

In the midst of turbulence

The present geopolitical situation in the world is assessed in the Republic of Belarus as a systemic crisis of the international situation, which is increasingly acquiring a global character. Among the main challenges here are: strengthening of rivalry and deepening of the trust deficit between leading international players and centers of power, "smoldering" regional conflicts and emergence of new hotbeds of instability; aggravation of economic contradictions, "trade wars", use of sanctions and countersanctions; threat of the international arms control system collapse and return to the arms race; appearance of principally new threats to international security in cyberspace. In these challenging conditions, official Minsk continues to maintain and strengthen its policy of ensuring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Belarusian state, pursuing an independent and balanced multi-vector foreign policy, developing integration processes in Eurasia, linking them with other associations and projects, strengthening regional and global security. At the same time, one of the main priorities in the country's foreign policy remains economic diplomacy.



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In the midst of turbulence

The Potential of Interstate Cooperation in the Era of Globalization

Boris Zalessky

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Cover image: www.ingimage.com

This book is a translation from the original published under ISBN 978-613-9-45165-4.

Publisher:

Scientia Scripts

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Dodo Books Indian Ocean Ltd., member of the OmniScriptum S.R.L
Publishing group

str. A.Russo 15, of. 61, Chisinau-2068, Republic of Moldova Europe

Printed at: see last page

ISBN: 978-620-4-52007-0

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

In the Republic of Belarus, regional media traditionally have a powerful impact on their audiences. According to First Deputy Minister of Information of the Republic of Belarus P. Legki, "they are not inferior to the republican ones in the degree of their influence on the public consciousness and coverage of the audience"¹. This largely explains the large-scale tasks that the Belarusian regional press is facing today in terms of reflecting the specifics of implementation of the state policy of development of the Belarusian regions, one of the most important components of which is deepening **of cross-border cooperation** with foreign partners, which implies, among other things, adequate development of the international segment of the Belarusian regional journalism. At the same time, representatives of the media sphere need to proceed from a number of basic provisions outlined in the program documents.

Let us recall that at the legislative level in the Republic of Belarus, **cross-border cooperation** is understood as: first, interaction with foreign countries at the regional and local levels in order to quickly solve border problems, attract foreign investment to improve border and transport infrastructure, the creation of commercial organizations with foreign investment; second, the development and implementation of regional technical assistance projects, funded by international organizations and programs

The National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2030, which defines the goals, stages and directions of the transition of the Belarusian state to a post-industrial society and innovative economic development, identifies the regions of the country as the place where a solid foundation for further sustainable development based on modernization of the system of economic relations and effective management is still to be created to ensure a balance between their social, economic and environmentally friendly p The

¹ Legkiy, P. Regional media should not be inferior to the republican ones / P. Legkiy // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/opinions/view/regionalnye-smi-ne-dolzheny-ustupat-respublikanskim-6366/>.

strategic objective of the Belarusian regional policy is the comprehensive development of each region and the reduction of the existing regional disparities, taking into account the effective use of its resource potential and competitive advantages in order to ensure high standards of living of the population, nature conservation and the positive contribution of regions to national competitiveness and security.

It is assumed that until 2030 the policy of regional development in the Republic of Belarus will be implemented in two stages. In the framework of the first one - until 2020 - it is planned to form and support regional development centers, reduce inter-regional differentiation in living standards, structural reorganization of the regional economy, creating favorable conditions for the development of entrepreneurship, strengthening the resource base of local budgets, solving the problems of the regions lagging behind the average national level, overcoming infrastructure and institutional barriers in socio-economic development of regions, increasing the effectiveness of

At the second stage - until 2030 - the development policy of the regions of Belarus will be focused on "expanding local self-government in solving socio-economic, environmental and ecological problems, reducing the subsidization of areas and ensuring a high standard of living in all regions."² At the same time, the main tasks for the long-term perspective will be: improvement of administrative and territorial division; deepening of specialization of regional economies, revealing their potential capabilities and competitive advantages in the domestic and **foreign** markets of goods and services; advanced development of cities and regions, acting as centers of territorial clusters; improving social standards of living in process of economic growth, their differentiation with consideration of specifics of population settlement, especially in rural areas. As for the latter, it will have to take place through: first, the formation of cooperative technological chains with production in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union in the form of holding structures and cross-border clusters in border areas and the creation of joint marketing alliances with them in third countries' markets; second, the development of import-substitution production aimed at the Eurasian

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

Economic Union market, including through the creation of branches and assembly facilities of transnational corporations in those

The Main Provisions of the Program of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 set the task - "by concentrating resources on key areas capable of ensuring maximum development of territories, effective use of local resource potential and competitive advantages"³ to create economic growth centers in Belarusian regions, where modern production structures, engineering and social infrastructure facilities will be concentrated. At the same time, the most important direction of regional policy is the development of the main networks and facilities of energy, transport, telecommunications and other infrastructure in accordance with the development strategy of a particular region. This is explained by the fact that the development of infrastructure in conjunction with the location of production will ensure the development of territories with a difficult economic situation and reduce the gap in the level and quality of life of the population in cities of different categories and in rural areas. Support for the most lagging regions will be expressed in the placement there of new organizations, branches and workshops of existing industries related to the service of agriculture and forestry, the processing of their products, the production of products from local raw materials, the development of services for the population and tourism. It is also important that key projects with the attraction of foreign investment and involvement of inefficiently used and idle production facilities in the investment process are envisaged to implement the strategic directions of regional development. In particular, "foreign investors, including through active interregional Sino-Belarusian contacts, will be attracted to implement projects important for regional development and create tourist and social infrastructure facilities. China's loans will be an additional source of funding for such projects."⁴

