

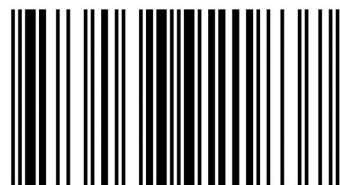
The boundaries of sustainable partnership. Part V

The Strategy for Attracting Foreign Direct Investments until 2035, which is currently being developed in the Republic of Belarus, should define long-term goals, objectives, principles, directions and expected results of attracting foreign investments, taking into account the priorities of socio-economic development of Belarus. Therefore, it defines as long-term goals the improvement of the investment climate, increase in the inflow of direct foreign investments into the country's economy, development of infrastructure, including the use of the mechanism of public-private partnership, increase in efficiency of investment activity. High-tech and knowledge-intensive industries, logistics, transport and digital infrastructure, the financial sector, the social sector - through public-private partnership projects - and the tourism industry are considered promising areas for attracting foreign direct investment in the Belarusian economy. How this task is already being addressed in the bilateral format with the countries located on different continents of the planet is described in this study.

This book has been translated with Artificial Intelligence.



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Boris Zaleski

**The boundaries of sustainable
partnership. Part V**

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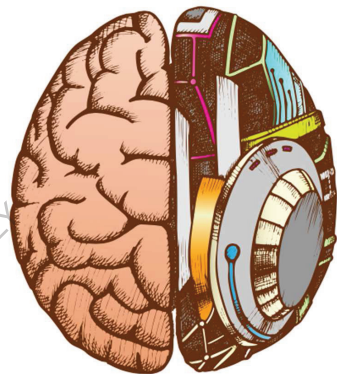
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Belarus: from a strategy to attract foreign investment to international cooperation

Back in 2018 the Republic of Belarus, together with international experts, government agencies, scientific and business community, began work on a draft Strategy to attract foreign direct investment until 2035. At the preliminary stage of preparation of the document the analysis of national legislation, law enforcement practice, institutional factors, experience of foreign countries in the field of investment was conducted. According to the intention of the developers, the strategy should define long-term goals, objectives, principles, directions and expected results of attracting foreign investment, taking into account the priorities of socio-economic development of Belarus. Thus, it defines as long-term goals the improvement of the investment climate, increase in inflow of direct foreign investments into the country's economy, development of infrastructure, including with the use of the mechanism of public-private partnership, increase in efficiency of investment activity. The implementation of the strategy is envisaged in four phases: 1) 2019-2020; 2) 2021-2025; 3) 2025-2030; 4) 2031-2035. Thus "under each stage the road map of actions in which responsible state bodies, terms of realization of actions and their results will be defined" will be developed¹.

The implementation of this strategy should result in Belarus becoming one of the first thirty countries in the world with the best business climate in the World Bank's Doing Business rating, as well as in being among the top thirty countries:

- 1) World Economic Forum global competitiveness rating;
- 2) world competitiveness rating of the international institute of management development;
- 3) International index of country attractiveness for venture and direct investment funds Ernst & Young.

High-tech and knowledge-intensive industries, logistics, transport and digital infrastructure, the financial sector, the social sphere - through public-private partnership projects - and the tourism industry are considered as promising areas for attracting foreign direct investment in the Belarusian economy. In addition, it is

¹ NAIP proposes to discuss a draft strategy to attract foreign direct investment in Belarus [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/naip-predlagaet-obsudit-proekt-strategii-privlechenija-prjamyh-inostrannyh-investitsij-v-belarus-337734-2019/>

planned "to form a package of additional preferences for the establishment of industrial micro, small and medium-sized enterprises by domestic businesses and foreign investors in areas with difficult economic situation"².

The first "swallow" in this regard can be considered a presidential decree "On the development of Orsha district of Vitsebsk voblast," which has seriously spurred investors' interest in the region. In particular, after the decree was issued, "four investors immediately appealed to the district executive committee with proposals for the implementation of various projects at the production site of the former plant of reinforced concrete products. <...> Nonwovens, pellet and furniture production is in progress. Orsha forestry enterprise is implementing a plan to organize new production with deep processing of wood, including the construction of a workshop for the production of pellets"³. In addition, negotiations have already been held here with representatives of a Chinese logistics company to establish a joint venture in the area.

Using the planned toolkit of the strategy implementation, which is the work on improvement of the investment legislation, simplification of administrative procedures for business, further digitalization of all processes in order to exclude subjective approach to solving problems as much as possible in the future, Belarus intends to double the volume of foreign direct investment attraction on a net basis by 2025. "It is also planned to actively work on attracting foreign investments and promoting the investment potential of Belarus abroad, including through such events as economic days, investment forums, conferences, meetings with business"⁴ as well as expanding cooperation with leading international financial organizations.

In the language of figures it means that in the first stage of the strategy implementation - in 2019-2020 - the volume of foreign direct investment should be at least one and a half billion dollars annually, and in the second stage - by 2025 - three billion dollars. It should be reminded that in 2018, foreign investors invested \$10.8 billion in the real sector of the Belarusian economy, except for banks, the bulk of which went to business entities of Russia, Britain and Cyprus. At the same time, "inflow of direct foreign investments amounted to \$8.5 billion, or 78.7% of all foreign investments received"⁵.

² Belarus intends to double the attraction of foreign direct investment by 2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-namerena-k-2025-godu-udvoit-privlechenie-prjamyh-inostrannyh-investitsij-338382-2019/>

³ Bogacheva, O. Decree on development of Orsha district increased interest of investors to the region - Isachenko / O. Bogacheva // [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/regions/view/ukaz-o-razviti-orshanskogo-rajona-povysil-interes-investorov-k-regionu-isachenko-336516-2019/>

⁴ In 2019, Belarus plans to attract at least \$1.6 billion of FDI on a net basis [Electron Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-v-2019-godu-privlech-ne-menee-16-mlrd-pii-na-chistoj-osnove-350482-2019/>

⁵ In 2018, foreign investors invested \$10.8 billion in the economy of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/inostrannye-investory-v-2018-godu-vlozhili-v-ekonomiku-belarusi-108-mlrd-336490-2019/>

And there has been a rapid growth of costs for the purchase of machinery and equipment, including such major investment projects as modernization of oil refineries, construction of a nuclear power plant, projects "Belaruskali" and "Slavkali".

During the hearings in the Belarusian parliament on the legal and practical aspects of improving the investment climate in Belarus, held in November 2018, it was noted that so far the structure of foreign direct investment demonstrates the desire of foreign capital to continue "to prevail in the rapidly recouped sectors of the economy. First of all, it is trade and service sector. Our task is to gradually reorient ourselves towards the industrial sector as well"⁶. For this purpose it is planned to reformat the work of the National Agency of Investment and Privatization to make it a full-fledged "one window" for investors, as well as to pay much more attention to investment policy at the level of regions, where it is necessary to prepare investment sites with ready transport and engineering infrastructure. As for expanding cooperation with leading international financial organizations, interesting prospects are opening up, in particular in cooperation with such representatives as the **Eurasian Development Bank** and the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank**.

The Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) is an international financial institution founded by Russia and Kazakhstan in January 2006 to promote the development of market economies in member states, their sustainable economic growth and the expansion of mutual trade and economic ties. Along with Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, the Republic of Belarus is also a member of the bank. It should be noted that in recent years, the bank has been developing very successfully, as evidenced by the following figures: "According to the results of 2018, the volume of investment increased by 2.5 times compared to 2017 and reached \$1.6 bln. This figure reached its maximum in the history of the bank <...>. The loan portfolio grew by 48% to \$3.6 billion and reached its five-year high"⁷. Interestingly, the bank considers the year of 2018 successful also because "loan provisions for the group of companies Alutech in Belarus have been restored. As a result, the bank received \$10 million in additional income"⁸. And in 2019 the EDB planned to increase its loan portfolio to \$2.9 billion. "As of July 1 [2019] the volume of the current investment

⁶ Belarus expects to double its investments by 2025 [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-udvoit-objem-investitsij-k-2025-godu-325426-2018/>

⁷ Belyaninov: It is extremely important for EDB to finance projects using the national currencies of the EAEC countries [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beljjaninov-eabr-krajne-vazhno-finansirovat-proekty-s-ispolzovaniem-natsvaljut-stran-caes-345396-2019/>

⁸ EDB plans to grow its loan portfolio in 2019 to \$2.9 billion [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eabr-planiruet-rost-kreditnogo-portfelja-v-2019-godu-do-29-mlrd-345498-2019/>

portfolio amounted to \$3.7 billion <...>. As of June 30, 2019, the EDB's assets grew by \$458 million or 12.3% to \$4.2 billion"⁹.

As for the Republic of Belarus, over the period of cooperation with the Eurasian Development Bank it has already implemented 30 projects worth about one billion dollars. As for today, "the Bank is currently considering investment projects of Belarusian industrial enterprises aimed at modernizing the existing ones and creating new production facilities, including with the use of technologies V and VI of technological patterns¹⁰. This line of business of the Eurasian Development Bank is confirmed by the loan agreement signed in May 2019 for the allocation of \$100 million to the Belarusian side to finance working capital and investment program of Belaruskali on mutually beneficial terms. All in all, today in cooperation between the EDB and the Republic of Belarus "more than six projects with different amounts in different sectors are in operation"¹¹. Syndicated loan agreements have been concluded with such Belarusian banks as JSC Belgazprombank and JSC JSSB Belarusbank, as well as credit lines have been opened for trade finance and support of small and medium businesses.

And active negotiations on the EDB's participation in Belinvestbank are currently underway. In this regard, it should be recalled that in October 2018 Belinvestbank, with the assistance of the EDB, raised a syndicated loan for one year in the amount of \$20 million, the funds of which "are provided to finance trade contracts of Belinvestbank's customers related to the supply of goods, equipment and services from the Russian Federation to the Republic of Belarus.¹²which promotes the development of small and medium-sized businesses in our country, a segment that should become one of the drivers of economic growth in the foreseeable future.

In general, the EDB is considering several projects in relation to Belarus - in the road sector, housing and communal services, as well as in the energy sector. Thus, the bank is interested in the upcoming reconstruction of roads in Belarus: the border with Russia - Gomel - Kobrin; Minsk - Vitsebsk. "The price of the road reconstruction issue may

⁹ The volume of EDB's investment portfolio as of July 1 exceeded \$8 billion [Electronic Resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/objem-investitsionnogo-portfelja-eabr-na-1-ijulja-prevysil-8-mlrd-354493-2019>

¹⁰ Meeting with Andrey Belyaninov [Electronic Resource], Chairman of the EDB Board. -- 2019. - URL: <http://government.by/ru/content/8785>

¹¹ The EDB will allocate \$100 million to finance working capital and investment program Belaruskali [Electronic Resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eabr-vydelit-100-mln-na-finansirovanie-oborotnogo-kapitala-i-investprogrammy-belaruskalija-347439-2019/>

¹² Belinvestbank attracted a syndicated loan from the Eurasian Development Bank [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: https://www.belinvestbank.by/about-bank/article/n_Belinvestbank-privlek-sindiczirovannyj-kredit-ot-Evrazijskogo-banka-razvitiya

range from 150 to 450 million euros"¹³. The EDB may also participate in the contract for the purchase of ten 5-car Stadler electric trains for international business class lines by the Belarusian Railway. Delivery of the first electric train is scheduled for late 2020. And since the parties planned to attract credit resources of leading foreign banks for this case, the Eurasian Development Bank in February 2019 announced a high degree of readiness of its participation in this investment project. In the energy sector, we are talking about the construction of gas turbine generators for the Belarusian nuclear power plant in Belarus. In addition, the EDB is interested in cooperation with the Belarusian High Technology Park to be present there with its partners. In particular, "we are talking about a Russian company that may become a HTP resident"¹⁴.

