

## The boundaries of sustainable partnership. Part VII

Today the Republic of Belarus is tackling a number of tasks aimed at creating conditions in the country to reduce the national economy's susceptibility to external shocks. Among the most important of these are: sustainable economic growth; ensuring efficient operation of each enterprise; equal and sustainable development of all Belarusian regions; creating conditions for attracting foreign and domestic investments; increasing exports of goods and services, including to new markets; developing effective international trade and economic cooperation. How some of these objectives are being implemented in practice by Belarus today is the subject of the proposed study.

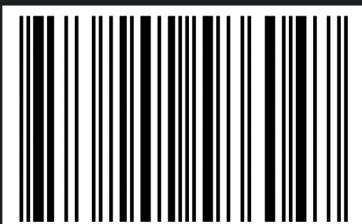


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## Belarus - Germany: potential for cooperation - in regions

In February 2020, the 17th meeting of the Belarusian-German Working Group on Trade and Investment was held in Leipzig, where, discussing the prospects for increasing bilateral trade and expanding the presence of German business in the Belarusian market, including in zones with preferential investment regimes, its participants stated "the presence of significant potential for further increasing mutual trade, including through the implementation of new investment projects in Belarus with the participation of German business"<sup>1</sup>. The very fact that this meeting of the working group was held in the Federal State of Saxony, as well as the organization there of a regular meeting of the Belarus-Saxony Business Council, established in 2009 by the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Industrial and Commercial Chamber of Leipzig, once again emphasizes the desire of the parties to significantly enhance cooperation at the regional level of Belarus and Germany in 2020. It should be reminded that today "about 20 Belarusian cities have friendly relations with German regions. In particular, Bonn is a partner of Minsk, Brest is a partner of the Union of Communities of Middle Shusentali, Grodno - Minden, Vitebsk - Ningburg and Frankfurt - Oder, Mogilev - Eisenakh"<sup>2</sup>. It should also be noted that it is interaction at the local level that has been "one of the most successful forms of bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Germany for quite a long time, since the brotherly and partner Belarusian-German movement reflects the desire of both local authorities and peoples of the two countries to strengthen friendship and mutual trust through long-term and multifaceted international partnership"<sup>3</sup>. The facts testify to the fact that the parties today have a serious desire to bring interregional cooperation to a new level.

In particular, in the Belarusian capital German companies see a number of areas for effective investment cooperation. "First of all, these are technological start-ups of the High-Tech Park - small companies that start working on the basis of new ideas. There is a huge potential here"<sup>4</sup>. In addition, the German side is very interested in Belarusian vehicles powered by electricity, as well as cooperation in the automotive

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<sup>1</sup> On the 17th meeting of the Belarus-German Working Group on Trade and Investment [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/ddfed039edafba4c.html](http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ddfed039edafba4c.html).

<sup>2</sup> A meeting of partner cities of Belarus and Germany will be held in March in Brest [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vstrechu-gorodov-partnerov-belarusi-i-germanii-provedut-v-marte-v-breste-379215-2020/>.

<sup>3</sup> Zalesky, B. Belarus - Europe: partnership potential. Policy of multi-vector policy in the conditions of global challenges / B. Zaleskiy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2016. - - C. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Ilyicheva, N. Germany is interested in Belarusian electric transport and investment in HTP startups / N. Ilyicheva // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/germanija-zainteresovana-v-belorusskom-elektrotransporte-i-investirovanii-v-startapy-pvt-378332-2020/>.

sector and instrument-making through the production of components for machinery manufactured in Germany.

The metropolitan area is also very interesting for German entrepreneurs in terms of investment projects in Belarus. Statistics says that among other countries, except for the supply of potash fertilizers, "Germany ranks fourth in terms of trade with Minsk voblast and third after Lithuania and Poland to export goods to the EU countries<sup>5</sup>. The Minsk region believes that the development of twinning with German partners will allow to expand cooperation with them not only in the social sphere, but also in trade and economic. In order to increase the volume of cooperation through small and medium businesses, in February 2020 the Belarusian side made a proposal to establish cooperation between Minsk Oblast and the Federal Union of Small and Medium Businesses of Germany, which would give a powerful impetus to the development of contacts between enterprises and organizations of the capital region with partners in the federal states.

The topic of Belarusian-German interregional cooperation is also topical for Grodno region, where Germany is considered an important foreign trade partner, "but the potential of trade and investment cooperation is far from being exhausted"<sup>6</sup>. A number of enterprises with German capital already operate here. In particular, there are examples of already implemented projects in Grodno and Svisloch districts. Another one may appear soon enough in the Lida district, where an investor from Germany plans to organize a farm for onion production. This agricultural project is called "Tsybulka. by". The German entrepreneur will be given 50 hectares to grow five varieties of onions in the Lida region. "In the long term it is planned to grow up to 10 thousand tons of onions in the rayon. Among the planned markets are not only Belarus, but also the EAEC and EU countries"<sup>7</sup>. It is quite possible that in the future carrots, potatoes, barley, rapeseed and rye will also be grown here using German technologies.

Another priority is the intensification of twinning between the cities of the two countries in 2020. Apparently, a constructive conversation on this topic will be held at the next meeting of representatives of the Belarusian and German cities, which is scheduled for late March 2020 in Brest - a city that has 30-year experience of

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<sup>5</sup> Minsk region as an investment site is interesting for German enterprises - Huterer [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/minskaja-oblast-kak-investitsionnaja-ploschadka-interesna-nemetskim-predpriyatijam-huterer-380069-2020/>.

<sup>6</sup> Germany and Grodno region intend to deepen cooperation in production and logistics [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/germanija-i-grodnenskaja-oblast-namereny-uglubit-sotrudnichestvo-v-sferah-proizvodstva-i-logistiki-382549-2020>.

<sup>7</sup> Investor from Germany plans to organize in Lidsk raion a farm for cultivation of onions [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investor-iz-germanii-planiruet-organizovat-v-lidskom-rajone-hozjajstvo-po-vyraschivaniju-luka-382778-2020/>.

cooperation with Ravensburg and Weingarten, as well as communities of Baienfurt, Bindt and Berg. The cooperation agreement between the cities of Grodno and Minden has been in force for over 20 years. In addition, Grodno has established relations with Magdeburg, where there is also considerable potential for cooperation. And now the parties intend to essentially update these communications.

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## Belarus - Ukraine: regions intend to cooperate

The Third Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine is planned to be held in autumn 2020 in Grodno, an event aimed at accelerating the pace of "creation of new and implementation of joint industrial productions, implementation of joint projects on modernization of road and transport infrastructure, implementation of innovative technologies"<sup>8</sup>. The very fact of holding the Forum in Hrodna, which now has cooperation agreements with eight Ukrainian regions, can be explained by the fact that "Ukraine today is the region's third external partner in trade turnover, which reached \$379 million last year [2019]<sup>9</sup>. At the upcoming forum it is planned to supplement the existing legal framework for cooperation of the **Grodno region** with its partners in Ukraine with two more agreements - with the Lviv and Kherson regions. It should be noted that other Belarusian regions are also actively preparing for the third forum, focusing on the implementation of joint projects with Ukrainian partners today.

In particular, it is aimed at strengthening comprehensive cooperation with the same Lviv region and **Brest region**, whose delegation took part in the Third Lviv Export Forum in March 2020. It should be reminded that the parties signed an agreement on cooperation back in 2004. And today "in terms of export supplies the Lviv region is the second most important Ukrainian region for the Brest region (Kyiv region takes the first place). Last year [2019] the Brest region almost doubled its export to this region in the west of Ukraine. In total, \$9.4 million of goods with Brest brand was delivered to Lviv region with the growth rate of 195%"<sup>10</sup>. By the third forum of regions in Hrodna the parties intend to develop a road map of cooperation to supplement the 2004 agreement with new concrete projects. The main emphasis will be placed on cooperation between regional centers. After all for Brest experience of Lvov is actual, first of all, in the sphere of tourism organization. And "Ukrainian partners are interested in the best practices of Brest waste processing plant, peat processing enterprises' production"<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Zalesky, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. View from Belarus / B. Zaleskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. -- C. 151.

<sup>9</sup> The agreement on cooperation is planned to be signed by Grodno, Lviv and Kherson regions [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-planirujut-podpisat-grodnenskaja-lvovskaja-i-hersonskaja-oblasti-382199-2020/>.

<sup>10</sup> The Brest region delegation will take part in the III Lviv Export Forum [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/delegatsija-bresterkoj-oblasti-primet-uchastie-v-iii-lvovskom-eksportnom-forume-382618-2020/>.

<sup>11</sup> Brest and Lviv regions will develop a road map for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskaja-i-lvovskaja-oblasti-razrabotajut-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-383502-2020/>.

Among the specific business entities of the Brest region, which are set to significantly increase their activities in the regions of Ukraine in 2020, we can name the "Managing Company of the holding" Bobruiskagromash", which plans to organize the assembly production of tractor trailers in the neighboring country with a period of implementation in the first half of this year. The agreement on this was reached in March 2020 with PrJSC "Nizhselmash". "In the next six months about 60 machine sets of tractor trailers will be delivered to "Nizhinselmash" for realization of the reached agreements"<sup>12</sup>.

Such economic entity of Brest region as JSC 13"Road and Construction Trust<sup>14</sup> of Brest", the volume of exports of which in 2019 to Ukraine increased by several times and amounted to 11 million dollars, feels confident in the Ukrainian regions. The trust performed works "in Rivne, Kyiv, Zhytomyr and Volyn regions both on roads of national and local importance. Employees of almost all <...> branches from Brest Drohichyn, Pinsk, Baranovichi were involved". In 2020, the business interests of the trust again, probably, will affect four Ukrainian regions. Firstly, back in 2019, Brest residents together with their Gomel colleagues signed a major contract for the construction of a bypass road around Rivne, and today they have already started work to finish the project by the end of 2021. Secondly, in early April 2020, Brest road workers will resume repairs on the road section in the Kyiv region. Thirdly, DST No. 4 of Brest actively participates in tenders held by the highway service of Zhytomyr region. Fourthly, in 2020 Brest residents will participate in the procedure of selecting the general contractor for the facility in Kherson region and hope to show their best side in this tender.

