issue is topical, with great unrealized potential.

The coverage in the Belarusian regional press of cooperation between the regions of Belarus and its partners in Kazakhstan, another member of the Eurasian Economic Union, with which the Treaty on Social and Economic Cooperation until 2026 was signed in November 2017, aimed at implementing a qualitatively new stage in bilateral relations, including at the regional level, should become very diverse. It is worth recalling here that back in 2000, Belarus and Kazakhstan signed an Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Press and Information, which in 2017 was supplemented by a provision that attached "special importance to the expansion of cooperation in the field of mass media between the two states"¹⁷ and which came into force in October 2018. The thematic range of publications in the regional press could be very broad in this regard. This is also the activity in Kazakhstan of joint assembly facilities with the participation of Belarus, which at the end of 2017 numbered eight, for the production of quarry, mine, special utility and fire fighting equipment, tractors, combines, engines, balers, medical equipment. This is also the implementation of a project of the Kazakhstan-Belarus Industrial and Technological Park of Agricultural and Municipal Machinery in Kokshetau, Akmola Oblast, the first phase of which was launched in 2016. This includes the implementation in Kazakhstan of several dozen joint scientific and technical projects with extensive use of Belarusian technologies, innovations and scientific developments. The topics of Belarusian-Kazakh interregional cooperation may be especially topical for the press of Gomel, Grodno and Mogilev regions. Thus, in November 2016, the Gomel Regional Executive Committee signed a cooperation agreement with the akimat of Pavlodar region. Mogilev region concluded similar agreements with South Kazakhstan (2003) and East Kazakhstan (2009) regions. In

¹⁶ Matveev, More than 70 regional agreements were signed at the V Forum of Belarusian and Russian Regions / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/boleee-70-regionalnyh-soglasheniy-podpisano-na-v-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-rossii-321404-2018/>

¹⁷ Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on cooperation in the field of mass media [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=125510=1017000711=1>

2014, Grodno and Akmola Regions signed the Memorandum of Cooperation in Agriculture. But how are all these documents implemented in practice? "They are not always adequately reflected in the media sphere. And this then has an impact on reducing the interest of partners and on the continuation of cooperation as a whole"¹⁸.

The intensification of interregional cooperation is an important component in strengthening bilateral trade-economic and cultural cooperation with Armenia, another member state of the Eurasian Economic Union. Suffice it to say that as of today "21 agreements on twinned relations have been signed between the cities and regions of Belarus and Armenia"¹⁹. Thus, back in 2008 within the framework of the development of cooperation between Minsk region and Syunik region the sister agreements on cooperation were signed with Borisov, Nesvizh, Soligorsk, Slutsk and Myadel regions with such Armenian cities as Kapan, Goris, Agarak, Sisian and Meghri respectively. Moreover, "in May 2011 the list of Belarusian and Armenian regional partners was extended to Osipovich district and city of Sevan, in June 2012 - Vitebsk region and Lori marz, cities of Orsha and Spitak, Vitebsk and Vanadzor, and in October 2012 - Lepel district and Tashir, Braslav district and Stepanavan"²⁰. Turning to the analysis of the implementation of these agreements, the regional press of Belarus and Armenia could proceed from the fact that the Belarusian-Armenian interregional cooperation as a whole contributes to the intensification of joint business activity, the restoration of lost production ties, humanitarian and human contacts, ensures the promotion of bilateral economic projects and the creation of joint competitive products that are in demand both in domestic markets and in third countries.

Finally, in July 2018, Belarus signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of information with another member country of the Eurasian Economic Union, Kyrgyzstan, to encourage regular exchange of information materials on political, economic, social and cultural life of both countries, as well as to develop cooperation between the editorial offices. At the same time, "the Kyrgyz side also proposed a new direction of cooperation in the field of information. This is particularly true of cooperation at the regional journalism level²¹. Many facts testify to the fact that the thematic portfolio of publications in the regional press of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan can be very diverse in this regard. For example, in 2017, Belarusian exports to this Central

¹⁸ Zalesky, B. International Relations and Media. Vectoriality of foreign policy in the conditions of global crisis of confidence / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2018. -- C. 57.

¹⁹ Trade and economic relations [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://armenia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/

²⁰ Zaleskiy, B.L. Belarusian international journalism: features, tendencies, prospects : teaching-methodical manual / B.L. Zaleskiy. - Minsk : BSU, 2014. -- C. 221.

²¹ Belarus and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of information [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kyrgyzstan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-informatsii-309989-2018/>

Asian country exceeded 300 commodity items: from dairy products and trucks to chipboard, furniture and wallpaper. There are more than 50 representative offices of the subjects of the commodity distribution network and distributors of Belarusian enterprises. In November 2016, assembly production of MTZ tractors and service center for agricultural machinery on the basis of Bishkek enterprise "Avtomash Radiator" was opened here. At the same time, "UPP "Niva-Holding" (Soligorsk) registered with the Ministry of Justice of Kyrgyzstan the Belarusian enterprise "Niva-Shakhtospetsstroy", which plans to produce equipment for the mining industry and hydraulic engineering from components manufactured by "Niva-Holding".²² [12]. The plans include the establishment of an assembly facility for Belarusian grain harvesters on Kyrgyz soil, which was the subject of the signed Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of Kyrgyzstan, Gomselmash OJSC and the dealer of the Belarusian enterprise Avtomash Radiator LLC. The agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian National Centre for Marketing and Price Study and the exhibition company BI Expo from Bishkek is aimed at expanding the Belarusian-Kyrgyz cooperation in exhibition and fair activities. Consistently developing regional economic ties with partners in Kyrgyzstan, in August 2018, the Belarusian side delivered to the Kyrgyz capital 15 low-floor trolleybuses produced by JSC "Belkommunmash", which will also be organized training of drivers of the Bishkek trolleybus department. Interesting detail: this "technique was purchased under the project "Development of public transport of Bishkek city", financed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development²³.

Let's sum it up. In this study we cited the facts of rapid development and growth of interregional cooperation of Belarus with partners only from the Eurasian Economic Union countries - Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan. If we add to them the similar trends observed today in the regions of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the European Union, the "far arc", the Economic Belt of the Silk Road, all of them will convincingly testify to the obvious: such a concept as "international regional journalism", which is still unusual even in the professional media environment, should find its real contours in the media practice of the information and communication space of the regions of Belarus as soon as possible, so that its representatives could be competent in the information and communication sector.²⁴

²² Interview of Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus in the Kyrgyz Republic A. Strachko to the information-analytical magazine "Market conjuncture" (№1, 2018) [Electron resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <http://mf.gov.by/press/smi/ba775717cb6a991b.html>

²³ In Bishkek 37 trolleybuses manufactured in Belarus and Russia were delivered [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-bishkek-postavili-37-trollejbusev-belorusskogo-i-rossijskogo-proizvodstva-313496-2018/>

²⁴ Zalesky, B. Belarus - Russia: edges of integration. Chronicle of allied construction / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2016. -- C. 96.

Belarus-Ukraine: potential for an advisory board

One of the most effective forms of coordination of Belarusian-Ukrainian trade and economic interaction is the Business Cooperation Advisory Council, which was established in 2010. The new bilateral structure has been tasked with several main tasks from the outset. Namely, in addition to developing partnership relations between Belarus and Ukraine in the trade and economic sphere, to fully facilitate the expansion of contacts between representatives of the business community, as well as to increase the volume of mutual trade. Today "advisory council is a platform where business discusses the most pressing problems. On the other hand, we discuss promising projects, new opportunities that open up for the parties"²⁵. That is why the next, seventh meeting of this consultative body became an important part of the program of the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine, which was held in October 2018 in Gomel.

The serious potential of the Belarusian-Ukrainian advisory council for business cooperation is evidenced, for example, by the list of issues considered at the October (2018) meeting, which included "the development of a draft agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of Belarus on the approval of the Regulations on the creation and application of an electronic system of certification of the origin of goods. They discussed interregional cooperation and the export potential of the regions, the prospects of using trade platforms to expand mutual trade between Belarus and Ukraine, the interaction of business circles and enterprises in various spheres"²⁶.

Another topic that was continued at the session of the Belarusian-Ukrainian Business Cooperation Advisory Council is the interaction of medium and small businesses of the two countries, as well as the development of industrial cooperation. In particular, from the Ukrainian side there were proposals to work with Belarusian partners on specific projects related to alternative energy, processing of agricultural products, pharmacology, "so that these products then enter the markets of other countries"²⁷.

²⁵ Ulakhovich, V. Important direction of cooperation between Belarus and Ukraine - development of industrial cooperation (in Russian) / V. Ulakhovich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/opinions/view/vazhnoe-napravlenie-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-ukrainy-razvitie-promkooperatsii-6508/>

²⁶ Documents for \$10 million were signed at the session of the Belarusian-Ukrainian advisory council [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/dokumenty-na-10-mln-podpisany-na-zasedanii-belorusko-ukrainskogo-konsultativnogo-soveta-323029-2018/>

²⁷ Interaction of medium and small businesses of Belarus and Ukraine is especially important - Chizhikov [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/vzaimodejstvie-srednego-i-malogo-biznesa-belarusi-i-ukrainy-osobno-vazhno-chizhikov-323008-2018/>

As far as industrial cooperation is concerned, the Belarusian side sees attractive prospects for its development in machine-building, road-building machinery and machine tool building. At the same time, Belarus can offer promotion of joint products in the market of the Eurasian Economic Union. And within the framework of the association agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, there are possibilities for joint Belarusian-Ukrainian products to enter the European market, even if within certain quotas. It should be noted that concrete steps have already been taken to achieve these prospects. In particular, within the framework of the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine already mentioned above, the Memorandum on cooperation development was signed by the Republican Association of Industrial Enterprises "BelAPP" and the Ukrainian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (UUIE). The given document "is urged to promote development of industrial cooperation, creation of joint manufactures, opening of objects of commodity conducting networks and representations of the enterprises - members of "BelAPP" and USPP"²⁸.

As for the acute problems that the business community of the two countries is currently concerned about, they include, first of all, restrictions and barriers that arise due to the fact that national legislation is changing in the process of interaction. In this regard, the discussion of this topic even went beyond the meeting of the Business Cooperation Advisory Board and acquired the conference format "Removal of Technical Barriers to Mutual Trade by Technological Regulation Methods. Industrial products", which brought together in Gomel more than 120 specialists from various sectors of the economy, who were able to discuss in detail the current trends in the development of systems of technical regulation, standardization, metrology and accreditation, so that then in practice to use these "the most important tools to produce safe and quality products and reduce technical barriers to trade"²⁹.