Returning to the loan agreement on Belaruskali, it will undoubtedly help the Belarusian company to implement a large-scale project to build the Petrikovsky mining and processing plant, which will help to increase potash production capacity in Belarus. Another interesting aspect of the EDB activities in Belarus concerns the bank's cooperation with the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone. In February 2019, the parties signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, which opens wide prospects for cooperation and provides for close partnerships in attracting strategic investors to the park, as well as funding individual projects. In particular, "the bank is interested in investing in the construction of the park infrastructure"¹⁵.

As for the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank** (AIIB), the Republic of Belarus became a member in January 2019 and was the first country in the European region to cooperate with this financial institution in the field of infrastructure financing. Recall that the AIIB was founded at the initiative of the People's Republic of China with a charter capital of 100 billion dollars in October 2014 to overcome infrastructure constraints of economic development not only in Asia but also beyond, to strengthen and supplement the funding of international development institutions such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the Eurasian Development Bank. The largest shareholders of the bank today are China, India and Russia. And in just a few years, "membership in AIIB has expanded from 57 to 93

¹³ EDB considers participation in financing the reconstruction of M10 and M3 roads in Belarus [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eabr-rassmatrivaet-uchastie-v-finansirovanii-rekonstruksii-dorog-m10-i-m3-v-belarusi-335452-2019/>

¹⁴ The EDB is interested in the presence of the Belarusian HTP [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eabr-rassmatrivaet-uchastie-v-finansirovanii-rekonstruksii-dorog-m10-i-m3-v-belarusi-335452-2019/>

¹⁵ "The Great Stone and EDB will work together to attract investors to the park [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/yelikij-kamen-i-eabr-budut-vzaimodejstvovat-v-privlechenii-v-park-investorov-335625-2019/>

countries"¹⁶. In particular, six new sovereign participants were recently admitted: Serbia, Libya, Algeria, Ghana, Morocco and Togo.

As such "regional financial arrangements shape a new world financial architecture and contribute to global financial stability by taking over the function of a lending facility to States participating in these financial arrangements when they require assistance". The¹⁷very emergence of this Western-independent multilateral regional bank has received strong support from an overwhelming number of Asian countries. In addition, the establishment of the new bank "marked a major change in the current structure of multilateral development institutions in Asia and the Pacific"¹⁸. The fact is that one of the most important tasks of ABII should be the construction of a new "Silk Road" within the transport corridor West China - Central Asia - Europe. This means that in order to achieve its stated objectives of developing integration and infrastructure that meets the requirements of the Asian region, the bank needs to rapidly expand its areas and scale of operations.

In other words, the ABII should be the instrument to take the process of regional economic integration in Asia to the multilateral level and beyond, in order to improve the connectivity of trade, economic and financial relations there and deepen cooperation with partners involved in the new Silk Road project. And the first steps in this direction have already been taken by the new bank. In just a few years of its existence, ABII has managed to finance 24 projects for four and a half billion dollars. And "the bank plans to increase the average annual volume of lending to \$4-6 billion in the coming years, and then - to \$10-15 billion"¹⁹. In particular, in February 2019, the head of ABII D. Likun said that "the bank plans to increase project financing from \$3.3 billion in 2018 to \$4 billion in 2019"²⁰. At the same time, the quality of projects remains the main allocation criterion. And while the bank intends to focus on financing projects in Asia, in particular in Pakistan, its next steps will be aimed at other countries of the world.

That is why Minsk believes that Belarus' accession to the ABII opens up new opportunities for the country, as the resources of the bank may be directed to the

¹⁶ The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has been expanded with 6 new members [Electronic Resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://ekd.me/2018/12/aziatskij-bank-infrastruktornyx-investicij-popolnitysya-6-novymi-chlenami/>

¹⁷ Valkova, A.V. Asian Bank for Infrastructure Investments: new financial initiatives in Asia-Pacific / A.V. Valkova // International finance. The banking system. -- 2016. - №1. - - C. 27.

¹⁸ Klishin, V.V. Establishment of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as a tool to improve investment strategy of developing countries in Asia-Pacific / V.V. Klishin // Business in law. Economic and legal magazine. -- 2015. - №1. - - C. 215.

¹⁹ Belarus expects to attract the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to co-finance projects [Electronic Resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-privlech-aziatskij-bank-infrastruktornyh-investitsij-k-sofinansirovaniju-proektov-322842-2018/>

²⁰ The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank will increase lending to projects by 20% in 2019 [Electronic Resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.vestifinance.ru/articles/114547>

development of the Chinese initiative "One Belt, One Way," in which our country is also a member. And these resources can be used "to create and modernize existing transport corridors, energy and urban infrastructure, production and logistics".²¹in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" as well as for co-financing projects with other international financial institutions. Moreover, interaction with the ABII may become another important step for the Republic of Belarus in terms of strengthening the relations of trust-based all-round strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation with the People's Republic of China.

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is ready to start programming investment projects for Belarus given its mandate to finance infrastructure development in the fields of transport, energy, housing and municipal services and urbanization was announced in May 2019 during the first official visit of an ABII delegation to our country. As a short-term financing priority, Belarus suggested that the bank should focus on projects in the transport sector, as "transport projects increase connectivity between different regions of Belarus, provide a land bridge between West and East, which is fully in line with one of the bank's key principles for developing and maintaining links with the Asian region"²². In particular, we are talking about financing the construction and reconstruction of the M3 (Minsk-Vitebsk) and M1 (Brest-Minsk-Russia border) roads, where today "the highest priority is investment in road infrastructure. Also ABII is considering joining the project of public-private partnership on reconstruction of M10 [Gomel-Kobrin], on which the Ministry of Transport and Communications is now actively working"²³. The amount of funding from the bank will be determined by the cost of the project and the ability of the Belarusian side to develop these resources. But it is already clear that we are talking about significant amounts of funding.

²¹ Belarus has joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank [Electronic Resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-vstupila-v-aziatskij-bank-infrastrukturnyh-investitsij-333276-2019/>

²² Belarus invited the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to consider projects in the transport sector [Electronic Resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlozila-aziatskomu-banku-infrastrukturnyh-investitsij-rassmotret-proekty-v-transportnom-347465-2019>

²³ The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank may start financing projects in Belarus by the end of the year [Electronic Resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aziatskij-bank-infrastrukturnyh-investitsij-mozhet-nachat-finansirovanie-proektov-v-belarusi-do-kontsa-350838-2019/>

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Belarus-European Union: the positive momentum must become irreversible

It is known that the European Union is the second largest trade partner of the Republic of Belarus after the Russian Federation, the dialogue with which is gradually acquiring more and more pragmatic contours. "Investment is growing, trade surpluses have increased, contacts are developing"²⁴. Suffice it to say that "over the past year [2018] the share of the European Union in the Belarusian exports has increased from 26% to more than 30%. This corresponds to Belarus' decision to diversify trade and economic relations"²⁵. Given the open nature of the Belarusian economy and its serious dependence on the situation in foreign markets in Minsk, attention is drawn to the need for further deepening of trade, economic and investment interaction with European partners, so that positive dynamics in relations with them become irreversible. And then "Belarus and the European Union may return to the maximum level of trade turnover that the parties had in 2012 - \$26.9 billion in 2019"²⁶. There is already a certain foundation for this. "Over the past three or four years, the parties have achieved much more than in the previous decade, when restrictions and sanctions were imposed on Belarus"²⁷.

Declaring its intention to continue the course of development of relations with the European Union, the official Minsk proceeds from the assumption that "we must look for what unites us, not for what separates us, and build our relations on this basis"²⁸. And in this regard, draws attention to the high dynamics of cooperation with such European financial institutions as the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development** and the **European Investment Bank**, "including the implementation of

²⁴ Meeting on participation in integration structures and cooperation with European organizations [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/soveschaniye-po-voprosam-uchastija-v-integratsionnyx-strukturax-i-sotrudnichestva-s-evropejskimi-20640/

²⁵ Belarus and the EU intend to remove the remaining trade barriers - Makej [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-es-namereny-ustranjat-ostajuschiesja-torgovyje-barjery-makej-347249-2019/>

²⁶ Meeting with European Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources Gunther Oettinger [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8617>

²⁷ Makej about cooperation with the EU: positive processes should become irreversible [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/makej-o-sotrudnichestve-s-es-polozhitelnye-protsessy-dolzny-stat-neobratimymi-347254-2019/>

²⁸ Matiyevsky, M. Belarus intends to continue the course on development of relations with the European Union - Makey / M. Matiyevsky // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-namerena-prodolzhat-kurs-na-razvitie-otnoshenij-s-evropejskim-sojuzom-makej-347074-2019/>

projects to support entrepreneurship, reconstruction of water treatment facilities and other areas²⁹.

As for the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development**, its investment in the Belarusian economy reached a record \$360 million in 2018. Thus, Belarus has become one of the ten countries that account for the largest amount of EBRD investments. The bank management explains such high performance by the strategic direction of Belarus and the effective policy pursued in the country. "Stable political and macroeconomic situation in Belarus is a very positive factor for investors"³⁰. That is why the new "goal is for Belarus to become one of the five leaders in the coming years"³¹. The Belarusian side hopes to achieve this goal through further expansion of cooperation with the EBRD and increased operations in the bank, including new areas and formats of joint work. In particular, in March 2019 the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Belarus signed a memorandum of understanding with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on cooperation in the transport sector, the main directions of which concern the reconstruction of the M3 highways Minsk-Vitebsk, M10 Gomel-Kobrin and bridges. In addition, Minsk is implementing a joint municipal project with the EBRD on reconstruction of water supply and drainage systems, restoration and insulation of housing stock. If it is successfully implemented in the capital, and there is no doubt about it, similar initiatives may appear in other cities of the country.

Speaking about the interaction of the Republic of Belarus with the **European Investment Bank**, we recall that the first loan agreements were signed by the parties in November 2018 and concerned the support of "small and medium businesses in the amount of €50 million with Belagroprombank and €25 million with Belarusbank, as well as the reconstruction of Minsk water treatment plant in the amount of €85 million³². And today the total amount of funding for projects implemented in Belarus with the participation of the bank has been brought up to €335 million. In July 2019, the parties signed new loan agreements in this regard. "In particular, €110 million is planned to be spent on the reconstruction of the M7 Minsk-Vilnius highway and the

²⁹ First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus A. Turchin held a meeting with the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Belarus A. Viktorin [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8809>

³⁰ Belarus is among the top ten countries with the largest amount of EBRD investments [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-vhodit-v-desjatku-stran-s-samym-bolshim-objemom-investitsij-ebrr-338772-2019/>

³¹ Meeting with President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Suma Chakrabarti [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-prezidentom-evropejskogo-banka-rekonstruktsii-i-razvitiya-sumoj-chakrabarti-20622/

³² Krishenik, E. Total loan portfolio of EIB in Belarus may increase up to EUR 1 billion / E. Krishenik // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/obschij-kreditnyj-portfel-eib-v-belarusi-mozhet-uvlichitsja-do-1-mlrd-evro-356001-2019/>

road crossing "Kamenny Loh". The expected effect is to increase transit traffic, reduce travel time and transport costs. In addition, the time for processing goods and vehicles at the border checkpoint will be reduced³³. The second loan agreement - for €66 million - concerns a project to modernize the water treatment system, the implementation of which will improve access to better quality water for half a million people in Belarus. Among the priority areas of cooperation the parties also consider cooperation in such areas as energy efficiency, railway potential development, housing and communal services, healthcare. All this allows predicting that "the annual volume of funding for projects in Belarus will reach €350 million in 2019.³⁴ And within the next two-three years the total loan portfolio of the European Investment Bank in Belarus is expected to increase to one billion euros.