We intend to increase our presence in the regions of Ukraine, where there is significant potential for growth, and economic entities of the **Gomel region**. In particular, this is the production association "Belorusneft", whose specialists in 2019 in cooperation with customers were able to reduce the cycle of drilling wells on Ukrainian soil from 6-7 to 3-3.5 months. The reputation of the reliable partner allowed the association to conclude contracts "with JSC "Ukrgezdochema" for 2020 - on works on hydraulic fracturing and coiled tubing technologies, with DTEK Neftegaz - on construction of wells on gas condensate fields"<sup>14</sup>. Even today, two Belarusian well

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<sup>12</sup> "Bobruiskagromash plans to assemble tractor trailers in Ukraine [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bobrujskagromash-planiruet-sobirat-traktornye-pritsepy-v-ukraine-382499-2020/>.

<sup>13</sup> Brest road workers this year plan to work in four regions of Ukraine [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskie-dorozhniki-v-etom-godu-planirujut-rabotat-v-chetyreh-oblastjah-ukrainy-382563-2020>.

<sup>14</sup> "Belorusneft intends to increase its presence in the service market in Russia and Ukraine [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusneft-namerena-naraschivat-prisutstvie-na-rynke-servisnyh-uslug-v-rossii-i-ukraine-381445-2020>.

drilling teams are already working in the Ukrainian regions in order to put up to five facilities into operation by the end of 2020, and four more are scheduled for sidetracking.

Finally, the Belarusian Railway also plans to seriously expand cooperation with Ukrainian regions in 2020. The point is that five pairs of trains are still organized in communication with Ukraine. Of course, this is not enough. That is why the parties are already considering "the issue of destination of either trains or unloading cars that will go from Vitebsk to Belgorod-Dnestrovsk. 15<...> There are also plans to expand communication to Lviv by organizing parity traffic" . In the meantime, only one train of the Belarusian train runs to Lviv.

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<sup>15</sup> Markovich, E. BZHD plans to expand communication with Ukraine / E. Markovich // [Electron resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bzhd-planiruet-rasshirjat-soobschenie-s-ukrainoj-380946-2020/>.



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## **Eurasian Economic Union: the way to the future will be determined by the development strategy**

From January 1, 2020, the Republic of Belarus assumed chairmanship of the bodies of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEC), thus opening another five-year cycle of development of this integration formation in the post-Soviet space. The action program of the Belarusian presidency within the Union promises to be very rich. In particular, it is planned to focus joint efforts of the EAEC member-states on the complete removal of barriers, maximum reduction of exemptions and restrictions in their markets, prevention of the possibility of new types of obstacles to a free competitive environment. In addition, the Belarusian side will initiate additional measures for the global and regional positioning of the union with a view to developing and implementing a common or unified information policy, which "requires the development of a Common Information Policy Concept, a Strategy for its implementation, and action plans for their implementation. 16<...> The most important thing is to ensure broad support for Eurasian integration by citizens of our states" . The successful accomplishment of this task undoubtedly depends on a number of factors, among which should be mentioned the adequate media articulation of the Eurasian integration theme by the international segment of national journalism in the EAEC member states, which requires from international journalists, first of all, a competent approach to its coverage in the media sphere.

Recall that on February 1, 2020 a new Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), headed by a representative of Belarus, M. M., also began its work. Myasnikovich. And already at the first meeting of this formation the main priorities of the EEC work were voiced.

Firstly, real working markets should be formed in the EEU by 2025, which requires more effective measures in this direction.

Secondly, the strategic directions of the development of the Eurasian economic integration up to 2025 should be promptly finalized.

Third, an urgent task is to increase the international prestige of the Union, for which "it is planned to intensify cooperation with international organizations and

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<sup>16</sup> Address by President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko to the Heads of the Member States of the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/obraschenie-prezidenta-respubliki-belarus-aleksandra-lukashenko-k-glavam-gosudarstv-chlenov-evrazijskogo-22827/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/obraschenie-prezidenta-respubliki-belarus-aleksandra-lukashenko-k-glavam-gosudarstv-chlenov-evrazijskogo-22827/).

associations, jointly develop transport and logistics infrastructure, including participation in projects of the "Belt and Way" initiative<sup>17</sup>.

Fourthly, there is a need to ensure real benefits for the countries of the union in conducting mutual trade. In the meantime, as noted at the first meeting of the new ECE membership, "new obstacles have not yet been removed and the task of the commission is to improve mechanisms for monitoring the rights of the union and to fully implement them"<sup>18</sup>. The statistics here are as follows: four years ago the list of barriers, restrictions and obstacles in the EAEC was 60 points, at the end of January 2020 - 71. As a result, the pace of development of mutual trade within the Union cannot be called rapid. Suffice it to say that "the volume of mutual trade in goods of the EAEC states in 2019 amounted to \$55.3 billion, or 100.2% of the 2018 level"<sup>19</sup>.

In the light of the tasks set for the development of the Union, much, of course, should be taken into account in the strategic directions of Eurasian integration until 2025, which are currently being developed within the framework of the EAEC. As of mid-February 2020, in this comprehensive document, "the parties have agreed on 318 positions, the remaining disagreements concern only 15 mechanisms of interaction"<sup>20</sup>. At the EEC meeting in February, the parties were able to agree on several more positions of the draft strategy. "In particular, they agreed on the wording of special protective, anti-dumping and compensatory measures, sanitary, veterinary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, as well as conceptual approaches to the formation of mechanisms to promote economic development of the EEEEC<sup>21</sup>.

The key points that lay down in the strategy are related:

- (a) The complete elimination of obstacles in the union market;
- b) improvement of customs regulation;

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<sup>17</sup> Participation in the meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9245>.

<sup>18</sup> Brewer, E. Common markets, fight against obstacles, infrastructure projects - Myasnikovich named the EEC priorities / E. Brewer // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/obschierynki-borba-s-prepjatstvijami-infrastrukturnye-proekty-mjasnikovich-nazval-prioritety-cek-378306-2020/>.

<sup>19</sup> Brewer, E.V. Industrial production and retail trade turnover grew in 2019 (in Russian) / E. Brewer // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-caes-v-2019-godu-vyrosli-promproizvodstvo-i-roznicnyj-tovarooborot-380320-2020/>.

<sup>20</sup> Pivovar, E. Myasnikovich: the work on the project of the Eurasian integration strategy till 2025 is being completed / E. Brewery // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-rabota-nad-proektom-strategii-evrazijskoj-integratsii-do-2025-goda-zavershaetsja-380272-2020/>.

<sup>21</sup> Brewer, E.V. Vice-Premiers coordinated SPS measures in the strategy of the Eurasian integration / E. Brewer // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vitse-premjery-soglasovali-sfs-mery-v-strategii-evrazijskoj-integratsii-380580-2020/>.

c) formation of a digital union space;

d) building a management system and financing joint cooperation projects.

Among the new directions to be reflected in the strategy are the development of green technologies, renewable energy, economic aspects in health, tourism, education and science. At the same time, the quality of the developed program document should be positively affected by the fact that the Scientific Council of the Russian Academy of Sciences in February 2020 decided to provide scientific support and support for the implementation of the Strategic Directions of the Eurasian economic integration until 2025. It only remains to add that in the finalized form this document should be approved at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in May 2020.

In addition, the plans of Belarus' presidency in the EAEC include the adoption of a single import substitution programme for the union on the basis of national programmes, the elaboration of a long-term strategic programme of innovative development, and the strengthening of cooperation in science, technology and innovation.

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## Belarus - Kyrgyzstan: trade, cooperation, cooperation of regions

In February 2020, the ninth meeting of the Belarusian-Kyrgyz intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation was held in Minsk, where topical issues of development and strengthening of system mutually beneficial partnership relations were considered. In Minsk and Bishkek, this meeting of the intergovernmental Belarusian-Kyrgyz commission, where the status of co-chairmen has already been raised to the level of deputy prime ministers, was seen as "a new impetus to the development of relations between our countries"<sup>22</sup>. It should be reminded that the Belarusian side has traditionally been interested in the closest partnership with this state in Central Asia, especially since "recently trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan has significantly intensified. Our trade turnover over the last three years has not dropped below \$100 million"<sup>23</sup>. Indeed, in 2019, the volume of Belarusian-Kyrgyz trade amounted to more than \$105 million with a surplus for the Belarusian side of more than \$90 million, which was ensured by supplies of dairy products, tractors and tractors, meat and poultry by-products, medicines, furniture and chipboard from Belarus. However, according to the parties, "the current volume of mutual trade between Kyrgyzstan and Belarus does not meet the economic potential of the countries"<sup>24</sup>. In fact, and for this reason, at the next meeting of the Interstate Commission, the attention of the parties was focused on priority areas of cooperation: 1) **increasing the** volume of mutual trade; 2) **deepening** industrial cooperation and establishing joint assembly facilities; 3) **expanding** interregional cooperation.

In terms of **increasing mutual trade**, the Belarusian side made specific proposals to increase the supply of passenger, freight and municipal vehicles to Kyrgyzstan, which is quite consistent with the plans of the Kyrgyz side to upgrade, for example, the fleet of passenger vehicles in Bishkek and other cities. In addition, by promoting its products on the Kyrgyz market, the Belarusian side intends to continue its active participation in exhibition events in Kyrgyzstan in 2020. Thus, in April the exposition of Belarusian exporters will be presented for the third time at the

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<sup>22</sup> The meeting of the Belarusian-Kyrgyz intergovernmental commission will be held in Minsk on February 21 [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zasedanie-belorussko-kyrgyzskoj-mezhpravkomissii-projdet-v-minske-21-fevralja-378085-2020/>.