Besides the discussion of topical issues of interaction, the participants of the council meeting were also able to adopt a number of documents, which show that this consultative structure is increasingly focused on the implementation of specific bilateral projects. In particular, a framework contract on providing credit security for goods turnover was signed by LLC with AI BNH Ukraine and JSC Credit Dnipro Bank. The agreements on cooperation with Ukrainian colleagues were signed by the heads of Gomel and Vitebsk branches of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. And such Belarusian exporters as Mozyrsol, Baranovich cotton production

²⁸ Enterprises of the Belarusian Industry Ministry will supply \$73.5m worth of equipment to Ukraine [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatija-minprom-a-belarusi-postavjat-v-ukrainu-tehniku-na-735-mln-323286-2018/>

²⁹ Ways to reduce technical barriers to trade will be discussed at the Regional Forum of Belarus and Ukraine [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/puti-snizhenija-tehnicheskikh-barjerov-v-torgovle-obsudjat-na-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-ukrainy-322764-2018/>

association, Domanovsky production and trade complex have concluded profitable contracts for the supply of their products to Ukrainian partners. In total, 9 documents worth almost \$10 million were signed as part of the council.

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Belarus - France: formats for partnership coordination

Today, the Joint Belarusian-French Commission on Economic Cooperation and the regularly convened business forum of business people of the two countries play a key role in coordinating the bilateral partnership relations between Belarus and France. This is quite eloquently evidenced by the third meeting of the joint commission and the fifth business forum, held in October 2018 in Minsk.

The participants of the meeting of the commission summed up the results of joint work over the past two years in the field of trade, economic and investment cooperation, as well as outlined priority areas of partnership development, including trade, environment, agriculture, transport, tourism, banking and financial sphere, as well as "inter-regional relations and development of legal framework of bilateral cooperation"³⁰.

Speaking about the results, the parties noted several positive trends in the development of Belarusian-French partnership ties. First, mutual trade between the two countries has steadily increased over the past two years: by 28 per cent in 2017 and by almost 15 per cent in the first eight months of 2018, exceeding \$260 million. At the same time, back in 2017, "the growth of Belarusian exports amounted to 155%, the positive dynamics of exports in 2018"³¹. This happened primarily due to such positions as transport, computer, telecommunication and information services. In addition, 250 items of goods are now delivered from Belarus to France. An interesting detail: at a meeting in Minsk, the French side suggested doubling trade with Belarusian partners in the next five years, believing that "promising areas of cooperation could be agriculture, insurance, transport, supply of equipment and machinery"³².

Second, there are positive developments in attracting French investment in the Belarusian economy, which increased by more than 75% in the first half of 2018 and amounted to four and a half million dollars. At that "40 organizations with French investments are registered in Belarus"³³.

³⁰ On holding the third session of the Joint Belarusian-French Commission on Economic Cooperation [Electronic Resource]. -- 2018. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/df75390f947ce6c.html

³¹ Interview of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the agency "Minsk-Novosti" (October 26, 2018) [Electron resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

³² France proposes to double the trade turnover with Belarus [Electronic resource] in the next five years. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/frantsija-predlagaet-v-blizhajshie-pjat-let-udvoit-tovarooborot-s-belarusiju-323245-2018/>

³³ Igor Petrishenko met with the State Secretary to the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8349>

As for the development of the legal framework of the Belarusian-French relations, until recently there have been 21 documents: from the Protocol on Establishment of Diplomatic Relations of 25 January 1992 to the Memorandum on Cooperation between the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus and the French National Chamber of Court Executors of 23 November 2017. Within the framework of the third meeting of the joint commission the parties have supplemented this list of bilateral documents with an intergovernmental agreement on international road transport of passengers and cargo, the draft of which was agreed back in the 1990s and now "legally fixes the existing agreements between Belarus and France in the field of international road transport"³⁴.

The fifth Belarusian-French business forum, which took place on the same October days in Minsk, has added its bright colors to the trade, economic and investment components of the joint commission. The forum was attended by about 40 French businessmen interested in developing cooperation with Belarusian partners in such areas as energy, food, wood processing and light industry, construction and engineering, petrochemical industry, tourism, legal and consulting services, aircraft construction, it-technology. This is evidenced by the documents accepted in the fields of the business forum.

First, the National Centre for Marketing and Price Study of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the French business association MEDEF International signed a memorandum of understanding, which "will contribute to increasing the number of French investments in the Belarusian economy" and will³⁵ help to develop cooperation in agriculture, energy and construction. Secondly, the forum participants concluded two framework agreements in the field of education and culture.

Thirdly, a concrete result of the fifth business forum was the contract signed by the branch "Domostroenie" RUE "Newspaper Factory" (Shklov) with the French company SARL Logibat, which is engaged in the construction of residential settlements in their country, for the supply in 2018-2019 about 60 sets of frame-board houses for a total of one million euros. It is interesting that "the first two houses from the Belarusian Shklov were sent to France back in 2015"³⁶. In the next five years the company plans to sell about 650 houses in France. In total, in the first eight months of 2018, Concern

³⁴ Belarus and France signed an interstate agreement on international road transport [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-frantsija-podpisali-mezhpravosoglashenie-o-mezhdunarodnyh-avtomobilnyh-perevozkah-323221-2018/>

³⁵ The National Centre for Marketing and the Business Association of France have signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyi-tsentr-marketinga-i-biznes-assotsiatsija-frantsii-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-323213-2018/>

³⁶ Shklovskoye "Domostroenie" will deliver a new batch of wooden houses to France [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shklovskoe-domostroenie-podpishet-soglashenie-o-postavke-novoj-partii-derevjannyh-domov-vo-frantsiju-323174-2018/>

Bellesbumprom, which includes "Domostroenie", exported to the French market products for three million dollars - furniture, wooden structures, windows and doors.

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Belarus - France: regional component

The intensification of the Belarusian-French interregional interaction has become one of the important components of the positive dynamics of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries observed today. In particular, this has led to the fact that over the past two years, the number of French and French-Belarusian companies operating in Belarus, including such large companies as Renault, Lactalis, Danone, has increased from 40 to 63, and the list of commodity items of Belarusian exports to France is already two and a half hundreds. But the parties still believe that "Belarusian-French trade and economic relations do not meet the potential of the two countries"³⁷. That is why the task of comprehensive commodity diversification of Belarusian supplies and finding new niches on the French market remains crucial even today. The regions of Belarus and France can and should make a weighty contribution to its solution. They certainly have the necessary capacity for that.

Thus, in November 2018, a quarter of Belarusian wooden houses was opened in the French city of Villeux, located in the Lorraine region. Interestingly, at the suggestion of the Belarusian side, this quarter was named after Jean Gilbert - an outstanding physician, botanist and biologist. "This man was the creator of one of the first hospitals, a hospital in Grodno, and one of the first botanical gardens in Eastern Europe. In Grodno there is a monument in honor of Jean Gilbert, there is a square of the same name"³⁸. In total, 71 residential buildings were built in Lorraine by mid-November 2018 from Belarusian materials. In particular, a street of 17 Belarusian houses has already been built in Okur-Mulen.³⁹...where the first tenants settled back in the first quarter of 2018.

These wooden houses are made by the branch 40 "Domostroenie" of Shklovsk Newspaper Plant. They have good thermal insulation characteristics, and their installation together with other construction works takes up to three months. Since all the main elements of the frame-panel house are made in Shklovo, the construction site in Lorraine remains only to mount ready-made structures. "Such a house does not

³⁷ Belarus and France will intensify inter-parliamentary cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-frantsija-aktivizirujut-mezhparlamentskoe-sotrudnichestvo-325720-2018/>

³⁸ Interview of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the agency "Minsk-Novosti" (October 26, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

³⁹ The first stone was laid in France to build a quarter of Belarusian wooden houses [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pevvyj-kamen-zalozhen-vo-frantsii-v-stroitelstvo-kvartala-iz-belorusskih-derevjannyh-domov-276022-2017/>

⁴⁰ Kulyagin, S. Shklovskoe "Domostroenie" plans to double export of the frame-panel houses to France (in Russian) / S. Kulyagin // [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/shklovskoe-domostroenie-planiruet-uvlechit-vdvoe-eksport-karkasno-panelnyh-domov-vo-frantsiju-228449-2017/>

shrink and can be erected at any time of year. <...> Their service life with full observance of construction technology is 30-50 years" .

Perhaps for these reasons, Lorraine now has plans to increase construction to 132 houses by the end of 2019, to sign a contract for the supply of Belarusian tiles, which will be used for decoration of houses, as well as kitchens made in Belarus to equip houses. In general, "in 2017, \$16 million of Belarusian furniture, houses and other wooden products were delivered to France, and for 9 months of this year - more than \$17 million⁴¹. Recall that the first two houses from the Belarusian Shklov were sent to French consumers back in 2015. And today "the company plans to sell about 650 houses in France in the next five years"⁴².

All these facts are very eloquent evidence of what points in the development of interregional cooperation with French partners are emphasized in Mogilev region, where JLLC Unimilk Shklov - one of the enterprises of the main French investor in Belarus - Danone company, which successfully operates in Shklov and intends to further develop. And the parties are already discussing "the issue of possible cooperation and partnership in domestic waste processing and drinking water treatment"⁴³.

Among other Belarusian regions seriously interested in developing cooperation with partners from France is Brest Oblast, where three enterprises with French capital operate. It is a subsidiary of the already well-known corporation Danone Pruzhany JLC and two small enterprises in Brest. Cooperation in mechanical engineering, light industry, chemical and perfume and cosmetics industry, in which France is one of the world leaders, seems promising⁴⁴. Another area of partnership is medicine. At the end of 2017, the Brest Regional Hospital and the University Clinic of Strasbourg concluded that it was necessary to sign a cooperation agreement in order to "give it a new impetus

⁴¹ A quarter of Belarusian wooden houses appeared in French Villeu [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kvartal-belorusskih-derevjannyh-domov-pojavilsja-vo-frantsuzskom-vilrju-324661-2018/>

⁴² Shklovskoye "Domostroenie" will deliver a new batch of wooden houses to France [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shklovskoe-domostroenie-podpishet-soglashenie-o-postavke-novoj-partii-derevjannyh-domov-vo-frantsiju-323174-2018/>

⁴³ Kulyagin, S. Mogilev region and France are going to emphasize the development of economic cooperation / S. Kulyagin // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaia-oblast-i-frantsija-namereny-sdelat-aktsent-na-razviti-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-251920-2017/>

⁴⁴ Vechorko, S. French businessmen are offered to invest capital in Brest region OJSC / S. Vechorko // [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/frantsuzskim-biznesmenam-predlagajut-vkladyvat-kapital-v-oao-brestskoj-oblasti-227920-2017/>

and a systemic character⁴⁵. In this way, the personal contacts of Brest and Strasbourg physicians have reached the level of a significant social project.