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³³ Meeting with the Vice-President of the European Investment Bank Vazil Khudak [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8898>

³⁴ Meeting with the Vice-President of the European Investment Bank Vazil Khudak [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8898>

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Belarus-United Kingdom: trade dialogue begins

The first round of the Belarusian-British trade dialogue is scheduled for June 2019 in Minsk. An agreement to create such a format of bilateral interaction was reached in March 2018 during the official visit of Belarusian Foreign Minister V. Makei to the United Kingdom. This was the first visit of the Head of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry to the United Kingdom since 1993, within the framework of which "documents were signed: on trade and economic cooperation, providing for the establishment of an intergovernmental dialogue to facilitate further development of mutual trade and investment between Belarus and Great Britain, as well as on interaction between the customs authorities of the two countries"³⁵.

It should be noted that the start of trade dialogue between Belarus and Great Britain is taking place against a rather favorable background of the growing trade turnover of bilateral trade. In particular, in 2017, the Belarusian-British mutual trade volume exceeded \$2.6 billion with a surplus of \$2.157 billion for the Belarusian side. In addition, in the same year 2017, Britain became the second largest foreign direct investment in the economy of Belarus - almost two and a half billion dollars. In 2018, bilateral trade volumes continued to grow. And not just for petroleum products. Thus, "for other commodity groups, trade turnover almost doubled"³⁶.

In May 2018, the first official visit of the delegation of the British Parliament to Belarus took place, which "opens a new page of bilateral cooperation"³⁷ and within the framework of which not only political, inter-parliamentary cooperation, but also trade and economic partnership issues were discussed. In particular, the parties stated then that "this meeting should give a new impetus to social projects in Belarus and Great Britain". The³⁸IT industry, science, medicine and culture were also mentioned among the promising areas of cooperation. An important outcome of last year's visit of British MPs to Belarus was the speech of the head of the parliamentary delegation and head of the inter-party group on Belarus, MP D. Wittingdale, at the debate in the UK Parliament

³⁵ Results of the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus V. Makei to Great Britain [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d41e8234403a4dfb.html

³⁶ Belarus offers Great Stone to the UK to open a pharmaceutical enterprise [Electronic Resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlagaet-velikobritanii-otkryt-v-velikom-kamne-farmatsevticheskoe-predpriyatie-346161-2019/>

³⁷ M. Myasnikovich met with a delegation from the British Parliament [Electronic Resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <http://www.sovrep.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/mmjasnikovich-vstretilsja-s-delegatsiej-parlamenta-velikobritanii-12664-2018/>

³⁸ Representatives of the British Parliament visited Minsk [Electronic Resource] for the first time. -- 2018. - URL: <https://sputnik.by/politics/20180529/1035687794/predstaviteli-britanskogo-parlamenta-vpervye-posetili-minsk.html>

in late April 2019, where he noted "the openness of Belarus for interaction with other countries, intensification of bilateral cooperation"³⁹.

In June 2018, Minsk hosted a forum on the development of Belarusian-British trade and economic cooperation and the organization of financing of Belarusian-British trade contacts, which "was attended by about 130 representatives of 70 Belarusian enterprises and organizations"⁴⁰. The event was focused on telling, showing, and advising Belarusian companies on issues related to increasing trade cooperation with British partners. After all, entering the UK market is a daunting task due to the very tough competition that characterizes it. "But presence on it is a kind of global "mark of quality", evidence of international maturity <...> of business, demand and recognition <...> of products and services" .

So far, supplies from Belarus to the UK are dominated by raw materials - oil products, products of coal tar distillation, bituminous mixtures, potash and nitrogen fertilizers, construction fittings, raw lead, as well as furniture, women's outerwear, devices on liquid crystals, binoculars and monoculars, X-ray equipment. British imports to the Belarusian market are also quite diverse: internal combustion engines supplied to Belarusian machine-building enterprises, air pumps, road and construction machinery, transformers, herbicides, chemical compounds, polymers and lubricants, medicines, as well as frozen fish, other food products, spirits, medical materials and equipment. In addition, "about 267 enterprises with British capital are registered in Belarus. In the UK, there are three entities of the Belarusian exporters' SCC - the company BNK UK Ltd (a subsidiary of CJSC Belarusian Oil Company), a representative office of Belavia and Adani Ltd. UK"⁴¹."

In Minsk, the prospects of trade and economic cooperation with British partners are assessed as quite wide: from interaction in the scientific, technical and educational spheres to opening of a pharmaceutical enterprise by British entrepreneurs and production of charging stations for electric cars in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone".

³⁹ UK Trade Policy Minister plans to visit Belarus in June [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ministr-po-torgovoj-politike-velikobritanii-planiruet-posetit-belarus-v-ijune-346186-2019/>

⁴⁰ Belarusian-British Trade and Economic Forum [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - <https://belarus24.by/news/economics/belorusko-britanskiy-torgovo-ekonomicheskij-forum/>

⁴¹ Trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://uk.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/

Belarus - Italy: a reference point for close cooperation

In June 2019, Rome hosted the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Italian Commission on Economic Cooperation, within the framework of which the parties considered topical issues of mutual trade, interaction in the fields of industry, infrastructure and transport, banking and finance, and reached agreements on the implementation of a number of concrete steps designed to give additional impetus to the development of bilateral partnerships, thanks to which "in 2020 the level of bilateral trade will exceed 1 billion euros"⁴². Recall that the first meeting of this structure was held in February 2016 in Minsk. Then the attention of its participants was focused on promising areas of cooperation, "including the establishment of an Italian industrial district in the Brest region, the development of interregional contacts, the use of European financial instruments to support joint investment projects"⁴³. In February 2019, during a visit to Italy, Prime Minister of Belarus S. Rumas and within the framework of the first meeting at the level of the leadership of the Belarusian and Italian governments over the past ten years it was agreed "to resume the work of the Belarusian-Italian intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation in an active format"⁴⁴. This happened against the background of a very positive dynamics in the bilateral Belarusian-Italian trade, the volume of which in 2017 and 2018 has consistently increased by 20 and 15 percent, exceeding \$900 million last year. At the same time, Belarusian exports of goods rose by more than a quarter. This was largely due to the fact that deliveries from Belarus to Italy were carried out on 188 commodity items, among which potash fertilizers, metal products, furniture prevailed, as well as a serious increase in supplies of timber, plywood, glass fiber, linen fabrics, synthetic yarns and cables.

Another important trend that emerged in 2018 is the growth of the volume of Belarusian exports of services, which increased by 60% over this period and amounted to \$55.4 million. It happened at the expense of computer, telecommunication, information, tourist and construction services. But the lion's share was still in the transport services. "Here we must pay tribute to the airline Belavia, which first in 2018 tried the scheme of daily flights between Minsk and Rome, is also actively working on

⁴² Krishenik, E. Belarus and Italy expect to exceed the trade turnover of EUR 1 billion in 2020 / E. Krishenik // [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/italija-i-belarus-rasschityvajut-v-2020-godu-dostich-tovarooborota-v-1-mlrd-evro-posol-349129-2019/>

⁴³ Belarus - Italy: new impetus for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <http://investinbelarus.by/press/news/belarus-italiya-novyj-impuls-sotrudnichestva/>

⁴⁴ Meeting with the Vice-President of the Council of Ministers of Italy Luigi Di Mayo [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8585>

the route Minsk-Milan and a variety of charter programs⁴⁵. Great prospects for Belarusian-Italian cooperation are now also opening up in the investment sphere. Suffice it to say that in 2018, \$23.3 million of investments were attracted from Italy to Belarus, including direct - \$23.1 million. Over the past two years, this has allowed setting up about 60 new enterprises with Italian capital on Belarusian soil, and bringing their total number to 263. In terms of intensifying investment cooperation between Belarus and Italy, great hopes are placed today on the development of partnerships between small and medium-sized enterprises of the two countries. To this end, back in December 2017, the Belarusian-Italian Business Council was established on the initiative of the Belarusian side to become "an instrument that will expand opportunities for trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, help establish cooperation between enterprises working for the benefit of their peoples".⁴⁶ Under the aegis of which the parties agreed to hold annually the Belarusian-Italian business forum with participation of both large companies and representatives of small and medium business in each country.

Another area, which can significantly update the Belarusian-Italian interaction, is the green economy, which in Belarus, taking into account the national and global challenges, is defined as a strategic priority and in December 2016 approved the National Action Plan for the development of the green economy until 2020. The first joint forum on this topic was held in Minsk back in March 2017 with the participation of more than two hundred organizations, half of which were Italian companies engaged in such areas as alternative energy, resource efficiency, recycling and environmental protection. They discussed opportunities for cooperation in the energy sector, "with particular attention to investment opportunities for Italian investors"⁴⁷. The Second Italian-Belarusian Green Economy Forum, held in April 2018 in Minsk, was attended by almost 50 Italian and 140 Belarusian enterprises interested in promoting "advanced Italian industry achievements in the green economy with special emphasis on waste management, renewable sources (solar and wind power plants), energy efficiency in civil and industrial construction, agriculture, "smart cities"⁴⁸. And as part of this event, the Association of Italian Entrepreneurs in Belarus has already signed the protocols of cooperation with the administrations of free economic zones "Gomel-Raton" and

⁴⁵ Guryanov, A. Belarus considers new projects in cooperation with Italy / A. Guryanov // [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belarus-rassmatrivaet-novye-proekty-v-sotrudnichestve-s-italiej-6691/>

⁴⁶ Chumakov, V. In Moscow the Belarusian-Italian business council was created / V. Chumakov // [Electron resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.dompressy.by/2017/12/14/v-moskve-sozdan-belorusko-italyanskij-delovoj-sovet/>

⁴⁷ Italy intends to develop investment cooperation with Belarus in the field of green economy [Electronic resource]. -- 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/italija-namerena-razvivat-investitsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusju-v-sfere-zelenoj-ekonomiki-239145-2017/>

⁴⁸ About 190 companies will take part in the Italian-Belarusian forum on green economy [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/okolo-190-kompanij-primut-uchastie-v-italo-beloruskom-forume-zelenoj-ekonomike-299486-2018/>

"Brest. The third similar forum on the green economy will be held in Minsk in October 2019. And there is every reason to believe that he will bring new bright colors to the cooperation between the two countries.

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Belarus-Poland: from revitalizing relations to a new cooperation programme

March 2017 marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and Poland, a characteristic trend of which has recently been marked by a marked intensification of dialogue not only at the level of government and parliament leaders of the two countries, but also at the level of specific regions. As a rule, their interaction is based on a pragmatic component in the form of trade and economic cooperation, implementation of joint investment projects, wide industrial cooperation. The figures show that "during 25 years of diplomatic relations 83 agreements on partnership and cooperation and 3 agreements on intention of cooperation between different cities and regions of Belarus and Poland have been signed"⁴⁹. Even today we can note very close cooperation of Grodno region with Podlaskie voivodship, Brest region with Lublin voivodship, Mogilev region with Kujawsko-Pomorsk voivodship, Gomel region with Lubus voivodship. Apparently, a qualitatively new level of cooperation is going to be reached with the Łódź Voivodeship and the Vitebsk Oblast.

They signed a partnership agreement back in 2009. However, the experience of the implementation of this document has shown that until recently, the parties, interacting with each other, still mainly focused on cultural exchange. Today, the Belarusian-Polish relations are characterized by an aspiration to develop contacts in all spheres with the aim of expanding "pragmatic and constructive cooperation in the interests of the peoples of Belarus and Poland"⁵⁰. That is why the signing of five agreements on cooperation between the districts of the Vitebsk Oblast and the municipalities of the Łódź Voivodeship in March 2017 looks absolutely timely and very encouraging. "Vitebsk district and the municipality of Gomunitsa, Senno and Goshanov, Shumilinsky and Makuv, Polotsky and Zgez, Gorodok district and the town of Opochno will develop partnership relations in trade, economic, social and cultural spheres. In addition, the protocol of intent on cooperation was signed by the Ushach district and the municipality of Tomaszów Mazowiecki"⁵¹.