<sup>23</sup> Sergei Rumas: Belarus is interested in increasing supplies of engineering products to Kyrgyzstan [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9292>.

<sup>24</sup> Kyrgyzstan proposes Belarus to create an agro-cluster for milk processing [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kyrgyzstan-predlagaet-belarusi-sozdat-agroklastor-poperabotke-moloka-380586-2020/>.

international exhibition of food industry "FoodExpo" in Bishkek, where visitors will be able to get acquainted with products and drinks from Belarus. "The emphasis will be on healthy eating and products with "Halal" certificate. For the first time at the national exposition there will be presented food additives, casings for meat and sausage products, baby food"<sup>25</sup>.

If we talk about **deepening production cooperation**, the Kyrgyz side proposed to intensify cooperation in agriculture and agro-industrial complex. First of all, we are talking about the creation of a joint agro-cluster for milk processing in Kyrgyzstan using Belarusian technologies, as well as about "the construction of dairy complexes with the necessary equipment of Belarusian production and supplies of breeding livestock"<sup>26</sup>. To consolidate these agreements in the legal field, following the meeting of the interstate commission, an agreement on cooperation in agriculture and food between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of Kyrgyzstan was signed. As for industrial cooperation, the plans voiced in Minsk to set up assembly facilities look quite realistic: transformers with the Kozlov Minsk Electromechanical Plant, elevators with Mogilevliftmash, gas meters with the Belarusian Optical and Mechanical Association. The seriousness of these intentions of the parties is evidenced, in particular, by the fact of signing an agreement on cooperation between the Minsk Electromechanical Plant named after V.I. Kozlov and the Belarusian Optical and Mechanical Association Mashelektrosnab following a meeting of the interstate commission.

Speaking about the **expansion of interregional cooperation between** Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, it should be reminded that so far the capitals - Minsk and Bishkek - have been setting the tone in this cooperation. "Back in 1997 they signed the Agreement on Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation, and in 2008 they established brotherly relations"<sup>27</sup>. At a meeting of the interstate commission in Minsk, the Gomel Oblast Executive Committee and the Office of the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Kyrgyz Government in Chui Oblast signed an agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technological, humanitarian and cultural spheres. Although this agreement was the first with Kyrgyz partners for the Belarusian region, even before that Gomel Oblast enterprises were already present on the Central

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<sup>25</sup> Nemankova, Y. Exposition of Belarusian manufacturers will be presented at FoodExpo in Bishkek / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekspozitsija-belorusskih-proizvoditelej-budet-predstavlena-na-vystavke-foodexpo-v-bishkeke-378791-2020/>.

<sup>26</sup> Vladimir Kukharev: Belarusian electric buses may appear in the streets of Bishkek [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9293>.

<sup>27</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Belarus - Kyrgyzstan: from trade to cooperation / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XIII Miedzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Nauka i inowacja - 2017", Volume 3. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - - C. 10.

Asian market. Suffice it to say that in 2019 the trade turnover of the region with Kyrgyzstan exceeded ten million dollars. "At the same time, exports were at the level of \$8.5 million. 26 enterprises of the region supplied their goods, including Gomselmash OJSC, Multipack, Mozyrsol OJSC, manufacturers of doors and wallpaper. The products of the Turov Dairy Plant, in particular soft cheese, have started to be promoted in the Kyrgyz market<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> The Gomel region will develop cooperation with the Chui Oblast of Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskij-region-budet-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-chujskoj-oblastju-kyrgyzstana-381123-2020>



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## **Belarus - International Atomic Energy Agency: cooperation with a view to strengthening cooperation**

Among the main directions of the Belarusian economic diplomacy, actualized by the processes of globalization and growth of interdependence of the economies of the world states, one should mention "participation of the Republic of Belarus in the work of universal and specialized, global and regional international organizations"<sup>29</sup>. One of the successful examples of such a plan is interaction of the Belarusian side with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Thus, quite recently - from February 24 to March 4, 2020 - the IAEA mission worked in Belarus, which was engaged in a comprehensive assessment of the development of national nuclear energy infrastructure (INIR 3) in our country. The mission not only considered the report prepared by the Belarusian side on the development of all areas of nuclear infrastructure, but also analyzed the infrastructure "in all 19 areas of its development, identified in the agency document for newcomers to nuclear energy - Milestones ("Milestones")<sup>30</sup>. In particular, these included such areas as nuclear energy training, accident management and emergency preparedness and response, public outreach, radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel management, radiation safety, legislative framework, and state policy on nuclear safety.

As a result, the mission experts have identified five good practices in the Belarusian experience that can be implemented in other countries and relate to such areas as: 1) coordination of programmes and projects; 2) use of independent expert groups; 3) cooperation with regulatory authorities of other countries; 4) interaction with international stakeholders; 5) emergency preparedness. In addition, the IAEA mission made seven recommendations to improve the development of the national nuclear power infrastructure in a number of areas, including the maintenance of the Belarusian nuclear power plant in Astravets, the first unit of which is scheduled for commissioning in 2020 and the second in 2021.

We emphasize that this mission of the IAEA was not the first in Belarus, although the visit of such missions is not mandatory, as each country invites the agency experts on its own initiative. Prior to that, our country has already visited a number of

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<sup>29</sup> Zalesky, B. International Relations and Media. Peculiarities of multi-vector international cooperation in the period of global challenges / B. Zaleskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2016. - - C. 345.

<sup>30</sup> As a result of the INIR 3 mission to Belarus, the IAEA has identified five practices useful for other countries [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [https://atom.belta.by/ru/belaes\\_ru/view/magate-vydelilo-po-itogam-missii-inir-3-v-belarusi-pjat-poleznyx-dlja-drugix-stran-praktik-10563](https://atom.belta.by/ru/belaes_ru/view/magate-vydelilo-po-itogam-missii-inir-3-v-belarusi-pjat-poleznyx-dlja-drugix-stran-praktik-10563).

expert and assessment missions of the IAEA in the field of nuclear safety, including "integrated assessment of nuclear energy infrastructure (INIR, 2012), assessment of regulatory infrastructure (IRRS, 2016), assessment of the site taking into account external events (SEED, 2017), emergency preparedness assessment (EPREV, 2018), accounting and control of nuclear materials (ISSAS, 2019)<sup>31</sup>.

All these facts once again emphasize the desire of the Belarusian side to create a safe, economically efficient and environmentally friendly nuclear industry. For this purpose, as we can see, Belarus actively uses the whole range of tools and services provided by the agency, considering the fundamental point for itself "strict compliance with all international obligations in the nuclear field and adherence to all standards and recommendations of the IAEA,<sup>32</sup> which are based on global best practices on "how and what can be improved before a nuclear power plant is commissioned to ensure long-term, safe and reliable operation"<sup>33</sup>. In this regard, the INIR 3 mission's final conclusion that the first unit of the Belarusian nuclear power plant is almost ready for commissioning and that the agency "has no technical claims to the Belarusian nuclear power plant"<sup>34</sup> seems to be very important.

As of February 2019, the IAEA, established in the framework of the United Nations in 1957, brought together more than 170 States, assisting them in the development of nuclear energy and technology, ensuring nuclear and radiation safety, and assisting them in conducting research in the field of nuclear energy and technology. Belarus actively participates in the practical implementation of international agreements concluded under the auspices of that international organization: Agreement on the application of safeguards between Belarus and IAEA; conventions on prompt notification of a nuclear accident, assistance in the event of a nuclear accident or radiation emergency, on the physical protection of nuclear material, on civil liability for nuclear damage and on nuclear safety; and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

Since 2013, when the first nuclear power plant was launched in the country, cooperation with the agency has become truly large-scale and complex. Moreover, with the launch of the first unit in Belarus, they expect only increased cooperation with the

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<sup>31</sup> Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the International Atomic Energy Agency [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [http://austria.mfa.gov.by/ru/int\\_org/iaea/](http://austria.mfa.gov.by/ru/int_org/iaea/).

<sup>32</sup> Sergei Rumas: Belarus is determined to create a safe, effective and environmentally friendly nuclear industry [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9307>.

<sup>33</sup> Belarus is ready to operate the NPP - IAEA [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [https://atom.belta.by/ru/belaes\\_ru/view/belarus-gotova-k-ekspluatatsii-aes-magate-10552/](https://atom.belta.by/ru/belaes_ru/view/belarus-gotova-k-ekspluatatsii-aes-magate-10552/).

<sup>34</sup> The IAEA has no technical claims to BelAES - deputy director of the agency [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [https://atom.belta.by/ru/belaes\\_ru/view/u-magate-net-texnicheskix-pretenzij-k-belaes-zamgendirektora-agentstva-10558/](https://atom.belta.by/ru/belaes_ru/view/u-magate-net-texnicheskix-pretenzij-k-belaes-zamgendirektora-agentstva-10558/).

IAEA when operating the plant. And they have already invited the next mission of the agency - on nuclear safety issues (IPPAS). In early March 2020, it became known that "this mission in Belarus will be put in the IAEA work plan for 2021"<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Belarus had invited an IAEA mission on physical nuclear security [Electronic Resource]. - – 2020. - URL: [https://atom.belta.by/ru/belaes\\_ru/view/belarus-priglasila-missiju-magate-po-voprosam-fizicheskoj-jadernoj-bezopasnosti-10560](https://atom.belta.by/ru/belaes_ru/view/belarus-priglasila-missiju-magate-po-voprosam-fizicheskoj-jadernoj-bezopasnosti-10560).