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⁴⁵ Brest Regional Hospital and University Clinic of Strasbourg will sign a cooperation agreement [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskaja-oblastnaja-bolnitsa-i-universitetskaja-klinika-strasburga-podpishut-dogovor-o-277163-2017/>

Belarus - France: system of honorary consulates

In the Republic of Belarus the existing format of honorary consulates is considered as an important and effective tool to expand Belarusian presence abroad, "to search for new opportunities for economic growth, new partners to implement a new strategy to ensure the systematic diversification of foreign trade"⁴⁶. The Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in France has accumulated an interesting experience of creating a whole system of such structures in one state. According to the head of the Belarusian diplomatic mission in this European country P. Latushko, it is "through honorary consulates, through regional contact we can develop economic ties"⁴⁷. That is why "the opening of honorary consulates is an important and necessary tool to enhance the dialogue between people and countries"⁴⁸.

It should be reminded that the first Honorary Consulate of Belarus in France was opened in 2015 in Lyon - one of the largest administrative-territorial, political, economic and cultural regional centers of France, the agglomeration of which has 1 million 253 thousand residents and with which Belarus has long-standing historical ties. The activities of the Honorary Consul in Lyon are carried out in the consular district, which includes the Rhône-Alpes region, and the main task is "to promote economic cooperation through contacts between business circles of the two countries, implementation of joint projects in the field of culture and education, consular and legal assistance to citizens of Belarus"⁴⁹. Already in 2016, on the initiative of the Honorary Consul, an agreement on cooperation between the M. Tank Belarusian State Pedagogical University and the Higher School of Teaching and Education of the Academy of Lyon was signed in this region.

The second Honorary Consulate of Belarus in France was opened in October 2017 in the city of Bordeaux, the territory of which became the New Aquitaine region - the third largest gross domestic product in this country. The primary project, the implementation of which was immediately taken up by a new structure, is the study of the possibility of "export deliveries of products of the glass plant "Neman", as well as

⁴⁶ Zalessky, B. Borders of Sustainable Partnership. Part II / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. - - C. 4.

⁴⁷ Transcript of the interview of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to France Pavel Latushko to the program "Picture of the World" on the TV channel "RTR-Belarus" (December 12, 2015) [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/d0ab2a8cf81749f7.html>

⁴⁸ Interview of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the agency "Minsk-Novosti" (October 26, 2018) [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

⁴⁹ The Honorary Consulate of Belarus was opened in French Lyon [Electronic Resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/pochetnoe-konsulstvo-belarusi-otkrylos-vo-frantsuzskom-lione-173804-2015>

mineral water of Belarusian enterprises⁵⁰. Besides, there is a great potential for cooperation of Belarusian partners with this region of France in agriculture, engineering, science and education.

In December 2017, a third similar structure appeared in Marseille - one of the largest industrial, scientific and cultural centers of France, the second largest city in the country in terms of population. The Honorary Consulate of Marseille has extended its activities to a district that "includes the departments of Bouche-du-Rhône, Var, the Haute-Alpes, Vaucluse, the Alpes de Provence of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region".⁵¹ which is generally one of the key French trade and economic regions. Its gross domestic product exceeds 150 billion euros.

The fourth French city, where in December 2018 another Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Belarus was opened, was Biarritz, located in the south-west of France near the border with Spain, in the historical region of New Aquitaine, and washed by the waters of the Bay of Biscay. Since 1912 it has had the official status of a climatic and balneological resort in France and is famous for its mild climate, sandy beaches, unconventional medicine and mineral waters. This is why "employment in Biarritz is mainly related to the tourism sector"⁵².

In addition, the Belarusian side plans to open another number of honorary consulates in several French cities, including Metz - "one of the regional capitals of France. It may happen in 2019."⁵³ Here it is appropriate to remind that Metz is the "economic heart" of the Lorraine region in the north-east of France, which is the country's leader in iron ore and coal mining, iron and steel smelting, and is characterized by its diverse links with Germany: "It is in this neighboring country that thousands of Lorraine residents go to work every day <...>, it is from here that a significant part of their products are sold to the industrial enterprises that continue to function successfully.

One more detail: France also sees the format of honorary consulates as an important tool to promote its national interests in Belarus. This is evidenced by the fact that in October 2014, the Honorary Consulate of this country was opened in Brest, the choice of which cannot be called accidental. According to the French side, the geographical location of Brest on the border with the European Union, as well as "the status of the

⁵⁰ The Honorary Consulate of Belarus [Electronic resource] has been opened in French Bordeaux. - - 2017. - URL: <https://naviny.by/new/20170930/1506782954-vo-francuzskom-bordo-otkryto-pochetnoe-konsulstvo-belarusi>

⁵¹ On opening of the Honorary Consulate of Belarus in Marseille [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://france.mfa.gov.by/be/embassy/news/a7c1eb9186dc9eb8.html>

⁵² City of Biarritz in France [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://www.gorodamira.biz/goroda/159-gorod-biarric-vo-francii.html>

⁵³ Interview of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the agency "Minsk-Novosti" (October 26, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

city, perhaps the most important on the road axis connecting Paris with Moscow, is an undeniable advantage and creates all the necessary prerequisites for a deep, constant exchange"⁵⁴.

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⁵⁴ The Honorary Consulate of France [Electronic Resource] opened in Brest on October 24. - - 2014. - URL: <https://by.ambafrance.org/24-oktyabrya-v-Breste-otkrylos>

Minsk: French vector of partnership

The development of interregional ties has become one of the priority topics on the agenda of the third session of the Joint Belarusian-French Commission on Economic Cooperation, which was held in Minsk in October 2018. This is explained by the fact that it is the regions of the two countries that today make their most important contribution to the growth of mutual trade between Belarus and France observed over the last two years, as "the regions understand the pragmatism of relations. There's people just walking on the ground."⁵⁵ Specifically, the twinning relations currently connect such cities of the two countries as Minsk and Lyon, Homel and Clermont-Ferrand, Brest and Brest, Partisanski district of Minsk and Turkuen, Central district of Minsk and Nevers.

The undoubted flagship of interregional cooperation with French partners is the Belarusian capital, where 39 economic entities with the participation of French capital are registered, including 24 joint ventures and 15 foreign enterprises. In the first eight months of 2018, trade turnover between Minsk and France increased by a quarter, while exports - even by 37.1%. During the same period, the economy of the Belarusian capital received more than one million dollars of direct French investments, which is twice as much as during the same period in 2017. Here it is appropriate to recall that an agreement on friendly relations between Minsk and Lyon was signed over forty years ago. In 2016, under the auspices of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of these twinning ties to enhance trade, economic and investment cooperation between the regions of the two countries "the Belarusian capital hosted the First Belarusian-French Interregional Forum, which was attended by more than 50 representatives from the French side and about 80 - from the Belarusian side"⁵⁶. At the same time, an agreement was signed between the Belarusian State Pedagogical University and the Higher School of Teaching Staff and Education of the Academy of Lyon.

And today Minsk offers its French partners to take up several joint projects at once. In the Belarusian capital, it is understood that "an important sector of innovation in France is the environment"⁵⁷ and the green economy is seen there as an engine of economic

⁵⁵ We are at the crossroads of mutual interests: Latushko about cooperation with France [Electronic resource]. -- 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-ulitki-perekrestok-interesov-i-sharl-de-goll-latushko-o-razvitii-sotrudnichestva-s-222884-2016/>

⁵⁶ Minsk offers French companies to participate in the projects of reconstruction of the treatment plant and recycling [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-predlagaet-frantsuzskim-kompanijam-uchastie-v-proektah-rekonstruktsii-ochistnoj-stantsii-i-323285-2018/>

⁵⁷ Ambassador of France on visa-free regime, Minsk agreements and the Belarusian language [Electronic resource]. -- 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/posol-frantsii-o-bezvizovom-rezhime-minskih-soglashenijah-i-beloruskom-jazyke-237950-2017/>

growth. In particular, we are talking about the possible participation of French companies in the projects of reconstruction of the Minsk treatment plant and construction of a waste processing plant. Reconstruction of the Minsk wastewater treatment plant - the most complex industrial and domestic wastewater treatment facility - is planned to begin in 2019, to improve the efficiency of wastewater treatment, reduce the environmental impact of this facility, to build a biogas complex and a waste incineration complex. As for the implementation of the project in the field of municipal solid waste management, it is planned to build a waste processing plant with the volume of processing up to 800 tons per year.

The French, as you know, have the most modern technologies in this regard. In addition, Belarus and France already have experience of mutually beneficial partnership in the field of environmental protection, including the management of hazardous waste. "In 2012, 823 tons of waste containing hazardous chemicals were taken to the factory of the French company Tready and destroyed there. This has reduced by 17% the total amount of waste containing polychlorinated biphenyls in Belarus"⁵⁸. Besides, the mentioned company participated in the implementation of the international technical assistance project on liquidation of the temporary storage warehouse of potentially hazardous pesticides in the village of Mizgiri, Slonim district, Grodno region. The agreement signed back in 2016 between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus and the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Sea of France on cooperation in environmental protection and sustainable development can and should give additional impetus to Belarusian-French interaction in this area.

The fact that the Belarusian capital's cooperation with its French partners may soon significantly expand is also proved by this fact. In November 2017, Minsk was visited by a representative delegation of companies from France, which consider the Belarusian market as potentially interesting for its development. When announcing this visit, the French side made no secret that "the geographical location of Belarus, its economic, scientific and, of course, human resources are important arguments for French exporters and investors"⁵⁹. In particular, the company JT Finances did not rule out the possibility of creating an enterprise in Belarus, "supplying transporters for

⁵⁸ Belarus and France will develop cooperation in the environmental sphere [Electronic resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-frantsija-budut-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-prirodooohrannoj-sfere-311222-2018/>

⁵⁹ Grishkevich, A. Representatives of the largest French companies will visit Belarus on November 14-15 / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - – 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predstaviteli-krupnejshih-frantsuzskih-kompanij-14-15-nojabrja-posetjat-belarus-275346-2017/>

automatic payment of roads⁶⁰. Interesting offers were brought to Minsk then by other well-known brands - Alteo, Atos, Airbus Helicopter Vostok, La Fonte Ardennaise, Secmair, Servier, Schneider Electric.

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⁶⁰ Mikhalchuk, L. Business France: Many French companies are just discovering the Belarusian market / A. Mikhalchuk // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belrynok.by/2017/11/18/business-france-mnogie-frantsuzskie-kompanii-tolko-otkryvayut-dlya-sebya-belorusskij-rynok/4133/>

Minsk - Tbilisi: a vector of cooperation

In March 2018, at the highest level, Belarus and Georgia signed the Treaty on the Basics of Cooperation, in which the parties expressed their intention to promote the expansion of interregional cooperation. Specific facts suggest that the capitals of the two states - Minsk and Tbilisi - are a very eloquent illustration of the implementation of this commitment in practice.