⁴⁹ Interview with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Poland A. Averyanova to the BelTA news agency (March 1, 2017) // [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/f247df4969db2386.html>

⁵⁰ Alexander Lukashenko has congratulated President of Poland Andrzej Duda [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-polshi-andzheja-dudu-15671/

⁵¹ Vitebsk region and Łódź voivodship expand inter-regional cooperation [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskaja-oblast-i-lodzinskoe-voevodstvo-rasshirajut-mezhregionalnoe-sotrudnichestvo-239226-2017/>

The parties have one intention: to expand trade relations and increase mutual trade turnover. Moreover, the participants of the signed documents have a wide range of processing technologies in footwear, textile industry, meat and dairy production, construction and woodworking. That is why representatives of Vitebsk region immediately offered their Polish partners a number of projects in the field of milk processing, meat production, baby food, drinking water, tailoring, flax and rapeseed cultivation. In addition, relevant projects of international cooperation for this Belarusian region are such as the organization of waste processing plants, construction of hydroelectric power plants and logistics centers, including the Vitebsk airport.

For its part, the Łódź Voivodeship is interesting to the Belarusian partners because this Polish region specializes in agricultural production - dairy products, fruit. Industrial enterprises are actively developing here. And the very location of the Voivodeship at the intersection of transport routes creates a promising basis for joint development of logistics infrastructure and joint access to the largest markets of the European and Eurasian Economic Union countries. But in order to successfully compete on external markets and obtain a significant financial result, the parties need to deepen cooperation and create joint products with high added value. To solve this problem, "together with Polish partners it is necessary to form a single technological chain: financing - creation of innovations - implementation into production"⁵².

Good conditions for Polish business can be provided by the Free Economic Zone "Vitebsk", where at the beginning of 2017 already 36 companies with capital from 14 countries were operating in such areas as mechanical engineering, electronics, veterinary medicine, chemical, fuel, food, light industry. In addition, "in 2016, FEZ administration concluded 6 cooperation agreements with foreign organizations that have the opportunity to assist in finding potential investors, including Lublin Business Club and Łódź Regional Development Agency (Poland)"⁵³. Specific work to expand Belarusian-Polish interregional cooperation was continued at the 6th International Economic Forum "Innovations. Investments. Prospects", which was held in Vitebsk in May 2017 and where, along with the exchange of business contacts "Prospective scientific and technical developments and innovative development of the region" and the international scientific conference "Energy and Resource Saving-2017", the section "BMS - as a promising platform for attracting foreign investment" worked.

⁵² The creation of the joint product will allow Vitebsk and Lodz enterprises to successfully compete - Matskevich [Electronic Resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/sozdanie-sovmestnogo-produkta-pozvolit-predpriyatijam-vitebska-i-lodzi-uspeshno-konkurirovat-matskevich-239246-2017/>

⁵³ In 2016 residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" expanded the geography of export supplies to 6 countries [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-v-2016-godu-rasshirili-geografiju-eksportnyh-postavok-na-6-stran-233960-2017/>

In the same year 2017, after a two-year break, the Belarusian-Polish working group on trade and investment, which is an important part of the Belarusian-Polish Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation, resumed its activities. In October 2017, Minsk hosted the fifth meeting of the group, which demonstrated the parties' clear understanding of the fact that "the revival, which is now observed in Belarusian-Polish relations, should be based on an increasing openness and mutual readiness to seek solutions to existing issues that arise daily in trade, economic and investment relations between our states"⁵⁴.

Such trends and figures testified to the noticeable revival of interaction between Belarus and Poland. In particular, against the background of building cooperation between individual agencies, finalizing the legal framework and searching for new projects useful for both parties "over the past two years, trade turnover between countries and the volume of Polish investments in Belarus has been growing"⁵⁵. Thus, in the first eight months of 2017, trade turnover between the parties reached almost \$1.6 billion. In addition, Belarusian exports have increased by 19 percent to almost \$700 million. At the same time, there is every reason to believe that the potential of Belarusian-Polish cooperation has not yet been fully realized. That is why, when discussing the possibilities of further partnership development, the participants of the fifth meeting of the working group on trade and investment "defined for themselves the growth of mutual trade in the near future up to \$4 billion"⁵⁶. This problem can only be solved with an effective approach to a wide range of bilateral cooperation issues, from investment cooperation, transport and logistics to standardization and insurance.

The issue of investment in this context is particularly important, as Poland is one of the largest investors in the Belarusian economy. In 2017 alone, the growth rate of Polish investments was 140 per cent. To be more precise, "the volume of foreign direct investment from this country in 2016 exceeded \$200 million, and in the first half of this year more than \$150 million was attracted from Poland to the Belarusian economy"⁵⁷.

In this regard, the prospects for cooperation between the two countries in transport and logistics look very tempting. Firstly, a number of Polish transport and logistics

⁵⁴ Belarus and Poland see each other as reliable partners [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-polsha-vidjat-drug-v-druge-nadezhnyh-partnerov-shestakov-272971-2017/>

⁵⁵ Belarus and Poland can cooperate on the principles of good neighborhood in all spheres - Konrad Pavlik [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-polsha-mogut-vzaimodejstvovat-na-printsipah-dobrososedstva-vo-vseh-sferah-konrad-pavlik-269635-2017/>

⁵⁶ Belarus and Poland expect to increase trade turnover to \$4 billion [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-polsha-rasschityvajut-uvelicit-tovarooborot-do-4-mlrd-273021-2017/>

⁵⁷ Belarusian exports to Poland increased by 19% between January and August [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskij-eksport-v-polshu-za-janvar-avgust-uvelicilsja-na-19-272978-2017/>

companies have already shown a concrete interest in investing in this area. Secondly, this interest is largely fuelled by the fact that "as part of the implementation of the state program of the logistics system in Belarus, 50 sites have been identified for the construction of logistics centers, including 18 for facilities with the possibility of final processing of products"⁵⁸. It is clear that the implementation of this program will make Belarus an even more attractive place in the Eurasian economic space and an important strategic hub in the implementation of the Chinese strategic initiative on the economic belt of the New Silk Road.

A good illustration of the relevance of this area of cooperation between Belarus and Poland can be the agreement with a Polish investor on the construction of a loading terminal at the Belarusian railway station Bruzgi, reached at the Belarusian-European Investment Forum, held in Luxembourg in October 2017. The investment in the project, which may be completed as early as 2019, will amount to about 15 million euros. Obviously, the appearance of this terminal will only contribute to an increase in transit cargo flow through Belarus. "We are talking about container trains from China to the Atlantic Ocean as part of the construction of the revived Silk Road"⁵⁹. An additional prerequisite for the successful implementation of this project is the fact that the Polish investor - OT Logistic Bel Ltd. - is planning to carry out its investment activities in the free economic zone "Grodnoinvest".

Not least, the fact that "Poland is implementing a strategy of responsible development until 2020 with a view to 2030, which creates a new stage in the management of the country's development processes, plays a role in the increased attention of Polish investors to projects in the Belarusian economy in the current circumstances. Economic legislation is being reformed, which is aimed at business needs and creating new incentives for investors"⁶⁰. Perhaps for this reason, too, the fifth meeting of the Trade and Investment Working Group helped the parties to specifically identify the prospects for collaboration in sectors such as construction, agricultural processing, vehicles, agricultural equipment, woodworking and even environmental technology.

As for the latter direction, in the same October 2017, at a meeting of the Belarusian-Polish group on water resources, the parties agreed to sign an agreement on cooperation

⁵⁸ Polish investors were interested in building logistics centers in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/polskie-investory-zainteresovalis-stroitelstvom-v-belarusi-logisticheskikh-tsentrov-272987-2017/>

⁵⁹ Dylenok, J. Polish investor will build a loading terminal at the railway station Bruzgi / J. Dylenok // [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/polskij-investor-postroit-pogruzochnyj-terminal-na-zheleznodorozhnoj-stantsii-bruzgi-273814-2017/>

⁶⁰ Belarus and Poland have defined perspective directions of economic interaction [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-polsha-opredelili-perspektivnye-napravlenija-ekonomicheskogo-vzaimodejstvia-273031-2017/>

in the field of protection and rational use of transboundary waters, as well as to solve "issues of updating threat and risk maps of floods on the Belarusian-Polish border"⁶¹.

People's diplomacy should also play an important role in the development of the Belarusian-Polish partnership at the present stage. This was the case, in particular, at the Fourth Meeting of Twin Cities of Belarus and Poland, held in October 2017 in Baranovichi. Representatives of 16 Belarusian and 12 Polish twin cities, including those from Grodno, Vitebsk, Novopolotsk, Nesvizh, Kobrin, Bialystok, Szczecin, Gdynia, Gdansk, Pulaw, Zielona Gora, Biala Podlaski, took part in the meeting. In the resolution adopted at this forum, the parties agreed that it is necessary "to continue the work on expanding partnerships between the municipalities of Belarus and Poland, involving representatives of business circles and civil society, deputies and youth in the twinned movement"⁶². The urgent task of public diplomacy in this regard is to jointly raise funds from international funds to implement interregional cooperation projects. One such joint project is "Supporting the work potential of young people with disabilities". - has already been successfully implemented in Baranovichi, where modern sewing equipment and a special vehicle for transporting the disabled are purchased with the help of purposeful funds, and where people with disabilities will be able to undergo training for subsequent employment in newly created jobs.

Another event that we would like to remember today is the 22nd Belarusian-Polish Economic Forum "Neighbourhood-2019", which took place in Minsk in June 2019, where the participants - "more than 440 Belarusian businessmen from all regions of the country and more than 140 Polish guests"⁶³ - at the plenary session and in three panel discussions - "Interregional Cooperation and Development", "Logistic Services. Creating a Favorable Climate", "Information Technologies" - considered the state and prospects of Belarusian-Polish trade and economic interaction, which has considerably strengthened over the past few years. Suffice it to say that "at the end of 2018, the volume of mutual trade reached \$2.55 billion for the first time in eight years. 339 organizations with Polish capital operate in Belarus. Polish investments in the economy of Belarus last year [2018] amounted to \$445 million"⁶⁴. Important detail: in 2018, the

⁶¹ Belarus and Poland plan to cooperate in the field of transboundary water protection [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-polsha-planirujut-sotrudnicat-v-oblasti-ohrany-transgranichnyh-vod-272740-2017/>

⁶² The tasks of public diplomacy are discussed in Baranovichi at the meeting of twin cities of Belarus and Poland [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/zadachi-narodnoj-diplomatii-obszhdajut-v-baranovichah-na-vstreche-gorodov-pobratimov-belarusi-i-polshi-270173-2017/>

⁶³ Ulakhovich, V. Forum "Neighbourhood-2019" will fill the relations between Belarus and Poland with new content (in Russian) / V. Ulakhovich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/opinions/view/forum-dobrososedstvo-2019-napolnit-otnoshenija-belarusi-i-polshi-novym-soderzhaniem-6885/>

⁶⁴ Lisatovich, T. Belarus considers Poland as an important and promising partner in the EU - Myasnikovich / T. Lisatovich / [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rassmatrivaet-polshu-kak-vazhnogo-i-perspektivnogo-partnera-v-es-mjasnikovich-350203-2019/>

Belarusian side exported to the Polish market products worth \$1.344 billion in 495 commodity items.

Forum "Neighborhood-2019" became the platform where it was announced that the potential for the development of bilateral Belarusian-Polish cooperation is such that "there are reserves, which already today give us the opportunity to overcome the \$3 billion boundary".⁶⁵ and Polish investment in the Belarusian economy may exceed \$500 million per year. Among the promising areas of strengthening partnerships, the parties see primarily such areas as wood and metalworking, construction, food industry, transport and logistics, environmental protection, pharmaceuticals, banking and insurance, as well as agriculture, where "in the four months of this year [2019], exports of Belarusian agricultural products and foodstuffs to Poland almost doubled"⁶⁶.