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## Belarus: food export growth trends

In 2019, almost one sixth of Belarus' merchandise exports consisted of agricultural products and foodstuffs supplied to 104 countries, exceeding in monetary terms the figure of five and a half billion dollars. A number of positive trends have contributed to the achievement of this level. Firstly, "supplies of milk and dairy products, rapeseed butter, ready-made or canned fish, canned fruits and vegetables, soybean oil, poultry meat, eggs, chocolate and other ready-made products containing cocoa and potatoes have increased<sup>36</sup>. Secondly, the geographical diversification of Belarusian exports has expanded. New markets included countries on almost all continents: in Asia - Afghanistan; in Africa - Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Sudan, Uganda; in the Americas and the Caribbean - Belize, Cuba, Uruguay; in Europe - Luxembourg, Finland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The diversity of supply from Belarus to these new countries can be seen in the following examples. For example, shipments of whey and skimmed milk powder to Afghanistan, malt to Angola and Burkina Faso, skimmed milk powder to Benin, Mozambique and Niger, canned milk and milk powder to Cuba, alcoholic beverages to Uruguay, fur and fur raw materials to Finland, sugar and potatoes to Albania, and potatoes to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thirdly, Belarusian exports of agricultural products and foodstuffs to the market of Belarus' strategic partners - Russia and China - increased in 2019. In particular, its volume grew by three percent to \$4.3 billion to Russia. It should be noted that "the main driver of growth in supplies to Russia has become dairy products. Revenues from its exports have increased by 23%. Supplies of eggs, flax fiber, gelatin, seeds and rapeseed oil have also increased<sup>37</sup>.

As for China, supplies there from Belarus have increased by almost 60% and amounted to \$131.5 million. This made it possible to increase the share of Belarusian exports to the Chinese market to 68 per cent in the structure of all exports to Asia and Oceania. At the same time, "the volume of shipments of processed meat products with high added value (beef and poultry) increased by \$53.3 million and reached 44.1% in

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<sup>36</sup> Exports of Belarusian agricultural products in 2019 exceeded \$5.5 billion [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-beloruskoj-selhozproduksii-v-2019-godu-prevysil-55-mlrd-378531-2020>.

<sup>37</sup> Nemankova, Yu. Belarus plans to supply over 3 million tons of dairy and 316 thousand tons of meat to Russia in 2020 / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-postavit-bolee-3-mln-t-molochki-i-316-tys-t-mjasa-v-rossiju-v-2020-godu-378543-2020>.

the total structure of food exports to China<sup>38</sup>. And this, along with the increased supplies of rapeseed oil, flax fiber, chocolate, alcoholic beverages, mineral water, skimmed milk powder and whey powder to the Celestial Empire.

Even more strenuous plans to develop exports of agricultural products and foodstuffs have been adopted in Belarus for 2020 - "to increase supplies by 4.2% compared to 2019 and reach an amount exceeding \$5.7 billion"<sup>39</sup>. At the same time, hopes are placed not only on dairy products, but also on plant and meat products. In particular, 3.6 million tons of dairy and 316 thousand tons of meat products will be shipped to Russia alone. Interesting prospects are also opening up for China, where in January 2020 another 14 new producers of meat products from Belarus were accredited. Among them there are 11 new beef producers - Pinsk, Brest, Zhlobin, Gomel, Grodno, Vitebsk, Slonim, Volkovyssk, meat-packing plants, enterprises "Brest Traditions", "Vakhavyak Plus", "Miron", as well as three producers of chicken meat - "Belorusneft-Osobino" and two sites of poultry factory "Dawn". The range of products available for export to the Chinese market, "including chicken legs, wing tips and by-products," has been expanded for another five companies<sup>40</sup>.

One of the effective tools to promote the interests of Belarusian agricultural and food producers in foreign markets in 2020 should also be their participation in international specialized exhibitions. Thus, already in the second half of February 2020 the National Pavilion of Belarus will be presented at the world's largest annual food exhibition "Gulfood-2020" in the United Arab Emirates. The exposition of Belarusian exporters, including Bellact OJSC, Verkhnedvinsk Butter and Cheese Plant, Lida Dairy and Canned Food Processing Plant, Primeilk Company, Slonim Meat Processing Plant, Slutsk Cheese Processing Plant, and Turov Dairy Plant, will be organized at Gulfood for the fifth consecutive year. In 2019, participants in the Belarusian pavilion signed contracts for \$13 million here. And "as a result of 11 months of work, the export of agricultural goods to the UAE has increased almost three times and amounted to \$1.8 million<sup>41</sup>. That is why there is every reason to believe that this time participation in this specialized business forum will fully justify itself, as more than five thousand

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<sup>38</sup> The first container train with meat products is planned to be sent to China this year [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervyj-kontejneryj-poezd-s-mjasnoj-produktsiej-planirujut-otpravit-v-kitaj-v-etom-godu-378553-2020/>.

<sup>39</sup> Belarus plans to increase food exports by 4.2% in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-uveliclit-eksport-prodovolstvija-na-42-v-2020-godu-378535-2020/>.

<sup>40</sup> Another 14 producers are accredited to supply Belarusian meat products to China [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dlja-postavok-belorusskoj-mjasnoj-produktsii-v-kitaj-akkreditovany-esche-14-proizvoditelej-375197-2020/>.

<sup>41</sup> The National Pavilion of Belarus will be presented at the world's largest food exhibition in Dubai [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyj-paviljon-belarusi-budet-predstavlen-na-krupnejshej-v-mire-pishevoj-vystavke-v-dubae-375478-2020/>.

companies from 120 countries will participate. The expected number of visitors is about one hundred thousand people. In total, expositions of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus in 2020 will be organized in more than forty countries, including Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Oman, Syria, Singapore, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe, South Africa, as well as in Georgia, Moldova, Netherlands, Poland, Serbia, Ukraine, United States of America.

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## Belarus: tourism as one of the priorities of services export

One of the most important directions for minimizing the dependence of the Belarusian economy on the influence of key factors of the foreign economic situation is the outpacing growth of services exports. At the same time, the main priorities and conceptual directions of export support and development in the Republic of Belarus include "expanding the range of exported services in transport, tourism, medicine, communications, finance and consulting"<sup>42</sup>. The experience of recent years shows that the measures taken in the country to address this challenge are bearing fruit. Thus, according to the results of 2019, "foreign trade turnover of services increased by 8.8% and reached \$ 15.468 billion. Export of services showed an increase of 9.3% to \$ 9.65 billion <...>. The balance of foreign trade in services was positive amounting to \$3.833 bln"<sup>43</sup>.

Exports of tourist services are developing very successfully in this regard, the volume of which in 2019 increased by almost 15 percent and exceeded \$250 million, while "the number of foreign citizens who visited Belarus in 2019 amounted to more than 4 million 924 thousand"<sup>44</sup>. To a large extent, this positive trend is due to the intensification of work on liberalization of visa-free regime and development of inbound tourism. In particular, since the beginning of the visa-free regime by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus of January 9, 2017, more than 350 thousand people from 70 countries have been able to use the visa-free regime, and in 2019 their number increased by more than 40% compared to 2018. The unification of the two visa-free zones into a single "Brest-Grodno" has also had a positive effect.

Thus, in 2019, about 32 thousand foreigners entered the Brest region, taking advantage of the visa-free regime. In January 2020, their number increased immediately by 70 percent compared to the same period in 2019 and amounted to almost 2200 people from 29 countries. Interestingly, "of the total number of visa-free tourists, 80% are Polish citizens. Brest region is increasingly visited by representatives of Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, Great Britain and

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<sup>42</sup> National Export Support and Development Programme of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <http://www.government.by/upload/docs/fileaff83a3fc04eb9c0.PDF>.

<sup>43</sup> In 2019, Belarus reduced exports of goods and services by 0.7% to almost \$42 billion [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-2019-godu-snizila-eksport-tovarov-i-uslug-na-07-pochti-do-42-mlrd-379111-2020>.

<sup>44</sup> Exports of tourist services in Belarus exceeded \$250 million in 2019 [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/eksport-turisticheskikh-uslug-belarusi-v-2019-godu-prevysil-250-mln-379317-2020>.

Belgium"<sup>45</sup>. At the same time, in 2020, the duration of stay of foreign tourists in the Brest region has also increased - from three to four days. In this south-western Belarusian region, they are determined to continue the trend of increasing tourist flow. To this end, they are actively working on the integration of tourist products together with Grodno region to combine their routes with European ones. Suffice it to say that the calendar of tourist events in Brest in 2020 includes more than a hundred events of various scales, including a gastronomic festival in the national park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha," at least four bicycle festivals, as well as an international tourism forum in Brest.

An important detail: more than 40 events in the calendar are somehow connected with the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, which in 2019 was visited by about 575 thousand tourists, including more than 85 thousand foreigners. In 2020 it is planned to pay special attention to marketing Belovezhskaya Pushcha for tourists from third countries - Western Europe, Asia and North America. Actually, and for this purpose at the meeting of the working group on development of transboundary tourism between Belarus and Poland in February 2020 in Brest, an agreement was reached on creation of a single trans-border information center in the National Park "Belovezhskaya Pushcha" and the Bialowieza National Park, the activity of which will be "aimed at strengthening interaction between employees of protected areas and raising awareness of tourists about the events from the Belarusian and Polish sides"<sup>46</sup>. In this regard, the road map of the tourist area of Belovezhskaya Pushcha, currently being developed by Belarusian and Polish specialists, will also cover part of Kamenets, Pruzhany and Svisloch districts, as well as the Podlasie Voivodeship. This document envisages the continuation of the AugustWelo project. The second part of the project was named "BelovezhaVelo". And the route of its length of about 70 kilometers will run between the border crossing "Pererov" and Svisloch.

Let us recall that more than forty years ago - in October 1979 - the Bialowieza National Park, located in Poland, was included in the List of World Heritage Sites of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 1992, the Belarusian part of Belovezhskaya Pushcha added to this list, which made it possible to create Europe's first natural cross-border World Heritage site. In 2014 "it was extended to 140 thousand hectares for the whole historical territory of Belovezhskaya Pushcha under the general name of the Bialowieza Forest. It includes

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<sup>45</sup> The number of visa-free tourists who entered the Brest region in January increased by 70% [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/chislo-vjehavshih-v-brestskuju-oblast-bezvizovyh-turistov-v-janvare-uvlichilos-na-70-379154-2020>.