Minsk and Tbilisi became sister cities in September 2015, agreeing then to promote investment and innovation activities, cooperation in health care and education, sports, culture, exchange of experience in organizing local self-government. These twinning relations have become a good impetus to intensify Belarusian-Georgian cooperation in various areas in the years to come. Suffice it to say that "the trade turnover between the enterprises of Minsk and Georgia at the end of 2017 increased by 13.5% to \$18.8 million, exports of goods by \$7.9 million and imports by \$10.9 million. Deliveries were made on 161 commodity positions. There are 14 enterprises with Georgian capital registered in Minsk (5 of them are joint ventures, 9 are foreign"⁶¹.

In March 2018, the Georgian capital hosted the Days of Minsk, during which the parties tried to make the best use of such tools as the Belarusian-Georgian business forum and the exhibition of goods of Minsk manufacturers to strengthen partnerships and twinning relationships. The format of these events allowed the citizens of Minsk to generously share with their Tbilisi colleagues their experience in implementing the "Smart City" system, to show the possibilities and conveniences of travel with a guest map of the Belarusian capital, to demonstrate the peculiarities of designing and construction of the underground, innovations in passenger transport, new technologies in the food industry. Georgian businessmen had a chance to get acquainted with the products of such Belarusian exporters as Kommunarka OJSC, Slodych Confectionery Factory OJSC, Minsk Kristall OJSC, Minskhhlebprom, Belita JV, Modum - Our Cosmetics OJSC, Minsk Automobile Plant OJSC, Amkodor OJSC, Minsk Tractor Plant OJSC.

The official part of the Days of Minsk in Tbilisi was also saturated. First of all, the parties signed the Program of Trade and Economic Cooperation for 2018-2020, in which they defined the areas of partnership in the economy, tourism, culture, education, transport and housing. In particular, "the cities intend to exchange experience in the

⁶¹ Belarusian-Georgian business forum will be held during the Days of Minsk in Tbilisi [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/belorusko-gruzinskij-biznes-forum-projdet-vo-vremja-dnej-minska-v-tbilisi-293959-2018/>

sphere of rendering services to the population, maintenance and capital repair of housing stock, energy saving, high technologies and innovations, and also investment offers, advertising and information materials"⁶². Secondly, a number of documents on interaction of Minsk enterprises with Georgian partners were agreed upon at the business forum already called above. Thus, "as part of the section "Modern Minsk and Tbilisi" a memorandum was signed between SOAO "Kommunarka" and LLC "Bel Trade" and an agreement between the information-tourist center "Minsk" and LLC "Resistorgeo"⁶³. as well as the agreement between LLC "Minsk City Technopark" and the Technopark of Tbilisi. In addition, the Minsk Automobile Plant, under an accepted contract with the Georgian LLC "Profauto", gave the company exclusive rights to sell automotive equipment on Georgian soil and will deliver 20 dump trucks to Georgia for more than one million dollars, as well as worked out possible contracts for the supply of fire-fighting equipment for the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Georgia and discussed "the possibility of supplying passenger buses to Tbilisi"⁶⁴. Minsk Tractor Plant has signed a contract with the Georgian supplier of agricultural machinery Hermes LLC for the supply of 50 sets and is opening an assembly plant of Belarusian tractors in Batumi. At the same time, the management of the Belarusian company is confident that "2018-2020 will be the most successful years for the tractor plant in the Georgian market"⁶⁵. It is assumed that at least two hundred or three hundred cars will be assembled here per year, as there is a need for various tractor equipment in Georgia - from low-power to energy-saturated.

Finally, interesting prospects are opening up in the Georgian market, where not only Tbilisi has a need to renew its public transport fleet and interest in using electric buses. Similar interest was also expressed by the three other major Georgian cities. That is why the creators of the Belarusian electric buses have already thought about the possible localization of production of their environmentally friendly cars on Georgian soil. In particular, "production of Belarusian electric buses can be established in Tbilisi"⁶⁶. In the meantime, in the next few months, Minsk residents will put one

⁶² Minsk and Tbilisi will determine the cooperation program for 2018-2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/minsk-i-tbilisi-opredeljat-programmu-sotrudnichestva-na-2018-2020-gody-293935-2018/>

⁶³ Matveev, V. About 30 documents were signed at Georgian-Belarusian forum in Tbilisi (in Russian) / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/okolo-30-dokumentov-podpisano-na-gruzinsko-belorusskom-biznes-forume-v-tbilisi-295186-2018/>

⁶⁴ Matveev, V. MAZ will deliver to Georgia dump trucks for \$ 1 million / V. Matveev // [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-postavit-v-gruziju-samosvaly-na-1-mln-295227-2018/>

⁶⁵ Matveev, V. Assembly manufacture of the Belarusian tractors is opened in Batumi (in Russian) / V. Matveev // [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-belorusskih-traktorov-otkryvaetsja-v-batumi-295203-2018/>

⁶⁶ Matveev, V. Production of the Belarusian electric buses can be created in Tbilisi (in Russian) / V. Matveev // [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-belorusskih-elektrobusov-mozhet-byt-sozdano-v-tbilisi-295211-2018/>

electric bus to the Georgian capital for trial operation, and a little later - a detailed concept and business plan of the project of industrial cooperation.

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Belarus - China: cooperation committee sketches out prospects

In November 2018, the third session of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation was held in Beijing, where the parties agreed: firstly, to expand mutual trade; secondly, to continue implementation of the plan to conjugate the economies of Belarus and China; thirdly, to increase mutual investments; fourthly, to strengthen interregional ties. The parties undoubtedly have the necessary prerequisites for the successful implementation of the planned tasks in each of these vectors of development.

As for the **expansion of mutual trade**, the goal set by the Belarusian side is as follows: "The volume of Belarusian exports to China should reach \$5 billion in the medium term"⁶⁷ [1]. It is expected to be achieved in several directions at once, one of which is to increase the supply of Belarusian agricultural products to Chinese consumers. Suffice it to say that Belarus has sent \$52 million worth of food to China for three quarters of 2018. And by the end of the fourth quarter, this figure should actually double. At the same time, "the leading position in Belarusian exports is occupied by dairy products, whose supplies have increased by 9 times compared to the same level in 2017"⁶⁸ [2]. The fact that in November 2018 the third train with Belarusian dairy products, consisting of 41 containers with the total weight exceeding one thousand tons, arrived in Chongqing, China, also contributed to such rapid dynamics. It is also encouraging in this regard that "the parties agreed to reach a weekly schedule for sending trains to Chongqing with Belarusian agricultural products in the near future"⁶⁹ [3]. In addition, the Belarusian JSC "Meat and Dairy Company" and a joint venture Sinoby Agriculture signed a contract for the supply of dairy products in 2019 for \$30 million.

The expansion of the product line in Hebei Province in 2019 through the joint venture "Zunshen Gomel Agricultural Machinery Enterprise" LLC, based on the joint capital of Gomselmash OJSC and Zunshen Industrial Corporation, will make a significant contribution to the **mutual investment**. Recall that the framework agreement on the establishment of this enterprise was signed in 2014, and a year later there was a

⁶⁷ Grishkevich, A. The volume of Belarusian export to China in the medium term should reach \$5 billion - Snopkov / A. Grishkevich // [Electron resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <http://news.21.by/economics/2018/11/06/1648136.html>

⁶⁸ Ministry of Agriculture: exports of Belarusian agricultural products to China at the end of the year will reach \$100 million [Electron resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minselhozprod-eksport-beloruskoj-selhozproduktov-i-kitaj-po-itogam-goda-dostignet-100-mln-324799-2018/>

⁶⁹ The train with Belarusian dairy products arrived in Chongqing [Electron resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/poezd-s-beloruskoj-molochnoj-produktsiej-pribyl-v-chuntsin-324784-2018/>

strategic agreement, the implementation of which led in 2016 to the start of production of joint products - forage harvesting and cob harvesting machines. In three years, about five hundred harvesters have been collected from Gomselmash's machine sets. By April 2019, it is planned to add 290 and 450 horsepower forage harvesters to the range of manufactured machinery. For this purpose, a new production building has already been built in Hebei Province's Wei Xiang County, which will enable to increase the production of agricultural machinery to one and a half thousand a year. "Chinese partners are planning to build another building, which will expand production capacity to 3 thousand combines"⁷⁰ [4].

In terms of **strengthening interregional ties**, the cooperation between the Mogilev region and Hunan Province can be very effective and promising, where the parties intend to focus on such strategic areas as the economy, investment and tourism. At the same time, in the first phase the efforts of the region and the province will be focused on the accelerated development of tourism. The fact is that the parties are sure: "There is a connection between the tendencies of tourism development and the general state of the economy, so this direction is chosen as one of the strategic ones for strengthening and development of joint cooperation"⁷¹ [5]. That is why, in terms of infrastructure projects, business people from Hunan Province have already been offered to build hotels, cultural and entertainment complexes, even a restaurant of Chinese cuisine in the Mogilev region, where tourists from China could feel comfortable. And the next step in developing this interregional investment cooperation could be projects to process local raw materials and produce food products, with the prospect of exporting them to China and other countries. For this purpose, about two hundred sites are already being offered to Chinese investors.

It is quite possible that in the near future other regions of the Celestial Empire may also join the active Belarusian-Chinese interregional cooperation. For example, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. At least in November 2018, when discussing the issues of mutually beneficial partnership in the supply of Belarusian agricultural products to this region and the exchange of experience in animal husbandry, the parties paid special attention to "the organization of Belarusian-Chinese joint ventures to assemble agricultural machinery in Khukhoto [the central city of Inner Mongolia]"⁷² [6]. And in

⁷⁰ The Junshen Gomei agricultural machine building company intends to expand its product line [Electronic Resource] in 2019. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatje-selhoz mashinostroenija-tszunshen-gomel-namereno-v-2019-godu-rasshirit-linejku-produktsii-325877-2018/>

⁷¹ Kulyagin, S. Mogilev region and Chinese province Hunan intend to accelerate development of mutual tourism [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-hunan-namereny-uskorit-razvitie-vzaimnogo-turizma-325776-2018/>

⁷² Grishkevich, A. Belarus and China discuss creation of the joint ventures for agricultural machinery assembling in Huhoto (in Russian) / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-knr-obsuzhdajut-sozdanie-v-huh-hoto-sovmestnyh-predpriyatij-po-sborke-selhoztehnik-324739-2018/>

the same November 2018, Minsk and Shanghai signed an agreement of intent to establish friendly relations.

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Belarus - China: in the Year of Education - to a new level of cooperation

The action plan for the Year of Education of Belarus and China in 2019 was signed during the third meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation held in November 2018 in Beijing. The opening of the Year of Education is scheduled for January 2019 at Dalian Polytechnic University, which should initiate a whole range of measures to establish direct ties between universities of Belarus and higher education institutions in China and eventually raise the entire spectrum of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in education to a new level.