The Belarusian-Polish production cooperation, where great hopes are placed today on the Polish Investment and Trade Agency, should become an effective tool for solving the tasks voiced. The fact is that back in 2016 the Polish government set an ambitious goal to create a global network of 70 bureaus, which should provide a new quality of support to Polish entrepreneurs on global markets. It's a fact that "Belarus was chosen as one of these strategic markets".⁶⁷ In 2018, the agency opened its trading office and immediately noted a significant increase in interest of Polish entrepreneurs in cooperation with Belarusian partners, which affected the results of the work. In particular, one of the examples of successful cooperation was an investment project in Belarus by Polish furniture company Szynaka, which in September 2018 signed an agreement with Grodno Regional Executive Committee on the establishment of a large furniture production in the region. Polish businessmen were attracted by the fact that a furniture cluster is being created in Grodno Region, there is a raw material necessary for production. As a result, Polish investments in this project "will amount to several tens of millions of euros. It will be a large production of a large number of different furniture. The number of employees after the plant start-up at full capacity can reach 500 people"⁶⁸. In this regard, the Belarusian side stresses that it is open for Polish business to come to the country, so "Polish companies, which need our wood, leather

⁶⁵ Lisatovich, T. Belarus and Poland have opportunities to overcome the \$3 billion border in mutual trade - Ambassador / T. Lisatovich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/u-belarusi-i-polshi-est-vozmozhnosti-preodolet-rubezh-vo-vzaimnoj-torgovle-v-3-mlrd-posol-350228-2019/>

⁶⁶ Exports of Belarusian agricultural products to Poland in January-April increased almost twofold [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskoj-selhozprodukcii-v-polshu-v-janvare-aprele-vyros-pochti-v-2-raza-350231-2019/>

⁶⁷ Interest of Polish entrepreneurs in Belarus is growing [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/interes-polskih-predprinimatelej-k-belarusi-rastet-350224-2019/>

⁶⁸ An investor from Poland will establish a large furniture production in Grodno region [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investor-iz-polshi-sozdast-krupnoe-mebelnoe-proizvodstvo-v-grodnenskoj-oblasti-317876-2018/>

and other raw materials, have every opportunity to open their production facilities in Belarus⁶⁹.

Another important area of cooperation between Belarus and Poland, which was discussed at the forum "Neighborhood-2019," has become more relevant over the past few years and concerns the unification of efforts of the two countries in the global project "Belt and Way. In this regard, Minsk and Warsaw have already made some important steps towards each other. In particular, they signed an agreement on the maintenance of border railway bridge facilities at the Belarusian-Polish border. This topic was continued by the decision of the parties announced at the end of June 2019, following the fifth meeting of the Belarusian-Polish working group on cooperation in the field of transport, to begin construction of a new road border bridge across the Zapadny Bug river at the Domachevo-Slovakhichi border crossing in 2020. The project is expected to take approximately four years to complete, of which the bridge will take a year and ten months. "The length of the bridge will be about 209 meters. The crossing will make it possible to ensure twenty-four-hour non-stop operation of the Republican Highway R-94 Brest-Poland border (Domachevo) and Domachevo border crossing, which, in turn, will reduce the load on the Warsaw Bridge and Kozlovichi border crossings"⁷⁰.

But perhaps the most significant result of the economic forum "Neighbourhood-2019" was the agreement of the parties to develop a new program of cooperation for 2021-2027, initiated by "Marshal of the Senate of Poland and Marshal of Podlaskie Voivodship. This is a program that will address not only cross-border projects, but also educational and commercial"⁷¹. The fact is that in 2020 the European Union cross-border cooperation programme "Poland-Belarus-Ukraine" will come to an end. That is why we can only welcome the intention of the parties to continue close cooperation not only in the short term, but also in the long term for the benefit of the peoples of the two countries.

⁶⁹ Lisatovich, T. Koltovich: Belarus is open for Polish business / T. Lisatovich // [Electron resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/koltovich-belarus-otkryta-dlja-polskogo-biznesa-350234-2019/>

⁷⁰ Lisatovich, T. Belarus and Poland will start building a new bridge at Domachevo-Slovatichi border crossing in 2020 / T. Lisatovich // [Electron resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-polsha-v-2020-godu-nachnut-stroit-novyyj-most-na-pogranperehode-domachevo-slovatichi-352908-2019/>

⁷¹ Lisatovich, T. Belarus and Poland agreed on new cooperation program / T. Lisatovich // [Electronic resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-polsha-dogovorilis-o-novoj-programme-sotrudnichestva-350246-2019/>

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Belarus - Azerbaijan: from industrial cooperation to participation in exhibitions

Azerbaijan is among those countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States with which cooperation is strategic for the Republic of Belarus. This is evidenced, in particular, by the results of 2018, when the Belarusian-Azerbaijani trade turnover "was about \$465.3 million and increased by 3 times compared to 2017⁷². The fact that the delivery of Belarusian products to the Azerbaijani market is now carried out on more than 220 commodity items also says a lot.

One of the key areas of cooperation between Belarus and Azerbaijan is increasingly becoming industrial cooperation, the flagship of which can be called the Ganja Automobile Plant. The company has already established assembly plants of Belarusian tractors, combine harvesters "Gomselmash," vehicles of Minsk Automobile Plant, electric buses "Belkommunmash. At least the fact that since 2007 more than 11 thousand tractors, as well as about 3.5 thousand units of automotive and special equipment have been assembled here testifies to the effectiveness of their activities. In May 2019, a new assembly line was opened at the Azerbaijani enterprise, "for the first time a grain-harvesting machine of KZS-575 "Palesse GS575" and an electric bus E321 descended from the conveyor"⁷³.

Of particular interest is the production of electric buses in Ganja, a public transport for 83 passengers, equipped with 26 seats, air conditioning, information monitor and video control system. This technique is beneficial in terms of both minimal environmental impact and energy savings. "The battery charging time of an electric bus capable of speeds up to 60 km/h < ...> is only six minutes". It is expected that in the future the Ganja Automobile Plant will produce up to 40 percent of spare parts for this environmentally friendly equipment. In case of rather high demand, the company's capacity will allow producing up to 150 electric buses per year. And there are still projects under development to assemble and supply municipal equipment of Minsk Automobile Plant and passenger vehicles of medium capacity. In addition, in July 2019 in the Turkish city of Kyrkkala, which is 80 kilometers from Ankara, with the support of the Ganja Automobile Plant should begin its work assembly production of Minsk tractors in such a way that by the end of this year to produce a hundred cars, next year

⁷² Igor Lyashenko made a working visit to Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8786>

⁷³ The President of Azerbaijan met with Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Lyashenko [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/prezident-azerbajdzhana-vstretilsja-s-vitse-premjerom-belarusi-ljashenko-347392-2019/>

- two hundred. And as a result, "the capacity of the plant will allow to collect up to three thousand tractors per year"⁷⁴. The assistance of the Azerbaijani side in this matter allowed saving about one million dollars only on the construction of one building of future production in Turkey.

Another important direction of Belarusian-Azerbaijani cooperation, which has received a strong development in spring 2019, is the participation of Belarusian exporting enterprises in the exhibition events in Azerbaijan. In May, the exposition of Belarusian manufacturers "Belarus. Taste of Nature" was presented in Baku at the international agricultural exhibition Caspian Agro, which has already "proved to be an important platform for promoting Belarusian interests in agriculture in the Azerbaijani market"⁷⁵. Among more than two hundred companies from 25 countries, which presented their traditional products and novelties in various sectors of the agricultural industry, 25 organizations and enterprises from Belarus showed their capabilities. Thus, organizations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus have demonstrated innovative equipment for agriculture - energy-efficient combine for berry harvesting, LED lamps and greenhouse irradiators for growing plants in greenhouse farms. The company "Belagro Bel" offered visitors to the exhibition "multi-brand portfolio of agricultural machinery produced in Belarus and integrated solutions for processing a wide range of crops"⁷⁶.

Even more diverse Belarusian products could be seen at the exhibition in the section of confectionery, drinks and groceries. In particular, "Red Gulp" from Bobruisk attracted attention with such novelties as: marshmallow - in the form of a rose flower, with the taste of pomegranate and duchesse; marmalade - in the form of bottles with the taste of tequila, wine and cognac. "Spartak" from Gomel showed chocolate - bitter and dairy, as well as white chocolate with almonds and coconut, with hazelnuts and sponge balls, with hazelnuts and cereals. The Belarusian exposition of children's food, meat and poultry products, as well as products of the Minsk Margarine Plant were added to the exhibition in Baku. The business part of Caspian Agro also proved to be very effective for Belarusian participants. In particular, the document on cooperation was signed by the "Belgospischeprom" concern and the Azerbaijan Industrial Corporation, in which the parties agreed to cooperate "in the field of tobacco products

⁷⁴ M. Matiyevesky, M. Assembly manufacture of the Belarusian tractors in Turkey should earn in July / M. Matiyevesky // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-belorusskih-tractorov-v-turtsii-dolzno-zarabotat-v-ijule-344079-2019/>

⁷⁵ Belarus is interested in developing cooperation with Azerbaijan in the agricultural sector and industrial operation [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-razvivat-s-azerbajdzhanom-sotrudnichestvo-v-apk-i-promkooperatsiju-347429-2019/>

⁷⁶ Belarus presented the largest national exposition at the agricultural exhibition in Baku [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-krupnejshuju-natsionalnuju-ekspozitsiju-nalskokozejajstvennoj-vystavke-v-baku-347619-2019/>

supply between "Azertabak" agro-industrial complex and Grodno Tobacco Factory, which is a part of the "Belgospisheprom" concern".⁷⁷as well as to share production experience.

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⁷⁷ "Belgospisheprom and the Azerbaijan Industrial Corporation signed a protocol on cooperation [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospisheprom-i-azerbajdzhanskaja-promyshlennaja-korporatsija-podpisali-protokol-o-sotrudnicestve-347723-2019/>

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Belarus - Armenia: in line with positive growth dynamics

Armenia is one of those countries in the post-Soviet space, whose trade turnover with the Republic of Belarus in 2018 had a positive growth dynamics, having increased by more than 17 percent and exceeded \$50 million. This trend continues to dominate in 2019, in the four months of which the volume of mutual Belarusian-Armenian trade increased by almost a third and amounted to almost \$20 million. At the same time, the surplus for the Belarusian side has exceeded \$10 million by strengthening the key export positions of Belarusian companies - producers of milk, condensed and dried cream, tractors and tractors, medicines, tires, paper and cardboard.

Investment cooperation is an important element of the Belarusian-Armenian cooperation. Suffice it to say that "in 2018 Belarus received \$7.6 million of investments from Armenia, including \$7.5 million of direct investments. In the first quarter of this year [2019] \$3.5 million of direct foreign investments were attracted⁷⁸. This picture of partnership between Belarus and Armenia is significantly complemented by more than 80 entities of the Belarusian distribution network of Belarusian enterprises operating today on Armenian soil, as well as 57 enterprises with Armenian capital - 17 joint ventures and 40 foreign ones operating now in Belarus. In addition, "there are three enterprises with Belarusian capital in Armenia: Armenian-Belarusian Trading House "Ar-Be" LLC, "BelAZ Caucasus Trans Service" LLC and "Trade House "BelAR" CJSC⁷⁹. Nevertheless, according to the parties, "so far there have been few joint investment projects, and those that are being worked on are often implemented in a sluggish manner⁸⁰. That is why it is especially important today not just to trade with each other, but to create joint companies so that the businesses of the two countries work more actively with each other. And such opportunities exist in many areas of cooperation.

One of the priority directions of the bilateral Belarusian-Armenian cooperation in modern conditions has become agriculture, as for Armenia the topic of saturation of the market with safe and quality food products is very important nowadays. That is why international engagement in this direction has great prospects. They want to do it now, as the Armenian President A. A. stated during his visit to Minsk in July 2019.