<sup>46</sup> Belarus and Poland are developing a road map of the cross-border tourism area [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/belarus-i-polsha-razrabatyvajut-dorozhnuju-kartu-transgranichnoj-turisticheskoj-territorii-378867-2020/>.

60 thousand ha of old-age forest on the Polish side and 80 thousand ha on the Belarusian side"<sup>47</sup>. Recently, the World Heritage Committee has issued recommendations to the Belarusian and Polish sides to intensify their efforts to prepare a single cross-border plan for the joint management of this World Heritage Site. The project now has much work to do to adapt its legislation to the joint plan and to conceptualize approaches to the management of the site according to the criteria of its outstanding universal value. It should be assumed that the tourist attractiveness of Belovezhskaya Pushcha in this regard will only increase in the eyes of foreigners visiting it.

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<sup>47</sup> Belarus and Poland will develop a plan for joint management of Belovezhskaya Pushcha [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/belarus-i-polsha-razrabotajut-plan-sovmestnogo-upravljenija-belovezhskoj-puschej-367608-2019/>.

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## Belarus: participation in exhibitions as a factor of tourism services export development

The "National Program of Support and Development of Exports of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020" named one of the main directions of optimization of the national system of support and development of exports as "using the potential of exhibition, fair and congress activities"<sup>48</sup>. This tool to promote Belarusian interests in foreign markets is particularly active for representatives of the tourism industry, which allows them to achieve good results in the development of exports of tourist services, "the volume of which in 2019 increased by almost 15 percent and exceeded 250 million dollars"<sup>49</sup>. In 2020, the tourism potential of Belarus will be demonstrated at 17 international tourism exhibitions, where our country will be represented by a single national stand.

Thus, in mid-January 2020, the Belarusian side has already taken part in the largest tourism exhibition of Northern Europe Matka 2020 in the Finnish capital, which annually gathers about 20 thousand professionals of the tourism industry, as well as about 50 thousand visitors. This time more than 350 companies from 70 countries were represented in Helsinki. At the stand of the Belarusian National Tourism Agency, "Minsk tour operators" BelAgroTravel, "Vneshinturist", "Prime Tour", as well as "Recreation Studio" from Grodno demonstrated their offers to potential foreign partners<sup>50</sup>.

In the last decade of January 2020 the possibilities of sanatorium-resort treatment in Belarus, as well as business, medical, sports tourism were presented at the Belarusian national stand within the framework of one of the largest specialized international tourist events in the United States of America - The New York Times Travel Show 2020. The presentation of the tourist potential of Belarus over the ocean was attended by the "Sports and Tourism Department of the Novogrudok District Executive

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<sup>48</sup> National Export Support and Development Programme of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <http://www.government.by/upload/docs/fileaff83a3fc04eb9c0.PDF>.

<sup>49</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Export of services: among priorities - tourism / B.L. Zalessky // Materialy XVI Mezinárodní vědecko-praktická konference "Věda a technologie: krok do budoucnosti - 2020". Volume 4: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - - C. 23.

<sup>50</sup> Grishkevich, A. Belarusian stand is presented at the largest tour exhibition of Northern Europe in Helsinki / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskij-stend-predstavlen-na-krupnejšej-turvystavke-severnoj-evropy-v-helsinki-376158-2020/>.

Committee in cooperation with the Novogrudok Regional Museum of Local History, Prime Tour" travel company<sup>51</sup>.

At the end of January 2020, an exposition under the single brand name Belarus was opened at the 27th International Travel Trade Fair Balttour 2020 in Riga. It "focuses on inbound medical tourism".<sup>52</sup>Therefore, leading Belarusian sanatoriums and health resorts, hotels and hotels, the Mir Castle complex, as well as the information portal of medical services were presented at the stand. In February 2020, the tourism potential of Belarus was widely presented at the 29th International Tourism Exhibition Tourest-2020 in the Estonian capital. Participants of this Belarusian stand were the National Agency for Tourism, the Department of Sports and Tourism of Gomel, Grodno and Minsk regional executive committees, the Center for Olympic Reserve Zhlobin, tourist companies - PCC "Center-Court", LLC "BelAgroTravel", LLC "Ditrib", portal "Vetliva", sanatoriums - "Mashinostroitel", "Raduga", "Pearl", "Krinitsa", "Pines", "Belorusochka", "Narachanka", "Narochansky Bereg". Attention of visitors to the Belarusian exposition showed "high interest of citizens and subjects of tourism industry of Estonia to health tourism in Belarus, as well as opportunities for visa-free entry to Belarus through the National airport "Minsk-2" and the visa-free territory "Brest-Grodno"<sup>53</sup>.

There is also great export potential in the field of inbound tourism such as hunting and fishing. The possibilities of this tourist destination, which is actively developing in Belarus, were widely presented in late January - early February 2020 at one of the largest world exhibitions in the field of hunting and fishing tourism JACD & HUND 2020 in the German city of Dortmund. Among more than six hundred exhibitors from different countries demonstrated their capabilities and organizations of the Belarusian Ministry of Forestry - unitary enterprise "Belgosohot", Vitebsk, Grodno and Mogilev GPLHO, as well as Pruzhan, Telekhansk and Kopyl farms. Promoting not for the first time their hunting and tourist product in Dortmund, the Belarusian participants of the exhibition informed foreign hunters about the services and types of hunting taking into account their interests: "The most attractive for the citizens of the

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<sup>51</sup> Belarus is represented at the tourist exhibition in New York [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavlena-na-turisticheskoy-vystavke-v-nju-jorke-377104-2020/>.

<sup>52</sup> Nemankova, Yu. Tourism potential of Belarus was presented at the exhibition Balttour-2020 in Riga // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/turisticheskij-potentsial-belarusi-prezentovan-na-vystavke-balttour-2020-v-rige-377966-2020/>.

<sup>53</sup> About 29th International tourist exhibition "Tourest-2020" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://estonia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c3677b38082f08c4.html>.

European Union is hunting for the wood grouse, bison, wolf, male elk and noble deer"<sup>54</sup>.

As we can see, the beginning of 2020 was very busy for the international segment of the Belarusian tourism industry. The continuation will be no less intensive, as the single national stand of Belarus will still be presented at international tourism exhibitions in Berlin and Moscow, Beijing, Baku and Dubai, Guangzhou, Nur-Sultan and London. And "will end the year of tourist exhibitions forum in Barcelona"<sup>55</sup>. It is believed that each of these exhibitions will not only be an additional impetus in terms of increasing the number of foreign tourists coming to Belarus, but will also contribute to further raising the level of the Belarusian tourism industry to the best international standards.

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<sup>54</sup> Opportunities for hunting and fishing tourism in Belarus are presented at the exhibition in Germany [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vozmozhnosti-ohotnichje-rybolovnogo-turizma-belarusi-predstavleny-na-vystavke-v-germanii-377905-2020/>.

<sup>55</sup> The tourist potential of Belarus in 2020 will be presented in New York, Dubai and London [Electronic Resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/turisticheskij-potentsial-belarusi-v-2020-godu-predstavjat-v-njju-jorke-dubae-i-londone-374521-2019/>.



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## Belarus: import substitution growth reserves - in modernization

As early as in the Program of Activity of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for 2018-2020, the task was outlined to create conditions for the implementation of a policy of rational import substitution and development of import-substituting industries, including using the potential of small and medium-sized companies to improve the trade balance of the country in order to eventually achieve "annual growth in production of import-substituting products in the amount of at least USD 600 million"<sup>56</sup>. In February 2020, while visiting the Dobrush paper mill "Hero of Labor," President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko visited the Dobrush paper mill. Lukashenko drew even more attention to this issue: "We need to earn currency, so it is desirable not to export it. <...> We will take import substitution seriously" .

It should be noted that in Belarus the main task of import substitution, which is understood as the state policy aimed at rationalizing the import of goods and services by stimulating domestic producers, including with the participation of foreign capital, to organize the production of products that were previously imported, is formulated as "not mechanical substitution of imported goods, but the development of competitive national production"<sup>57</sup>. According to the estimates of the Belarusian Ministry of Economy, the share of import substitution products in the country has already approached 40% or \$20 billion in monetary terms. At the same time, "the share of sales of import-substituting products for export has increased to 50%. This shows that it is not only competitive in the domestic market, but also in demand abroad"<sup>58</sup>.

Among the economic entities of Belarus, quite successfully solving the issues of import substitution, one can name the enterprises of the concern Bellesbumprom. In 2019, they increased the output of such products by almost 10% and produced them by more than \$530 million. To be more precise, the import-substituting products were produced by 26 enterprises in 38 commodity items, including cellulose, wood-fiber and chipboard, plywood, uncoated paper and cardboard, corrugated and non-fluted cardboard, paper bags, newsprint and sanitary paper. In particular, "in 2019 JSC

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<sup>56</sup> Programme of Activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for 2018-2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/upload/docs/file253cf6b5b538838e.PDF>.

<sup>57</sup> Ideas for import substitution [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [http://www.economy.gov.by/ru/idei\\_importozames-ru/](http://www.economy.gov.by/ru/idei_importozames-ru/).

<sup>58</sup> The share of import-substituting products in Belarusian industry is approaching 40% [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dolja-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-v-promyshlennosti-belarusi-priblizhaetsja-k-40-379006-2020/>.

Svetlogorsk PPK produced 145 thousand tons of cellulose, which is 5.6 times more than in 2018<sup>59</sup>. Another interesting example in this context is Rechitsadrev. Three years ago, the Synthetic Resins Plant started operating in Rechitsa. One of the directions for using this resin is the production of decorative film from ordinary paper used in the production of laminated wood boards. The result: if previously furniture makers had to buy synthetic resin abroad, now they began to export the surplus resin themselves. And in 2019 alone, this gave the company around three million euros. All in all, "the production of its own resin saved around 10 million Euros over the entire period"<sup>60</sup>.