Speaking about the development of partnerships in this field, it should be noted that "the Chinese education system is unique in its kind. Unlike in Western Europe, it cultivates not so much individuality as discipline and devotion to collective interests. This model has proven its worth: the overall level of education development in China is above the world average"⁷³. In this regard, the interest of the Belarusian side in the planned activities is obvious not only to get acquainted closer with the Chinese experience, but also to compare it with its own. To this end, it is planned to significantly intensify in 2019 the work on expanding the presence of Belarusian educational institutions in the Chinese educational market through such formats of cooperation as opening representative offices of universities, joint faculties, centers of study of Belarus. In addition, the Belarusian national exhibition "may take a central place at the largest international exhibition" China Education Expo ", which is traditionally held in October in four major cities in China: Beijing, Chengdu, Shanghai and Guangzhou"⁷⁴.

As for new forms of cooperation between higher education institutions of the two countries and new participants, a number of promising projects were implemented by the parties as early as 2018. These include, for example, the agreement signed by F. Skorina State University of Gomel and Nanjing University of Science and Technology in December 2018 on joint training of researchers of higher qualification (Ph.D.) and on double international guidance for writing and defending⁷⁵ a Ph. The basic element of this training will be postgraduate studies at these universities, and the topics of PhD dissertations will be determined by the partner universities. The result of this

⁷³ China [Electronic resource]. - -- 2018. - URL: <https://export.by/china>

⁷⁴ Features of organization of ideological and educational work in higher education institutions in 2018/2019 academic year. - RIVSH, 2018, P. 7.

⁷⁵ Gomel and Nanjing Universities will start a joint PhD training [Electronic Resource]. - -- 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/gomelskij-i-nankinskij-universitety-nachnut-sovmestnuju-podgotovku-kandidatov-nauk-328395-2018/>

interaction will be an opportunity to obtain a PhD degree from both Gomel and Nanjing universities. And the results of research will become the property of two universities and will be published in international scientific collections.

In October 2018, the cooperation agreement was signed by Baranovich State University and Nanchan Technological Institute, which "intend to develop cooperation in technical field - in information systems and technologies, automation of technological processes"⁷⁶. In addition, the Chinese side expressed interest in studying the Belarusian methodology of ion-plasma nitriding, environment, mechanisms of socio-economic stability. As a result, the partners agreed to form a joint team of scientists in each of the selected areas.

In September 2018, the Centre for the Study of Belarus was opened at Ankhov University with the assistance of the Consulate General of the Republic of Belarus in Shanghai and the Pushkin Brest State University. It is expected to become "a broad platform for the development of inter-university research, educational, cultural cooperation, as well as the strengthening and expansion of regional ties between the Brest region and Anhui Province of China"⁷⁷. In turn, it is planned to open a center for the study of China at the Pushkin Brest State University. In this way, Brest residents are putting into practice the provisions of the cooperation agreement signed in September 2017 with Anhov University. According to the parties, the opening of such centers will contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural traditions of the Belarusian and Chinese peoples, strengthen relations between the region and the province in the humanitarian sphere, and will open "new opportunities for academic exchange of students, cooperation of teachers in the scientific sphere"⁷⁸. It should be added that the first center for the study of Belarus in China was opened back in 2012 at the East China Pedagogical University in Shanghai, which in November 2018 "signed a cooperation program of Belarusian universities < ... > for the development of the Center for Study of Belarus.

⁷⁶ Baranovich State University will cooperate with Nanchansk Technological Institute [Electronic Resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/baranovichskij-gosuniversitet-budet-sotrudnicat-s-nanchanskim-tehnologicheskim-institutom-320995-2018/>

⁷⁷ Grishkevich, A. The Centre for Belarus studies was opened in Anhui University in China / A. Grishkevich // [Electron resource]. -- 2018. - <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsentr-izuchenija-belarusi-otkrylsja-v-anhojskom-universitete-v-kitae-318426-2018/>

⁷⁸ The Center for China Studies is planning to open in Brest State University [Electronic mode]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/tsentr-izuchenija-kitaja-planirujut-otkryt-v-brestskom-gosuniversitete-314837-2018/>

Minsk - Shanghai: there's a platform for relationship development

In November 2018, Minsk and Shanghai signed an agreement of intent to establish friendly relations. According to the parties, this document is very important for developing closer trade contacts and implementing specific projects: "It will be a platform for the development of our relations in all spheres."⁷⁹ Representatives of the Chinese city are interested in Minsk experience in industry, metalworking, machine-building. And the Belarusian capital is interested in partnership with investors from Shanghai "in terms of urban infrastructure management, "Smart City" system, transport system, improvement, management of municipal solid waste"⁸⁰. Earlier Minsk had already signed agreements on the establishment of twinned relations with such cities of China as Changchun, Beijing, Shenzhen, as well as on the establishment of cooperation - with Shenyang.

An important detail: the signing of the November agreement was preceded by the trade and economic forum "Sails of Shanghai" held in September 2018 in Minsk, where representatives of this Chinese city said that "given the current good Belarusian-Chinese relations, the implementation of new joint projects, including with Shanghai businessmen, has great prospects"⁸¹. This trade and economic forum has brought together in the Belarusian capital more than 130 domestic and Chinese companies interested in cooperation in engineering, construction, information technology, chemical industry, environmental protection, light industry, food, jewelry production. In addition, Chinese manufacturers of electronics and household appliances, clothing and fabrics, packaging for medical equipment, cosmetics, toys, jewelry, as well as importers of cars, electrical and welding equipment, computer equipment, interested in finding business partners in Belarus, came to Minsk to participate in the forum.

It is also symbolic that the signing of this agreement took place during the first China International Import Expo in Shanghai, where a solid list of Minsk enterprises and organizations was presented. Among them are Minsk Tractor Plant, Minskkhlebprom, Kommunarka, Minsk Automobile Plant, Integral, Minsk Dairy Plant №1. The

⁷⁹ The agreement on cooperation between Minsk and Shanghai will take the partnership to a new level - Jiang Ping [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-minska-i-shanhaja-vyvedet-partnerstvo-na-novyj-uroven-tszjan-pin-321797-2018/>

⁸⁰ Minsk counts on Shanghai's assistance in the modernization of urban infrastructure [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minsk-rasschityvayet-na-pomosch-shanhaja-v-modernizatsii-gorodskoj-infrastruktury-321799-2018/>

⁸¹ Grishkevich, A. Forum "Sails of Shanghai" in Minsk will contribute to realization of the joint projects (in Russian) / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/forum-parus-shanhaja-v-minske-posposobstvuet-realizatsii-sovmestnyh-proektov-lin-sjan-317232-2018/>

voluminous portfolio of its developments in the field of instrumentation, automation of production, medicine, agriculture - more than thirty - demonstrated in Shanghai and the Belarusian State University, located, as it is known, in Minsk. In particular, the exhibition of imported goods and services showed his medical unit of general hyperthermia "Bird-M", designed for the complex treatment of various forms of cancer in specialized clinics. In the list of innovations of BSU were also presented in Shanghai "phytosols for correction of high threshold of taste sensitivity to table salt, edible packaging films, a series of veterinary bio preparations for treatment and prevention of diseases of agricultural and domestic animals, antitumoral drugs, hardware and software complex "Calibration"⁸².

An interesting continuation of cooperation between Minsk and Shanghai can be obtained at the level of partnership of individual districts of these cities. In this case, we are talking about the Soviet district of the Belarusian capital and Channin Shanghai, which signed a framework agreement on cooperation in September 2018. Interestingly, "cooperation between the two districts began in 1994 when the first cooperation agreement was signed. During this time, trade turnover has increased several times"⁸³. This time, the parties expressed interest in implementing a number of joint projects. In particular, Magic of Light LLC offered Chinese businessmen a partnership in the production of protective holograms. Considers to find partners in Shanghai and Minsk OJSC "Promsvyaz" to participate in the project to bring the production of the enterprise to the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park "Great Stone". An investment proposal for the establishment of a multifunctional medical and scientific-practical center was made by the company Medical Initiative.

Apparently, another district of Minsk - Frunzenski, which signed an agreement on twinning with the Chinese city of Jilin, located in the province of Girin, in September 2018, will significantly intensify its international contacts in the near future. The document adopted by the parties envisages the development of trade and economic relations and cultural exchange. And "among the promising areas are joint projects in the construction industry, education, tourism, food supplies"⁸⁴.

⁸² More than 30 scientific and technical developments will be presented by BSU at the exhibition of imports in China [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-30-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-razrabotok-predstavit-bgu-na-vystavke-importa-v-kitae-324163-2018/>

⁸³ Sovetsky district of Minsk and Channin Shanghai district signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sovetskij-rajon-minska-i-rajon-channin-shanhaja-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-317462-2018/>

⁸⁴ Frunzenski district of Minsk and Chinese Jilin signed an agreement on twinned connections [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/frunzenskij-rajon-minska-i-kitajskij-tszilin-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-318157-2018/>

Minsk Oblast - Zhejiang Province: from agreement to specific projects

Back in May 2015, the Chinese province of Zhejiang and the Belarusian Minsk region signed an agreement on establishing friendly relations. Then, assessing the prospects for the development of these bilateral interregional ties, the Chinese side stated that "Zhejiang Province intends to make significant investments in the economy of Minsk region."⁸⁵In this regard, he will encourage his businessmen in every possible way, as well as invited partners from the capital region "to jointly develop tourism"⁸⁶. A year later, the Borisov plant of medical products, located in Minsk voblast, began negotiations with the company "Menovo" from Zhejiang province on the implementation of a joint project for the production of medicines. And today this project is already starting to take shape more and more clearly.

In January 2018, another result of cooperation between the Minsk Region and Zhejiang was the opening of a center for traditional Chinese medicine at the Minsk Regional Clinical Hospital in the village of Lesnoy, Minsk District, where Chinese colleagues have already begun to transfer years of experience in traditional medicine and their skills, which allows Belarusian specialists to improve and expand the list of medical services. More specifically, in four treatment rooms and the office of reflexotherapists "patients are offered to undergo the procedure of classical acupuncture (acupuncture), laser puncture, electropuncture, vacuum reflexotherapy, hirudotherapy, auriculoreflexotherapy"⁸⁷. In addition, "the Center of Traditional Chinese Medicine is also planned to open on the basis of the Minsk Regional Center of Medical Rehabilitation "Zagorie"⁸⁸.

In November 2018, the Belarusian capital region, taking into account the interest of Chinese partners in the supply of dairy and meat products - ice cream, beef and poultry - from Belarus, said it was ready to load with its agricultural products container trains, which were returned from Europe to China. As for the prospects of this cooperation,

⁸⁵ Zhejiang Province intends to make significant investments in the economy of Minsk Oblast [Electronic Resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://investinbelarus.by/press/news/provinciya-chjeczyan-namerena-napravit-v-ekonomiku-minskoy-oblasti-znachitelnye-investicii/>

⁸⁶ Zhejiang Province offers Minsk region to cooperate in tourism [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/provintsija-chzhetszjan-predlagaet-minskoy-oblasti-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-turizma-2646-2015/>

⁸⁷ The Center of Chinese Medicine was established on the basis of Minsk Regional Hospital [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.zviazda.by/ru/news/20180112/1515764769-centr-kitayskoy-mediciny-sozdan-na-baze-minskoy-oblastnoy-bolnicy>

⁸⁸ The Centre of Traditional Chinese Medicine [Electronic Resource] was opened in Minsk. - - 2018. - URL: <https://politring.com/region/12002-v-minske-otkrylsya-centr-tradicionnoy-kitayskoy-mediciny.html>

the partner regions "plan to implement joint projects in tourism, trade, industrial production, agriculture, medicine, culture and transport logistics"⁸⁹.