⁷⁸ Armenian President Sargsyan has arrived in Belarus [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/prezident-armenii-sarkisjan-pribyl-v-belarus-353322-2019/>

⁷⁹ Meeting with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8605>

⁸⁰ Myasnikovich suggested that Armenia should activate the investment cooperation [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-predlozil-armenii-aktivizirovat-investsotrudnichestvo-343419-2019/>

Sargsyan, "to create a platform of food safety on the basis of which certain agreements with producers of different countries will be implemented"⁸¹. And the partnership with the Belarusian side in this regard looks very promising. This is evidenced by the fact that in 2018, exports of agricultural products from Belarus to Armenia grew by 30% to \$13 million. In the first four months of 2019, that figure rose by more than 20 per cent to more than five million dollars.

As measures contributing to the growth of trade turnover in agriculture, the parties today consider not only joint actions in food trade, but also the expansion of supply of agricultural and other equipment, strengthening the role of the trading house of Belarus in Yerevan, the establishment of a trading house of Armenia on Belarusian soil, as well as the organization of joint ventures and cooperation in the field of animal husbandry. Realizing that the next step in the bilateral relations should be to reach a higher level of cooperation, the Belarusian side also proposed, in particular, "to take part in the renewal of the park of passenger equipment of Armenia, in the program of renewal of the elevator facilities"⁸².

Another promising direction in the development of Belarusian-Armenian partnership relations is the improvement of transport links between the two former Soviet republics. As you know, there are no direct communications between Belarus and Armenia, but there is an opportunity to create them within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, along with the relevant infrastructure, ensuring the delivery of goods and transit traffic between the countries. In particular, the parties are now considering the possibility of transporting Armenian goods to Belarus and transit through its territory by rail. A promising logistical direction in this regard is the use of the "North - South road under construction, which will connect Georgia with Iran, and a FEZ in the city of Meghri, where there is a free economic zone. This is a good opportunity to expand the geography of supplies of Belarusian goods"⁸³.

All these facts show that Armenia was and remains for Belarus the state with which official Minsk aims to expand the trade and economic component of bilateral relations

⁸¹ Armenia is interested in developing cooperation with Belarus in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/armenija-zainteresovana-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusiju-v-oblasti-selskogo-hozjajstva-353502-2019/>

⁸² Belarus is ready to take part in the renewal of the passenger machinery park of Armenia [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-uchastvovat-v-obnovlenii-parka-passazhirskoj-tehniki-armenii-334782-2019/>

⁸³ The heads of transport agencies of Belarus and Armenia have outlined the points of growth of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/glavy-transportnyh-vedomstv-belarusi-i-armenii-nametili-tochki-rosta-sotrudnichestva-354239-2019/>

and is ready "to participate in any projects, including those in Armenia, which will be of interest to Armenian partners⁸⁴.

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⁸⁴ Presentation of credentials by ambassadors of foreign countries [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vruchenie-veritelnix-gramot-poslami-zarubezhnyx-gosudarstv-20325/

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Belarus-Uzbekistan: priority areas of partnership identified

In June 2019, Minsk hosted the seventh session of the Belarusian-Uzbek intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation, within the framework of which the sides discussed priority areas of cooperation, including the agro-industrial complex, machine-building, food and pharmaceutical industries, light industry, with special attention to industrial cooperation issues. Recall that since 2017, two assembly plants of Belarusian equipment with the participation of the Belarusian capital - JV Amkodor-Agrotexmash and JV UzBelAgromash - have already been operating on Uzbek soil, and since 2018 - the footwear manufacturer UzShoes, the founder of which is the Belarusian holding Marko. Finally, "in September 2018, in Tashkent, the presidents of Belarus and Uzbekistan opened a new plant for the assembly of Amkodor equipment"⁸⁵. Within the framework of the seventh session of the intergovernmental commission, the Belarusian side proposed to implement new large-scale projects in the sphere of **mechanical engineering** to establish production of cargo, special and trailer vehicles, buses using NGV fuel. Moreover, Minsk Automobile Plant is already "ready to take part in the creation of such production facilities with a high degree of localization"⁸⁶.

As for cooperation in **agriculture**, the parties reached an agreement to establish dairy complexes in Uzbekistan "at the expense of the Uzbek side with the involvement of Belarusian design and construction organizations, the supply of Belarusian equipment, as well as the supply of cattle of Belarusian selection"⁸⁷. And have already taken concrete steps in that direction. In particular, back in April 2019 in Tashkent region a joint venture "Zdravushka Tashkent" was established, which will be engaged in the construction of a factory for processing milk and dairy products for one thousand cattle.

Speaking about the prospects for cooperation in the **light industry**, it should be noted that in the first quarter of 2019 the trade turnover of Bellegprom's enterprises with Uzbekistan exceeded four and a half million dollars. From Belarus, the Uzbek market was supplied with fabrics of "Mogotex," "Kamvol," lint fabrics of "Belfa," corsetry of the joint venture "Milavitsa. The basis of imports was cotton yarn, knitted fabrics and cotton fibre. Nevertheless, Bellegprom is considering additional opportunities for cooperation and development of cooperative ties with Uzbek partners. It is a question

⁸⁵ Belarus - Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/bilateral/cis/uzbekistan/>

⁸⁶ Vladimir Dvornik took part in the session of intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://government.gov.by/ru/content/8847>

⁸⁷ The Government of Belarus offers Uzbekistan large-scale projects to produce equipment [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pravitelstvo-belarusi-predlagaet-uzbekistanu-masshtabnye-proekty-po-proizvodstvu-tehniki-113-2019/>

of joint work "on deliveries of demanded production - a yarn from synthetic fibres, fabrics, pile cloths, corsetry and hosiery, cotton yarn"⁸⁸. Projects on entering the Baranovichi cotton production association into the Uzbek cotton and textile cluster and on expanding joint footwear production are also promising.

New opportunities for Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the **pharmaceutical industry** are opened by the agreement on cooperation in the investment and information spheres signed in June 2019 by the administrations of free economic zones "Vitebsk" and "Kosonsoy-Pharm" in Namangan region of Uzbekistan. The fact is that FEZ "Kosonsoy-Pharm", established in May 2017, specializes in the development of enterprises in the pharmaceutical industry, the activities of which are also conducted by several residents of FEZ "Vitebsk". Why "attraction of investments into projects on creation of production of medicines and medical devices is one of the most perspective directions of cooperation between administrations of two FEZs"⁸⁹.

It should be reminded that in September 2018 at the talks between the heads of state A. Lukashenko and S. Merziev it was noted that "the countries have the potential to increase trade turnover up to \$1 billion"⁹⁰. The task is expected to be completed in three to four years. To this end, in November 2018, the Heads of Government of the two countries signed a concrete and detailed plan for the implementation of the agreements reached - a road map that "includes more than 100 activities to promote bilateral trade in goods and services".⁹¹ as well as to ensure mutual access to the markets of the parties and cooperation in the field of industrial cooperation, agriculture, light industry, pharmaceuticals and health care, construction, petrochemistry, energy.

Quite quickly, this document began to yield real results. Suffice it to say that already at the end of 2018 "mutual trade turnover has increased by 2.5 times"⁹². And there is every reason to believe that the task set by the presidents of the two countries will be successfully fulfilled if the current dynamics of expanding Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation continues.

⁸⁸ "Bellegprom plans to expand cooperation with Uzbekistan [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belleprom-planiruet-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-uzbekistanom-333-2019/>

⁸⁹ FEZ "Vitebsk" and Uzbek "Kosonsoy-Pharm" will develop investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-uzbekskaja-kosonsoj-farm-budut-razvivat-investitsionoe-sotrudnichestvo-352766-2019/>

⁹⁰ Matiyevsky, M. Lukashenko and Merziev consider it possible to raise the level of trade turnover up to \$1 billion / Matiyevsky // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-i-mirzиеv-schitajut-vozmozhnym-podnjat-uroven-tovarooborota-do-1-mlrd-317697-2018/?utm_source=belatm_medium=newstm_campaign=accent

⁹¹ Signing of the road map to develop cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8364>

⁹² Trade turnover growth and new projects - Ambassador of Uzbekistan about dynamics of relations with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/rost-tovarooborota-i-novye-proekty-posol-uzbekistana-o-dinamike-otnoshenij-s-belarusju-333099-2019/>

Belarus - Uzbekistan: from agreement to specific projects

Back in September 2018 in Tashkent, Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an intergovernmental agreement on socio-economic cooperation for 2019-2023, which reflected the key agreements at the highest level to develop Belarusian-Uzbek relations and bring them to a qualitatively new level, including in science and technology. At the same time, an agreement on cooperation in science and technology was adopted at the level of the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus and the Ministry of Innovation Development of Uzbekistan, which provides for the development and strengthening of long-term scientific and technical cooperation in such priority areas as energy, medicine, nano and biotechnology, information and communication technologies, robotics, agro-industrial technologies, and also contained an agreement "to implement joint scientific and technical projects".⁹³To coordinate this cooperation, the parties have established a joint commission on cooperation in science and technology, the first meeting of which was held in April 2019 in Minsk and within the framework of which an executive program of scientific, technical and innovation cooperation for 2019-2020 was signed.

According to this document, the two former Soviet republics agreed to develop scientific and technical cooperation on advanced technologies, implement joint scientific and technical projects, cooperate in the exchange of scientific and technical information, and conduct research and development of mutual interest. These are projects in mechanical engineering, agriculture and agro-industrial technologies, medicine and pharmacy, new materials, information and communication technologies, genetics of biotechnologies, selected "as a result of the competition of joint scientific and technical projects for 2019-2021, which was held in priority areas of bilateral cooperation <...>. In addition, the parties plan to establish at least two joint research laboratories in Belarus and Uzbekistan⁹⁴. In total, a list of 15 joint projects in various areas for co-financing has been agreed upon. And a number of concrete steps to develop this area of cooperation have already been taken.

Thus, in February 2019, the Belarusian National Technical University and the Islam Karimov Tashkent State Technical University agreed to create a joint scientific and technological park, which will be the first university subject of innovation

⁹³ Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an agreement on cooperation in science and technology [Electronic resource]. - -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-oblasti-nauki-i-tehnologii-317747-2018/>

⁹⁴ Belarus and Uzbekistan are implementing 15 joint scientific and technical projects [Electronic resource]. - -- 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-realizujut-15-sovmestnyh-nauchno-tehnicheskijh-proektov-343295-2019/>

infrastructure in Uzbekistan. As a co-founder in this project will participate scientific and technological park BNTU "Polytechnic", which "will integrate scientific and innovative potential of BNTU and TashSU, scale up the experience of the Belarusian University in business incubation of high-tech projects, jointly develop science-based production of international level with the participation of students, masters and doctoral students of both universities⁹⁵. And the first joint innovation project in the technopark will be development and production of medical devices.

In April 2019 it became known that the same universities - the Belarusian National Technical University and the Tashkent State Technical University - would be the founders of the Belarusian-Uzbek inter-industry institute of applied technical qualifications, where the main direction of work would be "training, retraining, internship and professional development of personnel in areas strategically important for Uzbekistan on the basis of joint educational programs, as well as the implementation of scientific, innovative activities and its commercialization".⁹⁶ Training at the new institute will be conducted in Russian in such areas as intelligent devices, machines and production, computer mechatronics, biotechnical and medical devices and systems, management of innovative projects of industrial enterprises. An important detail: the graduates will be awarded a diploma of the Belarusian university, which is recognized as a document of higher education in this Central Asian country.