The secret of success of the concern's enterprises is in the carried out modernization of basic woodworking enterprises that has allowed to expand considerably the assortment of let out production and to provide its high quality. Bottom line: over the last five years, when new plants started operating, the volume of production of import-substituting products has more than doubled. Continuing to develop this actual priority of activity, Bellesbumprom sees such perspective directions as expansion of assortment and growth of volumes of production of various kinds of paper packaging as an alternative to polyethylene, and also manufacture of high-quality coated cardboard which in considerable quantities is used in polygraphic, food, pharmaceutical, cosmetic industries. As a result, "in 2020 the concern's enterprises plan to increase production of import substitution products by 30 million dollars to 560 million"<sup>61</sup>.

Interesting experience in the development of import substitution has also been accumulated in the production association "Energokomplekt" in Vitebsk, where in 2019 exports were "86% of the total volume of \$112 million. At the same time, the Vitebsk enterprise accounts for 70% of all cable products manufactured in Belarus"<sup>62</sup>. It is worth adding that this association, founded in 1992 and now a resident of the free economic zone "Vitsebsk," employs 650 people, providing innovative products to both domestic and foreign consumers. A number of examples of successful implementation of import substitution policy can be seen in the Gomel region as well. In particular, "one of them is the Turov Dairy Plant, which produces traditional Italian cheese for

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<sup>59</sup> Enterprises of "Bellesbumprom" in 2019 increased production of import-substituting products by 9.3% [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumprom-2019-godu-uvlechili-proizvodstvo-importozameschajushej-produktsii-na-379049-2020/>.

<sup>60</sup> Kapba, E. In the lens - "Rechitsadrev". Successful import substitution / E. Kapba // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://dneprovec.by/companynews/2020/02/14/25898>.

<sup>61</sup> Igor Lyashenko orients "Bellesbumprom" towards more active production of import substitution products [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9267>.

<sup>62</sup> Bogacheva, O. The questions of import substitution should be paid more attention - Anfimov / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/voprosam-importozameschenija-neobhodimo-udeljat-bolshe-vnimanija-anfimov-378866-2020/>.

sale on the national Belarusian market"<sup>63</sup>. All these examples suggest that the import substitution policy in Belarus, although developing, still has a huge potential that many market players have to learn from the best practices already available in the country.

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<sup>63</sup> Shumel, K.V. Development of the import-substituting industries in the context of the innovation development concept of the Republic of Belarus / K.V. Shumel // Women scientists of Belarus and Kazakhstan : a collection of materials of the International scientific-practical conference, Minsk, 1-2 March 2018 / edited by A.V. Shumel. I.V. Kazakova [et al.]. - Minsk : RIVSh, 2018. -- C. 553.

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## Belarus: the future is for electric cars

In March 2020, the Republic of Belarus adopted a decree of President A. Lukashenko "On Stimulating the Use of Electric Vehicles," which provides for measures to stimulate the demand in the country for this environmentally friendly equipment, as well as the creation of appropriate charging and service infrastructure in the regions. The appearance of this document is caused by a number of circumstances. At the 24th United Nations World Conference on Climate Change, held in December 2018 in the Polish city of Katowice, Belarus stated that it views the green economy and low-carbon sustainable development as a strategic vector"<sup>64</sup>.

Secondly, the existing forecasts of experts show that "by 2030 every fifth car in the world will be electric. This process is spurred by government policy in a number of countries, where they are going to impose restrictions on cars with internal combustion engines"<sup>65</sup>. Thirdly, the increase in the number of electric cars will help to reduce air pollution in Belarus. Fourthly, "the use of electric transport is one of the directions for a smart increase in electricity consumption".<sup>66</sup>which becomes especially important today in the light of the expected commissioning of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. Fifth, the transition to electric cars means that the general public is turning to new technologies corresponding to the world best practice so that by 2025 about 40% of the available cars with internal combustion engine in Belarus could be replaced with electric transport.

Turning to the decree, we note some of the measures contained therein. Thus, this document exempts the owners of electric vehicles from paying the fee for the issuance of the permit to participate in road traffic. Individuals will not have to pay value added tax when importing electric cars for personal use in our country. In addition, "owners of electric vehicles are exempt from parking fees until April 1, 2026 in specially equipped places in public car parks"<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> Zaleskiy, B. Point of growth. Peculiarities of sustainable development under the global challenges / B. Zaleskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. -- C. 57.

<sup>65</sup> The measures taken will contribute to the creation of production of electric cars in Belarus - the Ministry of Economy [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prinimaemye-mery-budut-sposobstvovat-sozdaniyu-v-belarusi-proizvodstva-elektromobilej-minekonomiki-383056-2020/>.

<sup>66</sup> Ecology and literate consumption of electric energy - what benefits the growth of electric cars in Belarus [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekologija-i-gramotnoe-potreblenie-elektroenergii-chem-vygoden-rost-chisla-elektromobilej-v-belarusi-383046-2020/>.

<sup>67</sup> Lukashenko signed a decree to encourage the purchase of electric cars [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-podpisa-ukaz-o-stimulirovanii-zakupok-elektromobilej-383041-2020/>.

The decree also contains measures for manufacturers of electric cars and electric charging stations, as well as for their operating organizations. In particular, the charging stations are exempt from value added tax if used in Belarus. And the Belorusneft production association will be provided with land plots for construction and maintenance of electric charging complexes without an auction. Perhaps, for this reason Belorusneft plans to open 180 quick-charging stations in 2020.

So far, the situation with electric charging stations (EPS) in Belarus is as follows. Since the beginning of 2020 "the network of filling stations has expanded to 251 such stations (plus 13 facilities)"<sup>68</sup>. And now it can serve up to nine thousand electric cars. The network of filling stations on the Belarusian territory includes two types of stations: first, Mode 3, where the electric car requires from six to eight hours for charging; second, Mode 4, where the battery can be charged in less than an hour. An important detail: at the beginning of 2020 the Belorusneft filling station network has a new brand - Malanka, under which by 2022 639 charging stations will already operate. And by 2030 there should be enough of them to serve up to three hundred thousand electric cars.

Speaking about the production of our own electric cars in our country, we should remind that the first Belarusian sample of such equipment based on Geely was presented in August 2017. At the same time it was stated that "after testing the first electric car, the scientists will start developing an improved prototype. It may be ready already in the next [2018] year"<sup>69</sup>. Nevertheless, as it was already noted at the meeting in March 2020 between the President of Belarus and the leadership of the Council of Ministers, the issue of the production of its own electric car has not yet received a proper impetus, although electric transport has a huge potential. "This is an urgent necessity today. <...> Many states are already developing this promising area. Countries like us, export-oriented, without huge reserves underground, have long been oriented towards electric transport"<sup>70</sup>.

It is quite possible that with the advent of the decree "On promoting the use of electric cars," this case will be taken up by BELGI, which "is ready to consider the production of electric cars in Belarus, provided that 5-10 thousand cars are sold per

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<sup>68</sup> "Belorusneft plans to open 180 electric charging stations this year [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusneft-planiruet-otkryt-180-elektrozarjadnyh-stantsij-v-etom-godu-383042-2020>.

<sup>69</sup> Gavrilova, V. Ecological, modern and maneuverable: scientists presented the first Belarusian electric car / V. Gavrilova // [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/reportazh-ekologichnyj-sovremennyj-i-manevrennyj-uchenye-prezentovali-pervyj-belorusskij-elektromobil-262688-2017>.

<sup>70</sup> Meeting with the leadership of the Council of Ministers [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/soveschanie-s-rukovodstvom-soveta-ministrov-23197/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/soveschanie-s-rukovodstvom-soveta-ministrov-23197/).

year<sup>71</sup>. In the meantime, the company has received four Chinese electric cars of Geely Geometry A model, which will be tested: one - at the factory, three - in dealer centers. This version of the electric car attracts by the fact that it has a power reserve of five hundred kilometers, systems of adaptive cruise control and response to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as an intelligent automatic parking system. It should be assumed that with the adoption of the presidential decree, the Geely Geometry A model at BELGI will go much faster.

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<sup>71</sup> "BELGIUM is ready to consider the production of electric cars when selling 5-10 thousand cars a year [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beldzhi-gotov-rassmatrivat-vypusk-elektromobilej-pri-prodazhe-5-10-tys-avto-v-god-382660-2020/>.



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## Free Economic Zone "Minsk": new residents - new opportunities

The Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Free Economic Zones", adopted on December 7, 1998, defines the attraction of "investments into the creation and development of export-oriented and import-substituting industries based on new and high technologies" as one of the main objectives of creating a FEZ<sup>72</sup>. The FEZ "Minsk", established in Belarus in 1998, is moving quite successfully towards this goal. At the beginning of February 2020, it had already united 116 resident enterprises on its territory, 57 of them with foreign investments. During its more than 20-year history, the capital's FEZ has attracted more than two billion dollars in investments, including from investors from more than twenty countries. Occupying an area of about three thousand hectares, it now includes 23 plots in Minsk and the capital region, including such cities as Molodechno, Zhodino, Fanipol, Borisov, where enterprises of mechanical engineering and metalworking, chemical and petrochemical, forestry and construction industries are successfully operating. A kind of business card of FEZ "Minsk" are such well-known manufacturers not only in Belarus, but also abroad: "Stadler-Minsk" - trains and trams; "Alutech" group of companies - components for protective shutters, gate systems; "Adaani" - X-ray equipment; "BELGIUM" - cars and light vehicles; "SN AE Europe Industries Bisov" - bimetallic band and end saws.

The facts show that this industrial center on the business map of Belarus continues to develop very actively. Suffice it to say that in 2019 the administration of FEZ "Minsk" registered 17 new resident companies. One of them in December 2019 was Belagromash, which intends to create the production of specialized steel railway containers in the territory of Molodechno Steel Works. Innovative properties of these containers will increase the speed of loading and unloading of goods due to the fact that new containers can be lifted from one mode of transport to another - from a railway platform to a road one and vice versa. This project is also attracted by the fact that "the main customer of containers is a foreign company, so the new production will be as export-oriented as possible. At least 130 jobs will be created"<sup>73</sup>.