One more important detail: the cities and districts located on their territory are beginning to provide considerable support to the interaction between the Belarusian region and the Chinese province. In particular, in the same 2015 the Memorandum on establishing friendly relations was signed by Smolevichi district and the city of Iu. Curiously, just twenty years ago, this Chinese city in Zhejiang Province was "a little-known agricultural settlement, and nowadays it is a rapidly developing center of international middle and small wholesale trade"⁹⁰. Here, in the southeast of China, is the world's largest indoor wholesale market "Yiu International Trade City", the uniqueness of which lies in the fact that, without leaving the walls of the shopping center, the buyer can choose the right product from a huge range of products, make a wholesale deal and organize the shipment of products to any destination. At the same time, "a huge range of products is presented in the ultra-modern complex Futian on an area of 2.6 million square meters. About 58 thousand trading stands are located on 5 floors. The length of the building itself is about 4 km"⁹¹. Now it is clear why today the Belarusian side is already discussing the issues of "increasing the supply of dairy and other food products of Minsk region to the Chinese market through the site of the pavilion of Belarusian goods of the company "Kingston" in the international market of goods of the city of Iu"⁹².

In November 2018, Belarusian Borisov and Chinese Ningbo signed an agreement on establishing friendly relations. "The Parties agreed to develop multilateral ties and cooperation in trade, economy, education, culture, tourism, sports, health care, urban development, environmental protection, as well as to promote mutual prosperity"⁹³. Apparently, the parties have the potential to implement such a scenario. After all, Ningbo is a major Chinese port city in Zhejiang Province. Four sea port complexes are located here at once. One of the largest is the Beilun, where the car factories of the company "Gili" are located, which are well known in Belarus. And the city's gross

⁸⁹ Minsk region expects to implement a project with Chinese Ningbo on production of medical drugs [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-rasschityvaet-realizovat-s-kitajskim-ninbo-proekt-po-vypusku-medpreparatov-326994-2018/>

⁹⁰ Belarus plans to sell goods in the Chinese center of medium and small wholesale trade Iu [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-realizovyvat-tovary-v-kitajskom-tsentre-srednej-i-melkooptovoj-torgovli-iu-242556-2017/>

⁹¹ Grishkevich, A. International trading town of Chinese goods may appear in Bolbasovo / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mezhdunarodnyj-torgovyj-gorodok-kitajskih-tovarov-mozhet-pojavitsja-v-bolbasovo-262012-2017/>

⁹² About inter-regional cooperation of Minsk region with Zhejiang province [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://minsk-region.gov.by/ru/glavnyj-novosti/item/36377-nikolay-rogaschuk-chtoby-nazad-konteynery-ne-shli-pustymi>

⁹³ Borisov and Chinese city of Ningbo have established friendly relations [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/borisov-i-kitajskij-gorod-ninbo-ustanovili-druzhestvennye-svjazi-326980-2018/>

domestic product in 2017 reached almost 145 billion dollars - a figure that speaks for itself. In short, this city also has a lot to learn from. And not just Borisov.

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Great Stone Industrial Park: a benchmark - new technologies

Over 40 companies from various countries of the world became residents of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" by early 2019. The peculiarity of this peculiar free economic zone on the territory of the Republic of Belarus, where residents are provided with unprecedented tax and tariff conditions, is that it accommodates "only those industries, those technologies that aspire to the future"⁹⁴. The fact that development here is going on at an active pace is also testified by the following fact: in 2018 "the first stage of construction of the infrastructure of the Veliky Kamen Industrial Park on an area of 8.5 square kilometers was completed"⁹⁵. In the same year 2018, the volume of investments attracted here amounted to at least 180 million dollars. In general, the accumulated investment since the establishment of the industrial park by early 2019 has reached half a billion dollars, about half of which are residents' funds, and the other half - investment in infrastructure development. As for the prospects, "by 2020, the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park will have more than 100 residents with investments of at least \$2 billion and the amount of goods produced from \$1 billion. There will also be at least 6.5 thousand new high-performance jobs"⁹⁶.

Among other things, the powerful potential of the new residents of the Great Stone should contribute to the successful solution of such difficult tasks of industrial park development. The facts testify to what it is. Thus, in January 2019, the 42nd resident of the park was the Chinese LLC "Vaisysi International Bel", which plans to create here both production and research and technical support center. "The volume of investments will amount to more than \$2 million, in the future it can be increased up to \$5 million"⁹⁷. The activity of the new resident, whose founder is Wiseasy, one of the leaders in the field of hardware services for business analysis in China, will contribute to the intensive development of mobile payments system in Belarus. The fact is that LLC "Vaisysi International Bel" specializes in the production of intelligent electronic terminals based on the Android system, which can accept payment with an encrypted

⁹⁴ Interview with V. Makei, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Japanese TV and Radio Company "NHK" (December 19, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/de367645ecb2d418.html>

⁹⁵ Tsui, C. Friendship of Belarus and China became all-weather / C. Tsui // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/druzhiba-belarusi-i-kitaja-stala-vsepogodnoj-6617/>

⁹⁶ The volume of attracted investments in the "Great Stone" in 2018 will amount to at least \$180 million [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/objem-privlechennyh-investitsij-v-velikij-kamen-v-2018-godu-sostavit-ne-menee-180-mln-330428-2018/>

⁹⁷ The new resident is registered in the "Great Stone" [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-zaregistrirovan-v-velikom-kamne-331481-2019>

card with a magnetic stripe, bank card with a chip, as well as with contactless short-range communication, widely used in smartphones.

In December 2018, "Great Stone" took in its "family" the Chinese company "Yunzhi Technology", the founder of which is a company from Shenzhen "Yunzhi Tech Co., Ltd.", known in the field of LED control systems and exports its products to more than one hundred countries. The new resident of the industrial park specializes in the production of innovative products that meet high environmental standards - LED transparent screens and LED monoblocks, which are used in the design of scenes and exhibitions, large-scale sports competitions. "The total investment in the project is \$3.2 million"⁹⁸. With an investment of about two million dollars at the end of 2018, the Chinese-Belarusian High-tech Aerospace Center for Research and Development Limited Liability Company, which will be engaged in research activities in the field of space technologies, became a member of the "Great Stone" industrial park.

In the same December 2018, the construction of the Sino-Belarusian center for cooperation in the field of transformation of scientific and technological achievements was launched at the Great Stone, which is scheduled to open in a year. In a five-storey building with a total area of about 20 thousand square meters, made in the form of a geometric figure reminiscent of the mathematical symbol of "infinity", it is planned to place "demonstration and multifunctional halls, shopping areas, centers for cooperation in the field of commercialization, business incubator and testing, center for intermediate testing and small-scale production of scientific and technical achievements, engaged in preliminary experiments"⁹⁹. There will also be laboratories, production halls for trial tests, a testing center, demonstration of samples and information on the production of products for subsequent registration of property rights. Finally, in December 2018, the Chinese company Sinotrans, one of the largest providers of logistics services in the country and engaged in the delivery of goods by sea, freight forwarding, express transport, warehousing services, opened its headquarters in the industrial park "Great Stone" in the Eurasian region. It is done with a long-range sight, as "a world-class logistics platform is being created on the Silk Road, the purpose of which will be to carry out maritime and air transport by rail"¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁸ Two new residents are registered with the Great Stone [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/dva-novyh-rezidenta-zaregistrirovany-v-velikom-kamne-330351-2018/>

⁹⁹ The Sino-Belarusian center of cooperation in the field of transformation of scientific and technical achievements is planned to be built in a year [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajsko-beloruskij-tsentr-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-transformatsii-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-dostizhenij-329775-2018/>

¹⁰⁰ Sinotrans opened its Eurasian headquarters in the "Great Stone" [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sinotrans-otkryla-evrazijskuju-shtab-kvartiru-v-velikom-kamne-329874-2018/>

Belarus-Sudan: impulses to deepen dialogue

In December 2018, President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan paid an official visit to Belarus, which "gave a significant impetus to further deepening of the interstate dialogue and realization of the existing potential of Belarusian-Sudanese cooperation"¹⁰¹. The following facts testify to the serious potential and tempting prospects of cooperation between Belarus and Sudan: 17 documents - agreements, treaties, contracts - worth about \$250 million were signed during the mentioned visit of the head of the Sudanese state to Minsk. Among the documents developing the legal framework of Belarusian-Sudanese relations, one should mention the intergovernmental agreement on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of tax evasion with respect to income taxes, as well as the memorandum on cooperation in the industrial sphere. Apparently, this is only a starting point for the development of the whole complex of bilateral relations, because, according to O. Al-Bashir, "Sudan is interested in expanding economic cooperation with Belarus"¹⁰². To raise these relations to a new level in the near future, the Sudanese side opened its diplomatic mission in Minsk in December 2018.

Belarus assumes that in its relations with Sudan, which is a bridge between Arab civilization and Africa, it should rely on the export of high-tech products with the subsequent establishment of joint assembly enterprises, since the increase and diversification of Belarusian exports should "contribute to the economic development of Sudan, solving the problems of industrialization, development of agriculture and training of local highly qualified personnel"¹⁰³. Back in 2017, dump trucks, prototypes of a high-tech combine harvester and an energy-saturated tractor, road-building machinery, agricultural equipment were delivered from Belarus to the Sudanese market for the first time, as well as trucks were renewed. And "over the first 10 months of 2018, exports of Belarusian goods to Sudan almost doubled compared to the same period last year"¹⁰⁴.

This African country attracts the attention of Belarus not only by its rich natural resources and good geographical location, not only by the opportunities to supply Belarusian equipment and training for Sudan, but also by the opening of promising

¹⁰¹ Congratulations to President Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir of the Sudan [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-sudana-omaru-xasanu-axmedu-al-bashiru-20193/

¹⁰² Grishkevich, A. Sudan is interested in expansion of economic cooperation with Belarus / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/sudan-zainteresovan-v-rasshirenii-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusju-328885-2018/>

¹⁰³ Negotiations with President Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir of the Sudan [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-sudana-omarom-xasanom-axmedom-al-bashrom-20033/

¹⁰⁴ It's the same place.

areas of cooperation, the list of which is quite wide: "This cooperation in the agro-industrial sector, in the development of minerals, infrastructure and logistics"¹⁰⁵.