The Belarusian State University is also seriously committed to cooperation with Uzbek partners. The thematic range of potential interaction in the innovation sphere was clearly demonstrated at the exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus, held in September 2018 in Tashkent, where more than 30 scientific and technical developments in the fields of agriculture, medicine and pharmaceuticals, food industry, as well as measuring instruments, equipment for the production of polyurethane foam products, technologies for the application of functional coatings, the creation of heat-resistant water purification materials were presented. Exhibitors and visitors of the exhibition also showed great interest in the stand of BSU "Tumodex", "Prospidelong" and "Zisplatel" antitumor drugs. They cause the death of cancer cells, prevent metastasis, contribute to reducing the toxic load on the body⁹⁷. It should be noted that

⁹⁵ In Uzbekistan with the participation of BNTU the first university technopark [Electronic resource] is being created. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/society/view/v-uzbekistane-pri-uchastii-bntu-sozdaetsja-pervyj-universitetskij-tehnopark-335511-2019/>

⁹⁶ The Belarusian-Uzbek institute of applied technical qualifications will be established in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-uzbekskij-institut-prikladnyh-tehnicheskikh-kvalifikatsij-sozdatut-v-tashkente-345862-2019/>

⁹⁷ More than 30 scientific and technical developments will be presented by BSU at the exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. -- 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-30-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-razrabotok-predstavit-bgu-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-317246-2018/>

this topic is important for Belarus and Uzbekistan in terms of industrial cooperation. After all, "the parties plan to establish two pharmaceutical enterprises. One will specialize in the production of oncological drugs, another in the production of drugs developed on the basis of herbs growing in Uzbekistan"⁹⁸. In total, more than one hundred scientific and technical developments from organizations of the Ministry of Education and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus were presented at this exhibition in Tashkent.

The Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after M. Tank is also actively cooperating with Uzbek partners, which in September 2018 facilitated the opening of the Belarusian-Uzbek educational center on the basis of the Nizami Tashkent State Pedagogical University, which is considered by the parties "as a platform for the development and strengthening of Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in education and culture"⁹⁹. In addition, these universities are now jointly implementing an educational programme in speech therapy and a project within the framework of a programme at the second level of higher education in a network form of cooperation in the specialties of "inclusive education" and "remedial pedagogy".

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⁹⁸ M. Matievskiy, M. Belarus and Uzbekistan plan to create joint ventures in pharmaceuticals, machine-building and agriculture / M. Matievskiy // [Electron resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-planirujut-sozdat-sovmestnye-predpriyatija-v-farmatsevtike-mashinostroenii-i-apk-317534-2018/>

⁹⁹ Grishkevich, A. The Belarusian-Uzbek educational center was opened in Tashkent peduniversity / A. Grishkevich // [Electron resource]. - – 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-uzbekskij-obrazovatelnyj-tsentr-otkrylsja-v-tashkentskom-peduniversitete-318451-2018/>

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Belarus - Uzbekistan: priority - industrial cooperation

Back in September 2018, at the highest level, Belarus and Uzbekistan came to the conclusion that in their bilateral relations, the priority area of cooperation "should be the expansion of industrial cooperation in mechanical engineering, agro-industrial complex, transport and pharmaceutical industries, and information technology"¹⁰⁰. A little later, in November 2018, at the level of the heads of government of the two countries it was announced that the parties "will work on the establishment of joint production of milk, medicines, medical equipment, mini-tractors and attachments, as well as bicycles, joint transport and logistics enterprise"¹⁰¹. It should be recalled that by the time the road map on cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan was signed, three assembly plants of Belarusian equipment were already operating on Uzbek soil. In particular, the joint venture Amkodor-Agrotehmash produces road-building machines. "UzBelAgromash produces a line of Bobruiskagromash machinery: these are tractor trailers, feed mixers, mowers. Besides, MTZ tractors are assembled at Tashkent Agricultural Machinery Plant. Cooperation between companies was started in 2016"¹⁰². As for Minsk Tractor Plant, in September 2018, at the Belarusian-Uzbek business forum in Tashkent, the company's management voiced plans to open another assembly plant in Uzbekistan - this time caterpillar and garden machinery. "The new enterprise, which has been agreed to be located in Karakalpakstan, will produce about 200 agricultural machines per year"¹⁰³.

Considers possibilities of creation of joint assembly manufactures of technics in territory of Uzbekistan and holding "Gomselmash" which experts have spent in February, 2019 negotiations "with representatives of khokimiyat of the Tashkent area, management of JSC "Uzagroteksanoatholding", JSC "Technologist", have visited the dealer center of "SN INVEST" Ltd¹⁰⁴. Interesting prospects for the development of industrial cooperation with Uzbek partners are also opening up today for other

¹⁰⁰ Negotiations with President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Merziyev [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-uzbekistana-shavkatom-mirzиеvym-19489

¹⁰¹ Signing of the road map to develop cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8364>

¹⁰² M. Matievskiy, M. Belarus and Uzbekistan plan to create joint ventures in pharmaceuticals, machine-building and agriculture / M. Matievskiy // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-planirujut-sozdat-sovmestnye-predpriyatiya-v-farmatsevtike-mashinostroenii-i-apk-317534-2018/>

¹⁰³ MTW will open an assembly plant for caterpillar and garden machinery in Uzbekistan [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-otkroet-sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-gusenichnoj-i-sadovoj-tehniki-v-uzbekistane-318069-2018/>

¹⁰⁴ "Gomselmashch plans to establish joint assembly facilities in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/gomelmash-planiruet-sozdat-sovmestnye-sborochnye-proizvodstva-v-uzbekistane-338356-2019/>

economic entities in Gomel region. These include the Gomel Regional Agricultural Experimental Station, the Spartak Confectionery Factory, and Svetlogorsk Khimvolokno, OJSC, whose products are in great demand in this Central Asian country. For this reason, "Uzbek investors are ready to invest their capital to develop the enterprise"¹⁰⁵.

Grodno Region is also planning to contribute to the development of the Belarusian-Uzbek production cooperation. Thus, within the framework of international business forum "Euroregion "Neman-2018", held in September 2018 in Grodno, it was announced about the beginning of construction with the participation of Uzbek capital of the plant for processing in Smorgon. "The amount of investment will be about 30 million euros. < ... > About 1.2 thousand employees will work at the enterprise". And the new enterprise is expected to be put into operation within two years. An important detail: the construction of the plant will occupy a resident of the free economic zone "Grodnoinvest" - Uzbek LLC "Europlastics Invest". The company's products are to be exported to the markets of the European Union countries - Poland, France and Germany. At the same time, in September 2018, the Baranovichi cotton production association joined the Uzbek cluster of cotton producers. The essence of this interaction is to grow cotton on Uzbek land, process it and "take the material on yarn, threads, which are necessary < ... > at the mill. It turns out to be cheaper and more reasonable"¹⁰⁶.

In addition, Motovelozaovod LLC, which in August 2018 signed an agreement of intent with the khokimiyat of Andijan region to establish production of bicycle equipment in the region, plans to become an active participant in the production cooperation with Uzbek partners. The parties agreed "on the establishment of long-term and mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as on the granting of preferences and privileges to JVs established for other joint ventures with foreign investments in Uzbekistan"¹⁰⁷. Finally, Belarus and Uzbekistan intend to develop mutually beneficial cooperation in the confectionery industry, where "it is a question of creating a licensed production. On the Belarusian side the confectionery factory "Kommunarka" takes part in the project¹⁰⁸. Let us hope that all these projects will help Belarus and Uzbekistan to

¹⁰⁵ Uzbekistan is interested in industrial cooperation with Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/uzbekistan-zainteresovan-v-promyshlennoj-koooperatsii-s-gomelskoj-oblastju-327270-2018/>

¹⁰⁶ Matiyevsky, M. Baranovichi combine was included into Uzbek cluster of cotton producers / M. Matiyevsky // [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/baranovichskij-kombinat-voshel-v-uzbekskij-klastero-proizvoditelej-hlopka-317839-2018/>

¹⁰⁷ The Motor Plant will establish a JV in Uzbekistan [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/motovelozaovod-sozdast-sp-v-uzbekistane-314017-2018/>

¹⁰⁸ Belarus and Uzbekistan plan to create a joint production of confectionery products [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-planirujut-sozdat-sovmestnoe-proizvodstvo-konditerskih-izdelij-306531-2018/>

achieve the strategic goal of increasing mutual trade turnover to one billion dollars in the next few years.

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Belarus-Mongolia: from general agreement to road map

In June 2019 in Ulaanbaatar the fifth meeting of the Joint Belarusian-Mongolian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held, at which the issues of practical implementation of the intergovernmental general agreement on granting an export credit were considered, and the Road Map on development of cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and Mongolia for 2019-2021 was signed.

We would like to remind you that the intergovernmental general agreement on export credit, adopted in April 2019, will make it possible to supply Belarusian equipment to Mongolia. According to this document, "in the coming years the parties will work out the issues of supply of fire-fighting, agricultural, municipal, road construction and road cleaning equipment, passenger elevators and railway cars¹⁰⁹. The point is also made that in Mongolia, using Belarusian technologies, a milk cluster will be created as part of a dairy processing plant and dairy farms, and "opportunities to develop cooperation in construction, mining and education sectors, as well as to expand the bilateral legal framework are being explored¹¹⁰.

It should be noted that since the establishment of Belarusian-Mongolian diplomatic relations in January 1992, Belarusian exports have traditionally been the basis of bilateral trade. At the end of 2018, with a total trade turnover of \$19.5 million, the value of exports from Belarus exceeded \$19 million with a surplus for the Belarusian side - \$18.8 million. The basis of supply of goods from Belarus to Mongolia was milk, condensed and dried cream, trucks, plastic containers, road and construction machinery, butter, medicines, bread and flour confectionery, synthetic raw fibers, shoes, sugar, engines and power units. In the same year 2018, the turnover of services between the two countries increased by almost 1.8 times, exceeding the figure of six million dollars.

The facts show that the bilateral relations between Belarus and Mongolia have significantly intensified in the last six years after: 1) the establishment in 2013 of the Joint Belarusian-Mongolian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation; 2) the opening in June 2014 of the Belarusian Embassy in Ulan Bator; 3) the establishment in 2015 of the Joint Belarusian-Mongolian Commission on Cooperation in Science and

¹⁰⁹ Belarus will provide an export credit to Mongolia for the purchase of its equipment [Electron Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predostavit-ekspornyj-kredit-mongolii-na-pokupku-svoej-tehniki-345020-2019/>

¹¹⁰ A regular session of the Belarusian-Mongolian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation [Electronic Resource] was held in Ulan Bator. - - 2019. - URL: <http://mongolia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/ddb45d27a11bdef0.html>

Technology and the bilateral interagency Working Group on Cooperation in Agriculture.

In June 2018, on the margins of the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the Chinese city of Qingdao, Presidents of the two countries A. Lukashenko and H. Battulga stated at a bilateral meeting that "Belarus and Mongolia are located between large states or blocs, so it is important to be able to take advantage of this position and find advantages in terms of economy"¹¹¹. At that time, the Belarusian side voiced its willingness to set up high-performance enterprises and equipment production facilities on the Mongolian land, while the Mongolian side expressed its interest, first of all, in setting up dairy production using Belarusian technologies.

On the whole, over the past five or six years, the legal framework in relations between Belarus and Mongolia has been expanded, and trade and economic cooperation has been strengthened. Cooperation in agricultural and scientific-technical spheres has been launched. Bilateral ties in education and sport have been re-established¹¹². And in the future, the Mongolian side is not only interested in more active cooperation with Belarus in agriculture, mechanical engineering, food industry, science, education, but also sees great opportunities in wide mutual use of each other's transit potential. Thus, according to the head of the Mongolian Foreign Ministry D. Tsogtbaatar, "Belarus may become an outlet for Mongolia and its goods to Europe, and Mongolia - a guide to Asia for Belarusian products"¹¹³.