On the eve of 2020, BelMetr Limited Liability Company became a FEZ resident. Its plans include the implementation in Zhodino of an investment project for the

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<sup>72</sup> Law of the Republic of Belarus On Free Economic Zones [Electronic resource]. - - 1998. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=H19800213>

<sup>73</sup> Production of freight containers will be set up in Molodechno [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-gruzovyh-kontejnerov-naladjat-v-molodechno-372673-2019/>.

production of vandal-proof water meters with improved characteristics. Among them are: antimagnetic protection; an antifraud device against external influence on the lid; high sensitivity of the meter; elimination of misting of the upper part of the case. And let "production at the initial stage will be carried out on leased areas, in the future it is planned to build a new production building"<sup>74</sup>.

The number of residents of FEZ "Minsk" began to grow quite intensively in 2020. In mid-January, the company JLLC "Techno-Express" - one of the leading Belarusian manufacturers in the field of life support systems for passenger cars - was registered here. In FEZ, the company plans to implement an investment project for the production of electrical equipment for passenger cars of locomotive traction. In particular, it concerns the production of air conditioner converters - "devices designed to power asynchronous motors of air conditioning installation on railway passenger coaches as part of electrical equipment and life support systems"<sup>75</sup>. This project has both import-substituting and export-oriented potential, since the main consumer of the above products will be not only the Belarusian Railway, but also interested companies in the near abroad.

A76 week later, the second resident of Bel-Dozer LLC appeared in the FEZ in 2020. His plans include the construction of a plant in Fanipol to produce a wide range of special equipment for earth-moving, construction and transportation works. Here they intend to "produce excavator loaders - multifunctional machines for construction and repair work, as well as graders - productive special equipment, which is actively used in the construction and maintenance of roads and airfields. <...> The volume of investments in the project implementation will exceed 1 million Euro".

Another new resident of FEZ "Minsk" - LLC "Emfil Air," registered here in early February 2020, will be accommodated in the same Fanipole. The distinctive feature of his investment project will be a pronounced export orientation of products. The fact is that "the company plans to establish production of dedusting, as well as chemically active filter elements for air purification, on the basis of which production of innovative

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<sup>74</sup> An investment project for the production of water meters will be implemented in Zhodino [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/investitsionnyj-proekt-po-proizvodstvu-schetchikov-vody-budet-realizovan-v-zhodino-374581-2019/>.

<sup>75</sup> The first resident in 2020 was registered in FEZ "Minsk". [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervyj-v-2020-godu-rezident-zaregistrirovann-v-sez-minsk-376013-2020/>.

<sup>76</sup> The new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will build a plant in Fanipol to produce special equipment [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-postroit-v-fanipole-zavod-po-proizvodstvu-spetstehniki-376899-2020/>.

high-tech equipment will be organized.<sup>77</sup>which will be designed, developed and manufactured exclusively to order.

As we can see, with the arrival of 2020 in FEZ "Minsk" does not slow down the growth rate, contributing to the socio-economic development of not only the capital region, but the country as a whole.

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<sup>77</sup> The new resident of FEZ "Minsk" will produce non-standard equipment for air purification [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-minsk-budet-vypuskat-nestandartnoe-oborudovanie-dlja-ochistki-vozduha-378734-2020>.

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## Free Economic Zone "Grodnoinvest": growth point - export

The volume of exports of resident companies of the free economic zone (FEZ) "Grodnoinvest" approached one billion in 2019, having increased by almost ten percent compared to 2018. This allowed to increase the share of the FEZ in the total exports of industrial goods of the Grodno region to 42%. In general, trade turnover of FEZ residents exceeded \$1.5 billion with a surplus of over \$380 million. There are two main vectors in the geography of these exports: post-Soviet - Russia, Ukraine; European - Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia. At the same time, the basis of supplies outside Belarus "was formed by companies from the sectors of woodworking and furniture production (30% of total exports), food production (27%), mechanical engineering and metalworking<sup>78</sup>. The chemical and textile industries, as well as manufacturers of transport vehicles and equipment, rubber and plastic products should be noted in the same line. The prospects for development in FEZs are seen in attracting new residents, who could further increase exports of goods and services through their activities.

We would like to remind you that FEZ "Grodnoinvest", created in 2002, today has 12 territories not only in Grodno, but also in such cities of Grodno region as Mosty, Novogrudok, Slonim, Shchuchin, Smorgon, Svisloch. By mid-January 2020, 75 companies with capital from 41 countries were operating in the FEZ. In 2019, four companies from Belarus, Austria and Poland became residents of the FEZ, where potential investors are offered land plots and production areas with engineering and transport infrastructure, tax, customs and other preferences that allow to significantly reduce project costs and improve the competitiveness of products, engaged in wood processing and production of non-metallic mineral products with a total volume of declared investments of more than 190 million dollars, including in fixed assets - from They intend to build highly efficient factories in Grodno and Svisloch, creating over 560 new jobs there. At the same time, "most of the products will be supplied to the European Union countries"<sup>79</sup>.

The year 2020 started very productively in this context for the BMS. In particular, in February the company "EUEcoPAC" was registered as a resident here,

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<sup>78</sup> Exports of FEZ Grodnoinvest residents in 2019 came close to \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2019-godu-priblizilsja-k-1mlrd-379958-2020>.

<sup>79</sup> Four companies with \$190 million worth of investment projects [Electronic resource] became residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest in 2019. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidentami-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2019-godu-stali-4-kompanii-s-investproektami-na-190-mln-375887-2020/>.

which intends to invest more than one million dollars in the creation of production facilities for the production of disposable paper packaging and canteen products. This topic is undoubtedly very topical for Belarus, where measures are being taken at the legislative level to encourage companies to use environmentally friendly packaging, including paper. The new FEZ resident intends to produce paper Kraft bags with and without handle, lunchbox cardboard packaging, paper cocktail tubes and glasses for cold and hot drinks. These products are "expected to be sold primarily in foreign markets. The share of export shipments will exceed 85%. The main markets will be the European Union countries"<sup>80</sup>. In addition, 25 new jobs will be created here.

In the same February 2020 the company "ZOV-MARKET" became a resident of FEZ, which on the basis of the unfinished construction object in Grodno will create a modern enterprise for the production of dry trimming board, bar, furniture blanks. It is characteristic that "70% of production will be exported to the European Union countries"<sup>81</sup>. One of the new residents of FEZ may soon become a logistics company Berango from France, which is interested in implementing an investment project in FEZ Grodnoinvest "on the creation of a multimodal logistics terminal for processing and cleaning of containers and tanks"<sup>82</sup>. Negotiations on this particular issue were held with the administration of the FEZ in Grodno in February 2020.

Export-oriented products are being actively expanded, as are already existing FEZ residents. Thus, in February 2020 Terrazit Plus LLC demonstrated a new innovative control knob VPC ALPHA Grip of Constellation series within the framework of the innovative project Virpil Controls on creation of devices for virtual control of planes, helicopters, prototypes of spaceships. Importantly, this "product is in demand in Western Europe, almost all production is for export"<sup>83</sup> and the project involves pilots, designers, designers and software developers. In 2019, Belabedding LLP, which has been a Boxspringbett resident since 2006, started producing new products - continental beds. And now "more than 80% of the company's production is

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<sup>80</sup> Production of paper packaging will be created by a new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvodstvo-bumazhnoj-upakovki-sozdast-novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-379035-2020/>.

<sup>81</sup> LLC "ZOV-MARKET" is registered as a resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/ooo-zov-market-zaregistrirvano-v-kachestve-rezidenta-sez-grodnoinvest/>.

<sup>82</sup> A French company is considering the possibility of creating a terminal in FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kompanija-iz-frantsii-rassmatrivaet-vozmoznost-sozdaniya-terminala-v-sez-grodnoinvest-379266-2020/>.

<sup>83</sup> The resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" LLC "Terrazit Plus" presented new innovative products [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-ooo-terrazit-plyus-predstavil-novyyu-innovacionnyu-produkciyu/>

exported to Western European countries"<sup>84</sup>. It is believed that the measures taken in the FEZ will bring even more significant results in terms of increasing exports of products of residents of the free economic zone "Grodnoinvest" in 2020.

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<sup>84</sup> FEZ "Grodnoinvest" resident Belabedding IOO launched production of new products [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-iooo-belabedding-zapustila-vypusk-novoj-produkcii/>.



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## Free Economic Zone "Vitebsk": the pace of development is dictated by investments

Residents of the free economic zone "Vitsebsk" - three and a half times at once, reaching the level of \$ 16.5 million - demonstrated high growth dynamics in attracting foreign direct investment in 2019. As a result, "the share of FEZ "Vitebsk" in the investment portfolio of the Vitebsk region for 2019 amounted to almost 39% and increased by 10 percentage points compared to 2018"<sup>85</sup>. Among the FEZ residents who have shown the greatest investment activity are JLLC "Natriks", LLC "Chess-Bell", LLC "Akitama", IUE "VIC animal health". In total, 50 residents are currently implementing their projects in the FEZ, of which almost half are with foreign capital. It should be noted that in 2019, "eight organizations, created with the participation of investors from Lithuania, Sweden, Spain, Russia and Belarus, received the resident status in FEZ "Vitsebsk". The total volume of investments in the new projects exceeds \$52 million, it is planned to create at least 270 jobs"<sup>86</sup>. Apparently, these figures will only grow in the near future.