With regard to industrial cooperation, today Belarus and Sudan are already developing and implementing twelve joint projects that "concern the extraction of gold, the establishment of a multi-profile machine-building enterprise for the assembly of tractors, MAZ trucks and Gomselmash equipment"¹⁰⁶. The same list should also mention the participation of Belarusian organizations in energy projects, measures to improve oil recovery at Sudanese fields, the establishment of joint ventures to produce meat and dairy products, fodder, growing vegetables and sprouts.

If we talk about the development of Belarusian-Sudanese cooperation in agriculture, we should first of all mention the framework contract for the supply of 17 grain storage facilities from Belarus worth €60 million to this African country. Back in September 2018, Belarusian Leedselmash and Selenergoprom signed the relevant documents with the Sudanese Agricultural Bank of Sudan. As a result, "Leedselmash" has signed a contract for the supply of eight grain storage facilities with a capacity of 50 thousand tons and four - 25 thousand tons with a total cost of 32.4 million euros. "Selenergoprom signed the documents for the delivery of five grain storage facilities of 100 thousand tons each, worth EUR 27.25 million"¹⁰⁷.

Exploration work in Sudan is also promising for Belarus. The relevant Belarusian enterprise has already been registered there for this purpose. In December 2018 it became known that "Sudan intends to allocate a second site for gold mining to Belarus in the near future, located near the Nile"¹⁰⁸. And then Belarusian specialists in this African country will carry out exploration work at two sites simultaneously. In addition, measures will soon be taken in both countries at the level of parliaments and business circles to "bring relations between the regions of Belarus and the states of Sudan to a higher level".¹⁰⁹ that matches the level of strategic partnership.

¹⁰⁵ During the visit of the President of Sudan to Belarus, contracts for \$250 million [Electronic Resource] were signed. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vo-vremja-vizita-prezidenta-sudana-v-belarus-podpisano-kontraktov-na-250-mln-328785-2018/>

¹⁰⁶ Grishkevich, A. Belarus and Sudan emphasize cooperation in economy and industrial cooperation - Rachkov / A. Grishkevich // [Electron resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-i-sudan-delajut-aktsent-na-sotrudnichestve-v-ekonomike-i-promkooperatsii-rachkov-328692-2018/>

¹⁰⁷ Belarus will deliver €60 million worth of grain storage to Sudan [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-postavit-v-sudan-zernohranilishcha-na-60-mln-evro-318290-2018/>

¹⁰⁸ Grishkevich, A. Sudan intends to allocate to Belarus the second site for gold mining / A. Grishkevich // [Electron resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sudan-nameren-vydelit-belarusi-vtoroj-uchastok-dlja-dobychi-zolota-328681-2018/>

¹⁰⁹ Interregional cooperation between Belarus and Sudan should be brought to a higher level - Andreichenko [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/politics/view/mezhregionalnoe-sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-sudana-sleduet-vyvesti-na-bolee-vysokij-uroven-andrejchenko-328837-2018/>

Brest region: goal - attracting foreign investments

It is known that foreign direct investment is an important factor for sustainable economic development and international competitiveness for most countries of the world. Attraction of foreign investments in the Republic of Belarus is the most important direction of the country's foreign economic activity "due to the fact that the increased volume of international relations, the tasks of integration of the Belarusian economy into the system of modern world economic relations and effective use of the existing domestic scientific and technical potential urgently require renovation of the main production assets and introduction of the newest foreign technologies"¹¹⁰.

The inflow of investments into the country's economy contributes to the development of enterprises, improving the quality of human capital, creating new jobs, attracting advanced technologies and stimulating their dissemination in related industries. More specifically, foreign direct investment performs such functions in the economy of the country, where it is attracted, as "activate the investment process as a whole; contribute to the development of the material base of the economy; provide an opportunity to exchange the latest achievements of production, management and marketing technologies necessary to reach the world level; stimulate the development of small and medium entrepreneurial forms; accelerate the development of sectors of the economy as a whole and of individual regions of the country; help to stimulate the development of the economy."¹¹¹

In this regard, there is a clear need to strengthen the innovation orientation of foreign direct investment in the regions of Belarus, where it should contribute to the sustainable, high-quality and balanced development of small towns and cities of the country, and to organize production of products attractive to the international market. This issue is very relevant today for Brest Oblast, a region of Belarus with great opportunities for attracting foreign investments. Due to its advantageous geographical location, the region can and should become a springboard for its export-oriented products to reach the markets of both the Eurasian Economic and European Union countries.

We remind that in 2016 foreign investments - about 134 million dollars - came to Brest region from 42 countries. A year later, the main investors in the region's economy were

¹¹⁰ Zalessky, B. International Relations and Media. View from Belarus / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing : Saarbrücken, Deutschland, 2014. -- C. 637.

¹¹¹ Treitiakova, E.V. Foreign direct investments: estimation of attraction to the Republic of Belarus / E.V. Treitiakova // Vestnik of P.O. Sukhoi State Technical University. -- 2017. -- №3. -- C. 77.

business entities from Lithuania, Russia, Poland and Germany. "Receipt of direct foreign investments amounted to \$199.7 million, or 86.8% of all received foreign investments"¹¹². In 2017, 38 projects were implemented in the region under the concluded investment agreements, including those involving foreign investments. In particular, the following issues were discussed: organization of mycelium production by "BTV-Agro" LLC in Kobrin district with the volume of investments - four and a half million dollars; cultivation of berry crops - blueberries and blackberries - by German company "Landberg Group" with organization of drip irrigation in Luninetz district and the volume of investments of one million dollars; creation of production of absorbent substances by Estonian "Terra Sorb" LLC on the basis of peat in Stolín district with the volume of financing - 400 thousand dollars. In addition, in 2017, LLC "Stolin Solar" was registered in Stolín district, the British investor of which came out with a proposal "to enter into an investment agreement for a total amount of more than \$34 million to create a solar energy plant"¹¹³. At first, the project envisaged the creation of ten new jobs, and during the season it was planned to hire up to 20 additional employees⁶.

In 2019, it is planned to attract at least 50 million dollars of foreign direct investment into the economy of Brest region, which will be used to modernize and further develop existing enterprises and industries, as well as to create new organizations in the field of small and medium-sized businesses. As for the continuation of the already launched major projects, we should name the foreign unitary enterprise for the production of furniture "Stanles" in Pinsk, in the development of which in 2019 will be invested half a million dollars. In the same Pinsk, the American corporation "Silicon Materials" will allocate almost two million dollars for the construction of an enterprise to produce ingots of single-crystal silicon. In Kobrin, the joint LLC "Polesie" PP plans to invest about one and a half million dollars in the construction of a production and warehouse complex for the production of plastic products. In addition, "the German company has launched a major investment project to establish a furniture production in the Ivatsevichi district"¹¹⁴. And in total at the end of 2018 the investment portfolio of Brest region included 26 proposals for potential investors for 167 million dollars. In order to attract foreign investors, a list of 109 land plots with various purposes was formed here.

¹¹² Brest region enterprises have invested more abroad than foreigners in the Brest region [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://1reg.by/2018/02/15/predpriyatiya-breestskoy-oblasti-bolshe-investirovali-za-rubezh-chem-inostrancyi-v-breestkiy-region/>

¹¹³ The British investor intends to create a solar plant in Stolín district [Electron Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/britanskij-investor-nameren-sozdat-solnechnuju-ustanovku-v-stolinskom-rajone-242581-2017/>

¹¹⁴ The inflow of direct foreign investments into the Brest region in 2019 will amount to at least \$50 million [Electronic resource]. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pritok-prjamyh-inostrannyh-investitsij-v-breestkuju-oblast-v-2019-godu-sostavit-ne-menee-50-mln-330506-2018/>

Free Economic Zone "Vitebsk": course - international cooperation

In August 2018 the Republic of Belarus adopted Decree No. 346 for further development of free economic zones and intensification of attraction of national and foreign investments, which stated the need to expand the territory and optimize the existing FEZs in the country - "Minsk", "Vitebsk", "Grodnoinvest", "Mogilev", "Gomel-Raton". It is assumed that the measures taken in the decree "will make it possible to accommodate residents, taking into account the prospects for their further growth, to organize jobs, to make optimal use of vacant land plots with the existing engineering and transport infrastructure, as well as to attract investments in the creation of export-oriented and import-substituting industries"¹¹⁵.

It should be noted that only in FEZ "Vitebsk" this decree defines 16 sectors, located not only in the area of Vitebsk, but also in other cities and urban settlements of the region - Postavy, Orsha, Barani, Bolbasovo, Novopolotsk, Polotsk district, as well as near the villages of Kosachi and Kopti of Vitebsk district, each of which in the near future can and should receive powerful impulses for development. And these plans are already beginning to be implemented in practice.

In particular, in December 2018 in FEZ "Vitebsk" appeared the first resident with Lithuanian capital - LLC "VMG WoodArt", the production site of which will be located in the first sector of the free economic zone on the territory of the former military airfield on the outskirts of Vitebsk, which is named "Zhurzhevo". The new resident is a part of one of the largest manufacturers and exporters of furniture and wood chipboards in the Baltic States, the international holding VMG, headquartered in Klaipeda, which unites a number of companies in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus.

Proposed for FEZ "Vitebsk" project involves the creation of sawmill production and factories for the production of wood chipboards and furniture. Its implementation will take place in two stages. "Initially, it is planned to invest more than 50 million euros in the development of production activities and create about 200 jobs in the period until 2023. The total volume of wood processing at the holding's enterprises will amount to about 700 thousand cubic meters per year. In total, at least 500 jobs will be created"¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁵ Belarus will consider the possibility of taking a loan to build energy infrastructure in a FEZ [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-privlechenija-zajma-dlja-stroitelstva-energeticheskoy-infrastruktury-330424-2018/>

¹¹⁶ A resident with Lithuanian capital is registered in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezident-s-litovskim-kapitalom-zaregistririvan-v-sez-vitebsk-330553-2018/>

Among the states with which the residents of the Vitebsk Free Economic Zone are successfully developing cooperation today is Latvia. During three quarters of 2018 their trade turnover with Latvian economic entities came close to 25 million dollars, which is more than a third of the mutual trade of the whole Vitebsk region with this Baltic country. "The following companies are involved in export-import transactions with Latvia: OOO BelGigaSint, OOO PO Energokomplekt, OAO Vityaz, OOO Modern-Expo, OOO Allianceplast, RUPTP Orsha flax mill"¹¹⁷.

Even more significant results are typical for the interaction of FEZ "Vitebsk" resident enterprises with Russian partners, especially from Moscow and Moscow region. Thus, in the first half of 2018 alone the trade turnover with them exceeded 60 million dollars, and the leaders of business cooperation with Muscovites can be called not only OJSC "Vitebsk Carpets", but also "a foreign enterprise" VIC-animal health ", LLC" Prodexim ", LLC" TransExpedition ", CJSC" Pozhtekhnika"¹¹⁸ " and a number of others.