In addition, interesting prospects open up in the Belarusian-Mongolian cooperation in the field of education, the basic element of which is an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in this area, signed in 2013, which provides for the possibility of annual exchange of students for training in the universities of the parties. Implementing the provisions of this document and as part of the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation and Cooperation between Somon Dalanzadgad aimag Umnugov and the city of Zhodino, signed in 2016, "in 2017/2018 academic year, six citizens of Mongolia enrolled for training in the Branch of BNTU" Zhodino State College "¹¹⁴.

¹¹¹ Negotiations with President of Mongolia Khaltmagijn Battulga [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-prezidentom-mongolii-xaltmagijn-battulgoj-18894/

¹¹² Transcript of the approach to the press of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus V. Makei following the results of negotiations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia (June 4, 2018, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d211839fb93936d7.html

¹¹³ Tsogtbaatar, D. Belarus may become an exit to Europe for Mongolia and its goods / D. Tsogtbaatar // [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/opinions/view/belarus-mozhet-stat-dlja-mongolii-i-ee-tovarovyhodom-v-evropu-6281/>

¹¹⁴ Humanitarian cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: http://mongolia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/cultural/e6d8f5ae8191d258.html

All these facts show that Belarus and Mongolia still have many untapped opportunities for cooperation. And "the task of both governments is not to miss these opportunities, to create the conditions for their translation into concrete mutually beneficial economic projects"¹¹⁵.

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¹¹⁵ Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://mongolia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/cultural/e6d8f5ae8191d258.html

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Great Stone Industrial Park: on the way to new technologies and investments

In July 2019, the 116 Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" will host the International Forum on Regional Cooperation and Development under the "Belt and Way" initiative, aimed at attracting new investments and investors, strengthening ties between the international investment community, business representatives and authorities, increasing competitiveness and investment attractiveness at the international level and consolidating the status of the most open and comfortable place for doing business along the Economic Belt. This will be the first regional international forum within the framework of the Belt and Way initiative, the idea of which "belongs to the leaders of Belarus and China - they agreed on it at a meeting in Qingdao. < ... > It is a question of inviting business circles from the largest countries that own technology and investments to this event" .

It should be recalled that in June 2018, at the meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, held in Qingdao, China, it was noted that within the framework of the plan of joint actions, Belarus has already taken the first step to align the national development strategies, as well as to link the Eurasian Economic Union with the initiative "Belts and Ways. In our country, the implementation of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" project "fully corresponds to the identification of new points of contact and expansion of cooperation areas. It was not for nothing that the name "Silk Road Pearl" was fixed¹⁷. And in April 2019 the leaders of Belarus and China put their signatures under the concept of holding the Forum on Regional Cooperation and Development within the framework of the "Belt and Way" initiative.

The facts show that the stage of infrastructure construction, building conditions, creation of some regulatory documents in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park is behind us. And today "the success of the project depends primarily on our residents"¹⁸. At the beginning of May 2019, 44 residents were registered in the "Great Stone". It is important that they include not only companies from China and Belarus, but also

¹¹⁶ Matveev, V. Results of the Belarusian delegation visit to China: new agreements in trade and the course on direct investments (in Russian) / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/itogi-vizita-belorusskoj-delegatsii-v-kitaj-novye-dogovorennosti-v-torgovle-i-kurs-na-prjamye-345691-2019/>

¹¹⁷ Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/zasedanie-soveta-glav-gosudarstv-shanxajskoj-organizatsii-sotrudnichestva-18898/

¹¹⁸ Krutoy, D. The success of the Sino-Belarusian industrial park today depends on its residents / D. Krutoy // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/opinions/view/uspeh-kitajsko-belorusskogo-industrialnogo-parka-segodnja-zavisit-ot-ego-rezidentov-6857/>

investors and manufacturers from Austria, Germany, Israel, Lithuania, Russia, and the United States. Their activities are illustrated by the fact that the "Great Stone" is "not only or not so much a production area, but above all a unique and unique incubator of advanced ideas on how to ensure synergies between the objectives of an efficient production process and the development of sustainable, environmentally friendly and socially efficient urban environment"¹¹⁹. In the future, it could become the prototype of a new type of industrial-logistic urban centre that could make the Belts and Ways network truly sustainable and efficient.

Another characteristic feature of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park is that 28 residents of the Great Stone have already started manufacturing their products or are in the phase of active construction. Among the residents who have already mastered production is MAZ-Weichay LLC and Chengdu Xinju Silk Road Development LLC, which opened a plant to produce supercapacitors. In 2019, the American manufacturer IPG Photonics company RuchTech is to start manufacturing fiber lasers. In total, about ten more production facilities are expected to be commissioned by the end of the year. In general, "after the commissioning of enterprises that are already located on the territory, will be created more than 4 thousand high-performance jobs"¹²⁰. A Belarusian, Swiss and Chinese company may soon appear among the new residents of the Great Stone. A resident from Belarus should come with new technologies and materials in the field of packaging. The Swiss project is related to software products, storage and processing of large data volumes. The Chinese company will present a large project in the field of automotive components. In general, "the park plans for this year [2019] to increase the number of residents to 60"¹²¹.

Another landmark project to be discussed at the upcoming International Forum on Regional Cooperation and Development under the "Belt and Way" initiative is the Bremino-Orsha industrial and logistics complex, where investors are also granted benefits and preferences. And where the first steps towards its development are already being taken. In particular, in May 2019, Bremino Group LLC and the Chinese company Shaanxi Zhongqiao Silk Road Technology Development Co. Ltd. agreed that in accordance with the agreement on comprehensive strategic cooperation they will establish an international town of construction materials in the special economic zone

¹¹⁹ Dapkunas, A. Belarus intends to strengthen its role in the development of Trans-European Economic Connectivity / A. Dapkunas // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belarus-namerena-usilit-svoju-rol-v-razvitii-transjevrazijskoj-ekonomicheskoy-soprjazhennosti-6823/>

¹²⁰ The number of Great Stone residents may double in the coming years [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/chislo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-v-blizhajshie-gody-mozhet-vyrasti-vidvoe-343201-2019/>

¹²¹ Lisatovich, T. Forum on regional cooperation will help to attract new investors to "Velikij Kamen" - Yaroshenko // T. Lisatovich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/forum-po-regionalnomu-sotrudnichestvu-pomozhet-privlech-novyh-investorov-v-velikij-kamen-jaroshenko-347184-2019/>

"Bremino-Orsha". At the same time, "investment in the first stage, which is scheduled for three years, will amount to about \$100 million¹²². And, to all appearances, this is not the only project that the Chinese company is ready to implement in Belarus.

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¹²² International town of building materials will appear in the special economic zone "Bremino-Orsha". [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mezhdunarodnyj-gorodok-strojmaterialov-pojavitsja-v-osoboj-ekonomicheskoy-zone-bremino-orsha-346313-2019/>

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Gomel region: economic forum as a tool for the development of international relations in the region

The XVI Gomel Economic Forum was held in May 2019 and brought together participants from 28 countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, China, Italy, Uzbekistan, Romania, Belgium, Qatar, Pakistan and India. Experience shows that over the past 15 years, and the first such event was held in the south-eastern region of Belarus in 2004, the economic forum has established itself as a new format of work with foreign investors at the regional level and an effective tool for the development of international inter-regional relations, as evidenced by the figures. In particular, over the years, the investment portfolio of the Gomel region "has been supplemented with 97 signed documents worth almost \$2.5 billion. More than 50% of the documents have already been implemented or are in the process of implementation. Creating almost 3,000 jobs"¹²³ in cities such as Gomel, Zhlobin, Mozyr, Rechitsa, Svetlogorsk, as well as in districts such as Lelchitsy, Zhitkovichi, Vetkovsky, Buda-Koshelevsky.

And this time nine documents worth \$130 million were signed as part of the plenary part of the XVI Gomel Economic Forum alone. These include protocols of intent that provide for the reconstruction of the Gomelstroyaterialy workshop, construction of plants for processing of metallurgical and woodworking waste, organization of production of knitted fabrics, hydraulic equipment and equipment for it, recycling of polymer materials, construction of a mining and processing plant for kaolin extraction and processing, as well as an authorized service center. In particular, the Estonian company Kaamos Group, which is already implementing one of its projects in the Vitebsk region, has announced its intention to invest up to 30 million euros in the establishment of a wood processing plant. "High-tech production with 100 export-oriented jobs is planned to be established in FEZ "Gomel-Raton". Its design capacity will exceed 160 thousand cubic meters of lumber per year"¹²⁴. In addition, more than 150 projects in the field of woodworking industry, processing of secondary material resources, food production, construction and construction materials, chemical production, energy, agriculture, tourism, trade, services, plus "120 real estate objects,

¹²³ Belarus is actively implementing initiatives to simplify the conditions for investment - Nightingale [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-belarusi-aktivno-vnedrjajutsja-initsiativy-po-uproscheniju-uslovij-dlja-investirovanija-solovej-348564-2019/>

¹²⁴ From workshop reconstruction to plant construction: 9 investment documents were signed at the forum in Gomel [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/ot-rekonstruktsii-tseha-do-stroitelstva-zavodov-9-investdokumentov-podpisali-na-forume-v-gomele-348594-2019/>

about 200 land plots, as well as a number of scientific developments and JSC for sale" were offered to¹²⁵potential investors at the forum.

Another area of international cooperation that helps to develop the format of the economic forum is twinning and partnership of regions at the level of regions, districts and cities. It should be noted that in the Gomel region by mid-May 2019, more than 220 international treaties and protocols on cooperation have already been concluded. At different times, the Gomel Economic Forum was the birthplace of new twin links: between the Zhitkovici district and the Moldovan Taraclia; between the Gomel region and the autonomous territorial unit of Gagauzia in Moldova. During the last two years the twinned and trade-economic relations of Gomel region with the regions of Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Serbia, Vietnam, Georgia, Italy and China have also been established, which later begin to give tangible economic effect. "Thus, the growth rate of foreign trade turnover between the region and Armenia in 2018 increased by 2.5 times. With the participation of Polish capital 5 large industrial and agricultural projects are being implemented in the Gomel region"¹²⁶. And at the XVI Gomel Economic Forum the documents on establishing friendly and brotherly relations were signed by Mozyr and Vulcanesti district of Gagauzia, as well as Gomel and Fergana regions of Uzbekistan.

As for the Memorandum on Interregional Cooperation of Gomel and Ferghana regions, it recorded an obvious growing interest of the Belarusian region to its partners in this Central Asian country. Suffice it to say that in 2018 direct Uzbek investments in the economy of Gomel region increased 114 (!) times. In addition, "an agreement to implement a joint project with the Khorezm region on the production of forage harvesting equipment" has become "important for the flagship of the country's combine construction - Gomselmash"¹²⁷. Interaction with Fergana region, which is home to more than three and a half million people, has developed petrochemical and chemical production and is the largest supplier of fruits and vegetables, should seriously expand the Belarusian-Uzbek relations at the level of specific territories on the eve of the First Forum of Belarus and Uzbekistan regions, which will be held in August 2019 in Minsk. All these facts testify to the fact that the annual international economic forum in Gomel has become for the south-eastern region of Belarus an important element of the policy of strengthening mutually beneficial contacts and friendly relations with foreign

¹²⁵ The Gomel Economic Forum is opening in the regional center [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskij-ekonomicheskij-forum-otkryvaetsja-v-oblastnom-tsentre-348536-2019/>

¹²⁶ Nightingale: Interregional cooperation should bring maximum benefit to local people [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/solovej-mezhregionalnoe-sotrudnichestvo-dolzno-prinosit-maksimalnuju-vygodu-dlja-mestnyh-zhitelej-348673-2019/>

¹²⁷ Memorandum on cooperation between the Gomel and Fergana regions was signed at the economic forum [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-gomelskoj-i-ferganskoj-oblastej-podpisan-na-ekonomicheskom-forume-348655-2019/>

partners, from which the implementation of mutually beneficial projects for the benefit of residents of these regions begins.

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