Thus, the first resident registered in the FEZ in 2020 was LLC "BelBank", created with the participation of an investor from Russia. The investment project of this company involves the reconstruction and modernization of production facilities on the outskirts of Vitebsk and the site of JSC "Vityaz", as well as the installation of two lines for the production of tin cans for industrial food preservation. Production activity here is planned to start already in 2021. Raw materials - white tin - will be supplied by Miorsky Metal Rolling Plant, located in Vitebsk region, which is scheduled for commissioning in the second quarter of 2021. As a result, BelBank LLC will first produce full-drawn cans, where the bottom and the side surface represent a single whole, only the lid will be rolled. In the second stage, the company will produce prefabricated products consisting of three parts (bottom, body and lid)<sup>87</sup>. The important detail: with an exit of the new enterprise on full capacity volume of production let out here will double. And all it will be shipped to foreign markets.

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<sup>85</sup> Residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" increased the volume of direct foreign investments by 3.5 times [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-uvulichili-objem-prjamyh-inostrannyh-investitsij-v-35-raza-379775-2020/>.

<sup>86</sup> Investors from 4 countries plan to start implementing projects in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource] this year. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investory-iz-4-stran-planirujut-v-etom-godu-nachat-realizatsiju-proektov-v-sez-vitebsk-379788-2020/>.

<sup>87</sup> In FEZ "Vitebsk" with the participation of a Russian investor will create a tin can production [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-sez-vitebsk-s-uchastiem-rossijskogo-investora-sozdadut-proizvodstvo-zhestjanyh-banok-377712-2020/>.

The investment picture of 2020 in FEZ "Vitebsk" is very significantly complemented by the fact that it is already planned to register as residents of at least six companies created with the participation of investors from Canada, China, Azerbaijan and Russia. At the same time, the total volume of investment in these projects will exceed one hundred million dollars, and the number of jobs created - at least three hundred. In particular, in Polotsk the company from Azerbaijan will organize in several stages of high-tech production of low-tonnage chemistry with the initial investment volume of about \$600,000. In the future, the volume of investment is expected to increase by several times. In the same Polotsk, the Belarusian investor intends to set up production of stainless steel containers with the organization of about twenty jobs. The Belarusian-Russian JLLC Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Metal Structures is considering the possibility of implementing a project with the volume of investments of about ten million dollars in the production of hot galvanizing in the village of Farinovo, Polotsk District. The Chinese company intends to invest about 28 million dollars in the woodworking complex on the outskirts of Vitebsk. And Belmatch LLC, created with the participation of an investor from Canada, is going to specialize in the production of match straw. In Orsha, the Belarusian company will try to establish production of fuel pellets, while Factory PAK will initiate a project to organize production of components for dump trucks.

In 2020, another significant investment event will take place in FEZ "Vitebsk" due to the fact that Lithuanian holding "VMG Group" decided to expand the financing of the investment project already being implemented in FEZ from 100 to 200 million euros. For this purpose, the investor is ready to organize additional production of solid wood furniture for the vertically integrated woodworking complex being created. As a result, the number of jobs created by the projects of the holding will increase to 1 thousand<sup>88</sup>. This is done in order to start production of new products - tables and chairs - at the new furniture production in 2021, the main buyer of which will be the IKEA concern, which now provides assistance in financing this project.

It should be noted that only in 2019 more than one billion dollars of investments were attracted to the economy of Vitebsk region. Thanks to the active investment policy in the region, the first plant in Belarus for the production of steel seamless cylinders was put into operation. New enterprises and production facilities for wood processing were opened in Rosson, Sharkovsk, Beshenkovichi, Gorodok and Polotsk districts. "The grain drying complex of the Vitebsk broiler poultry factory in the urban settlement of Surazh and the soybean processing shop of the Ekomol-Agro enterprise

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<sup>88</sup> Lithuanian holding "VMG Group" will increase the volume of investments on projects in FEZ "Vitebsk" to 200 million euros [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/litovskij-holding-vmg-grupp-velichit-objem-investitsij-po-proektam-v-sez-vitebsk-do-200-mln-evro-379950-2020/>.

were put into operation<sup>89</sup>. In addition, the construction of the largest dairy complex in Belarus "Kupalinka" for more than two thousand heads is being completed at the agrocombinat "Yubileiny". In the first half of 2020 two more innovative objects of the agricultural enterprise "Ustie" will be put into operation - a grain drying complex for preparation of agricultural seeds for 10 thousand tons and a dairy complex with milking system "robotic carousel". And this is by no means a complete list. This is the pace set by the investments attracted today for the development of only one of the Belarusian regions.

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<sup>89</sup> Bogacheva, O. More than \$1 billion of investments were attracted to the economy of Vitebsk region for 2019 / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bolee-1-mlrd-investitsij-privlecheno-v-ekonomiku-vitebskoj-oblasti-za-2019-god-378810-2020/>.

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## **Great Stone Industrial Park: globalization, industrialization, digitalization, ecologization**

In 2020, in accordance with the decisions of the 12th meeting of the Working Group on its activities, held in October 2019 in Beijing, the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" should develop a new stage of development of this large-scale project, related not only to the creation of an international industrial park, but also an ecological industrial city, as well as the issues of "attracting anchor investors with high-tech projects, expanding international activities"<sup>90</sup>. At the same time, four basic principles of development are guided here: "First, it is globalization, since the industrial park is not Chinese or Belarusian, but international. Secondly, industrialization. The main objective is to attract international clusters of industry. Thirdly, it is digitalization, which should give great advantages to the development of the park. <...> Fourth, ecologization. Environmental protection and compliance with environmental requirements is the key to sustainable development"<sup>91</sup>.

Let us recall that at the beginning of 2020, 60 residents from 15 countries were registered in the "Great Stone", including: 33 - from the People's Republic of China; 15 - with participation of companies from Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Switzerland, and the United States of America; 12 - were created by Belarusian business entities. By that time, 32 kilometers of roads had already been built here in less than five years, about 400 kilometers of water and gas pipelines, electric lines, sewage outlets had been laid, 25 buildings with the total area of about 300 thousand square meters had been completed. And the total volume of concluded contracts and investments has exceeded one billion dollars from 11 countries. It is expected that by the end of 2020 at least 80 residents will be registered in the "Great Stone" with the volume of declared investments of one and a half billion dollars.

Speaking about the trends observed today in the industrial park, there are several main ones. One of them is the development of the "Great Stone" as a smart city with an innovative industry and high quality of life. To achieve this goal, in February 2020 an agreement on the development of 5G technology in the industrial park was signed

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<sup>90</sup> Zalesskiy, B.L. "Velikiy Kamen": development perspective - subparks / B.L. Zalesskiy // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Science and civilization - 2020", 30 January - 07 February, 2020. Economic sciences. : Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - - C. 20.

<sup>91</sup> Zheng, H. "The Great Stone" becomes a strategic platform for the Belarusian-Chinese cooperation / H. Zheng // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/velikij-kamen-stanovitsja-strategicheskoy-platfornoj-dlja-belorussko-kitajskogo-sotrudnichestva-7152/>.

by the Ministry of Communications and Informatization of the Republic of Belarus, NWAO "Industrial Park Development Company" and the administration of the "Great Stone". It was noted that one of the most promising areas of 5G technology development here is unmanned transport. As a result, the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park should become "the first in Belarus model base for the introduction of 5G technologies"<sup>92</sup>.

It should be noted that the priority directions of the Great Stone development remain engineering, electronics and telecommunications, biotechnologies, pharmaceuticals, new materials, logistics. At the same time, the emphasis is placed on innovative activity of residents. And "at present, about 20 projects are already yielding results"<sup>93</sup>. Among them are the commercial and logistics company "China Merchants", which has received a certificate for the operation of Belarus' only bonded warehouse for public use, and the plant "MAZ-Veichai", where the production of diesel engines of Euro-5 and Euro-6 standards for trucks, special vehicles and buses is organized. In November 2019 in the "Great Stone" took place the opening of the production building of the subsidiary of the Swiss company Garrosserie Hess AG - Hess Great Stone LLC - for the production of electric passenger transport. "This type of transport will be characterized by the absence of carbon dioxide emissions and quiet operation. The rooftop batteries will be recharged at the final stop in a few minutes"<sup>94</sup>. This resident of the industrial park plans to reach the full production cycle in 2021, when up to fifty bus bodies will already be produced here.

The following fact also speaks of a lot in terms of innovative activity of park residents: in March 2020 the manufacturer of medical products of wide assortment of "Assomedika" Ltd., registered in "The Great Stone" as a resident in 2017, "has mastered new production of breathing masks and bacterial-virus filters of single application for adults, children and newborns"<sup>95</sup> - products providing the maximum protection of breath from microbes and viruses, which can be used within 12-24 hours.

Thinking in an industrial park and about the future. This is evidenced by the fact of registration of the Chinese company Sinomach as a resident of the "Great Stone" in

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<sup>92</sup> Nemankova, Yu. Pilot project on 5G development is realized in "Great stone" / Yu. Nemankova // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pilotnyj-proekt-po-razvitiyu-5g-realizujut-v-velikom-kamne-381000-2020/>.

<sup>93</sup> Zheng, H. "The Great Stone" becomes a strategic platform for the Belarusian-Chinese cooperation / H. Zheng // [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/velikij-kamen-stanovitsja-strategicheskoy-platfornoj-dlja-belorusko-kitajskogo-sotrudnichestva-7152/>

<sup>94</sup> Alexander Turchin: Belarusian-Swiss cooperation has serious potential [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9136>.

<sup>95</sup> Production of breathing masks was opened in the industrial park "Great Stone" [Electron resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-dyhatelnyh-masok-otkryto-v-industrialnom-parke-velikij-kamen-383799-2020/>.

March 2020 with a project to create a zone for scientific and technological cooperation and innovation development, within which it is planned to build a complex of administrative buildings for scientific research and auxiliary infrastructure. In the first phase, it intends to "implement four research projects related to such developments as optical devices, automotive sensors, semiconductor devices and new materials. The company also plans to implement the second phase of the project<sup>96</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> The new resident with Chinese capital is registered in the "Great Stone" [Electronic Resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-s-kitajskim-kapitalom-zaregistrirovan-v-velikom-kamne-384192-2020>.



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