Other specific plans of FEZ "Vitebsk" to expand the geography of international cooperation are also of interest. Thus, the Chinese company "Blue Lotus" planned in 2019 to begin implementation of the project here with the volume of investment of at least three hundred million dollars. It is a question of creation by the Chinese investor on the territory of FEZ "up to ten production enterprises on manufacture of production from wood - from fuel biomaterials to furniture"¹¹⁹. AL Maya Group from the United Arab Emirates, whose representatives visited Vitebsk in July 2018, sees one of the promising areas of investment cooperation in pharmaceuticals, "as the Middle Eastern partners have a wealth of experience in this area"¹²⁰. Finally, in September 2018, the administration of FEZ "Vitebsk" signed a cooperation agreement with the Indian company India Advisory, which, according to the parties, "will give impetus to further fruitful cooperation and attract Indian investments in Vitebsk region"¹²¹.

We would like to remind you that the free economic zone "Vitebsk" was established in 1999. Prior to Decree No. 346, it consisted of 13 sectors, including 7 in Vitebsk, 4 in Orsha, as well as one each in Vitebsk and Postavsk districts. As of the end of 2018, 44 companies with investors from more than 10 countries were registered here, including German Witella, Polish Décora East, British LINPAC Peking East, Estonian Suisse-

¹¹⁷ Participation of FEZ "Vitebsk" administration in Belarusian-Latvian business forum [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <http://www.fez-vitebsk.com/ru/news>

¹¹⁸ Participation of FEZ "Vitebsk" administration in complex presentation of Vitebsk region in Moscow [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.fez-vitebsk.com/ru/news>

¹¹⁹ Agreement of intent was signed between FEZ "Vitebsk" administration and Chinese company [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.fez-vitebsk.com/ru/news>

¹²⁰ FEZ "Vitebsk" administration was visited by businessmen from UAE [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.fez-vitebsk.com/ru/news>

¹²¹ Participation of FEZ "Vitebsk" administration in Belarusian-Indian business forum [Electronic resource]. - URL: <http://www.fez-vitebsk.com/ru/news>

Cable, American CESS-Bel and a number of others, which operate in 25 production areas, including mechanical engineering, electronics, veterinary, chemical, fuel, food and light industry. And the total number of employees at resident enterprises is about 11 thousand people.

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Belarus: from green economy to green cities

At the 24th United Nations World Conference on Climate Change, held in December 2018 in the Polish city of Katowice, the Belarusian side stated that it views the green economy and low-carbon sustainable development as a strategic vector. Due to the fact that over 60 per cent of emissions in the Republic of Belarus are generated by the energy sector, the country pays special attention to improving energy efficiency of the economy, development of renewable and other low-carbon energy sources. Having pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 28 per cent by 2030 to 1990 levels, Belarus, at a forum in Katowice, expressed its readiness to "increase its ambitions" to "do more in energy, transport, industry, construction and waste management"¹²². However, equitable and inclusive criteria for access to international climate funds should be established for middle-income countries or countries with economies in transition.

The projects implemented with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are a very effective tool for achieving the strategic objective in Belarus. One of them - "Belarus: Supporting green urban development in small and medium-sized cities of Belarus" ("Green Cities"), for which the Global Environment Facility has allocated three million dollars, - in December 2018 moved to the stage of practical implementation of three pilot initiatives to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in three Belarusian cities - Polotsk, Novopolotsk and Novogrudok - by 2022 by more than 90 thousand tons.

Recall that sustainable development of cities and human settlements was included in 2015 by the United Nations as a separate goal in the global sustainable development agenda to "make cities and human settlements open, safe, resilient and sustainable"¹²³. This implies not only access to safe and affordable housing, but also necessary investment in improved public transport, green public spaces, and improved urban planning and development in a participatory and inclusive manner. In Belarus, this issue is also based on the understanding that "a green city must sustainably meet the needs of several generations, make a significant contribution to the economy while

¹²² Belarus views the green economy as a strategic vector - Khudyk [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-rassmatrivaet-zelenuju-ekonomiku-kak-strategicheskij-vektor-hudyk-329111-2018/>

¹²³ Goal 11: Sustainable cities and human settlements [Electronic resource]. - - 2015. - URL: <http://www.by.undp.org/content/belarus/ru/home/post-2015/sdg-overview/goal-11.html>

reducing greenhouse gas emissions"¹²⁴. That is why the country's solution to this problem is based on an integrated approach aimed at increasing the sustainability of cities through energy conservation, transport and urban mobility, reducing carbon dioxide emissions and other measures that are beneficial to the environment, beneficial to the urban economy and improve the quality of life of people.

Speaking about the implementation of the "Green Cities" project in Polotsk and Novopolotsk, it should be noted that one of the main elements there will be the implementation of pilot initiatives on sustainable urban transport, where it is planned to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 77.8 thousand tons by 2022 through the mobile component - improvement of urban transport and development of bicycle driving. And in Novogrudok, the task will be achieved through energy efficiency measures. In this regard, all three cities have already developed green urban development plans - step-by-step strategies to achieve the desired state of the city.

Thus, a tender will be held in Polotsk and Novopolotsk for the creation of design and estimate documentation for the construction of a cycle track, which will connect the two cities. At the same time, the optimal route through the village of Ekiman was chosen when considering different route options. It is also important that the cycling infrastructure of Polotsk and Novopolotsk will be developed in a comprehensive way: from bicycle lanes, bicycle parking lots, bicycle cafes to repair shops and rental shops. It also provides for "replacement of public transport stops, installation of information panels, implementation of adaptive control system for synchronization of traffic light signals"¹²⁵. In addition, for these two cities in Vitsebsk voblast, for the first time in Belarus, a unified plan of sustainable urban mobility is being developed, which will allow the city authorities to jointly address regional problems of the demand for public transport, congestion of roads due to excessive use of private cars.

As for Novogrudok, in accordance with the "Green Cities" project, it is planned to implement measures to improve energy efficiency: from replacement of inefficient street lighting systems with "smart" LED lamps to the use of intelligent energy accounting system at residential facilities. In doing so, "street lighting control systems will take into account the presence or absence of people, transport, lighting and time of day, thus saving energy and money"¹²⁶. Turning to the second direction of the pilot

¹²⁴ The UNDP project "Green Cities" in Belarus will help to reduce CO2 emissions by more than 90,000 tonnes [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/proekt-proon-zelenye-goroda-v-belarusi-pomozhet-sokratit-vybrosy-so2-bolee-chem-na-90-tys-t-328928-2018/>

¹²⁵ The UNDP Green Cities Project in Belarus is moving to the implementation stage [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/proekt-proon-zelenye-goroda-v-belarusi-perehodit-k-stadii-prakticheskoi-realizatsii-328934-2018/>

¹²⁶ It's the same place.

initiative in Novogrudok, it should be noted that the house where "smart" meters will be installed has already been determined.

It remains to be added that the lessons learned from the three pilot initiatives of the UNDP Green Cities Project will then be used in at least another ten communities of the Republic of Belarus.

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Belarus: on the way to 3+ educational standards

One of the main tasks in organizing the educational process in higher education institutions of the Republic of Belarus in the academic year 2018/2019 is to update the content of education and transition to a new generation of educational standards that provide training of specialists for all types of professional activities, as well as "providing flexibility and variability of educational programs in accordance with the changing needs of the labor market, innovative development of sectors of the economy and social sphere; <..127.> providing practical orientation This question is dictated by the fact that such trends in the development of higher education in the world today are highlighted as follows: 1) transition to mass higher education, which is explained by the development of the world economy and the growing demand for qualified specialists; 2) introduction of information and communication technologies in higher education, which brings to the fore the formation of competencies needed by specialists; 3) organization of lifelong learning, which requires fundamental knowledge in primary education and entails a reduction of special and practice-oriented training at the initial stage. In this regard, in the Republic of Belarus among the priorities for the development of higher education are such areas as: ensuring the quality of education in the conditions of mass higher education, the relationship with the labor market, "the integration of educational research and innovation-entrepreneurial activities <...>; further integration into the international educational space, increasing international competitiveness.

It is characteristic of the Republic of Belarus that the core basis of higher education standards, on the basis of which the educational process at its first and second levels is carried out today, is a **competency-based approach**. Widely used in the world practice, it allows to formulate requirements to young graduates, their professional and personal competences more precisely. It is with this approach that the competence and qualification characteristics of a specialist's professional activity are most fully focused on spheres, objects, types and tasks of professional activity, as well as on the composition of competences. In other words, the introduction of a competency-based approach into the higher education system is aimed at improving the quality of this education, training highly qualified professionals who are competitive on the labor market, fluent in their profession and oriented to related fields of activity, ready for continuous professional growth, social and professional mobility.

¹²⁷ On organization of educational process in higher education institutions in 2018/2019 academic year. - Letter from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus of 24.08.2018. - - C. 2,3.

It should also be noted that the current educational standards for higher education in the Republic of Belarus introduced a **modular principle of** social and humanitarian cycle organization. And it has been widely implemented in Belarusian universities in recent years in the study of social and humanitarian disciplines, which allowed "to move in practice to the integration of educational content and interdisciplinarity, as well as to organize the variability in mastering the content of educational programs in connection with the future professional activity of the graduate"¹²⁸. Further development and improvement of this principle presupposes wide dissemination of **practice-oriented learning**, which is realized through integration of educational, scientific and effective production practices. That is why the introduction of the modular principle of building educational programs of higher education is recommended by the Republican Council of Rectors of higher education institutions of the Republic of Belarus as a tool for their review and updating of content.

Third-generation educational standards were introduced at the Belarusian higher school back in 2012-2013. Their implementation required a balanced systemic approach to the issues of education quality assurance, application of innovative educational technologies in the educational process, strengthening the practical orientation of the knowledge obtained, and development of lifelong learning. Nevertheless, in June 2016, the Republican Council of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions adopted a decision 129 "On the development of standard educational planning documentation of a new generation (educational standards and model curricula)", which indicated the purpose of developing a new generation of standards in 3+ format based on existing standards of the third generation. The key principles should be "implementation of the competence approach, modular design of curricula and standards, profiling <...> , close relationship of bachelor and master training models" . The developed standards in 3+ format should be based on the experience of implementation of national educational standards of previous generations and the best international experience in creating educational programs, as well as contribute to the development and demand for master's programs.

¹²⁸ On directions of development of higher education in the Republic of Belarus (improving the quality of training and competitiveness) [Electronic resource]. -- 2014. - URL: http://srrb.niks.by/info/post_09_14_14.htm

¹²⁹ Makarov, A. V. Realization of the competence approach at designing the standards of the higher education generation 3+ / A. V. Makarov // Higher technical education. -- 2017. -- №1. - Volume 1. -- C. 14.

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