In total, more than 60 centers of economic growth are supposed to be created in

³ Main Provisions of the Program of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://shod.belta.by/programma/>

⁴ Program of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 // Council The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. 2016. -- URL: http://www.government.by/upload/docs/program_ek2016-2020.pdf

the regions of Belarus, which should cover two-thirds of the country. In the process of their formation three complementary vectors will be taken into account: first, the creation of these centers in those districts and cities where there is potential for it; second, the creation of jobs outside the economic growth centers within hourly reach; third, the creation of comfortable conditions throughout the country, which will require a developed modern infrastructure. In this regard, investment activities will have to be based on the coordination of three policies: scientific and technological, industrial and regional. The first block is to define priority economic activities, technological niches and corresponding concrete projects to be offered to business for implementation. The second is the placement of selected projects based on the specialization of the regions and taking into account their human, production and raw material potential. At the same time, a balanced development of the regions should be one of the main conditions. The third is the formation of a package of stimulating measures of the republican and regional level for the implementation of projects.⁵ If we talk more specifically about the prospects of the development of the Belarusian regions, the picture that emerges here is as follows.

In Brest Region, the mining industry, agro-industrial complex, mechanical engineering, woodworking and furniture production, transport and logistics, and tourism should receive priority development. The cities of Brest, Baranovichi, Pinsk and adjacent districts, as well as Berezovski, Pruzhanski, Ivatsevichi, Kobrin and Luninets districts will become centers of economic growth. Among the main investment projects are the following: modernization of CJSC Pinskiy Holding Company, aimed at increasing the output of plywood and bent plywood parts up to one hundred thousand cubic meters per year; continuation of the construction of the mining and processing plant on the basis of the Sitnitskoye deposit; creation of Beldan FLLC - an agro-industrial organization for slaughter and processing of bacon pork with a capacity of 80 heads per hour; ensuring a full cycle of production of lead batteries in Exide Technologies FLLC; reconstruction of the palace and park ensemble "Soveiki"

⁵ Belarus may create more than 60 centers of economic growth in the regions - Zinovskiy [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-belarusi-mozhet-byt-sozdano-bolee-60-tsentrov-ekonomicheskogo-rosta-v-regionah-zinovskij-272081-2017/>.

by LadaGarant CJSC.

In the **Vitebsk region**, economic growth will be ensured primarily in oil refining and petrochemicals, energy, footwear production, agro-industrial complex, metallurgy, machine building, and tourism. Vitebsk and Novopolotsk, as well as Vitebsk, Orsha, Braslav, Verkhnedvinsk, Glubokoe, Miork, Lepel, Polotsk, Postavy and Chashniki districts should become investment centers. As for the main investment projects, we are talking here, first of all, about completing the reconstruction of the vacuum unit AVT-2 unit for processing residual fuel oil and construction of delayed coking complex at "Naftan", modernization of RUPTP "Orsha flax mill," as well as the construction of factories for the production of: sheet metal and tin - LLC "MMPZ-Group in Miory district, metal structures - in Polotsk district, trade equipment - in "Modern-Expo" LLC.

Oil refining and oil extraction, mining and chemical industries, metallurgy and machine building, pulp and paper industry, woodworking and alternative energy should become the key directions of development of **Gomel region**. Gomel and the districts of Gomel, Mozyr, Rechitsa, Rogachev, Zhlobin, Svetlogorsk, Kalinkovichi, Dobrush and Zhitkovichi were defined as centers of economic growth. And among the major investment projects are: reconstruction of the main technological units of arc-furnace shops number 1 and number 2 and the construction of a complex of special steels in JSC "Belarusian Steel Works" - the managing company of the holding "Belarusian Metallurgical Company", the creation of two plants in Lelchitsy district, a plant for the production of sulfate bleached pulp on the basis of JSC "Svetlogorsk Pulp and Paper Mill " capacity of 400 thousand tons per year, a complex hydro-cracking heavy oil residues.

As for **Grodno Region**, a fundamentally new industry for the whole of Belarus, nuclear power engineering, as well as chemical production, agro-industrial agro-complex, woodworking, and tourism will continue their development. Not only Grodno, but also Grodno, Lidsky, Ostrovetsky, Mostovsky, Smorgonsky, Volkovysky, and Slonimsky districts will become centers of economic growth. If we talk about major investment projects, they include completion of technical re-equipment of the

phthalic anhydride production with an increase in capacity to 48 thousand tons per year in JSC "Lakokraska", construction of the nitric acid production shop in JSC "GrodnoAzot", implementation of the project in Skidel to produce pharmaceutical forms - tablets and capsules - in JSC "Novalok", reconstruction of the hotel and restaurant complex "Grodno".

Chemical production, pharmaceuticals and fine chemistry, automotive and agro-industrial complex, transport and logistics, and tourism should be ahead of the curve in **Minsk Region**. The centers of economic growth will be formed in Zhodino, Barysau, Minsk, Smolevichi, Soligorsk, Dzerzhinsk, Molodechno, Slutsk, Pukhovichi, Logoisk, Nesvizh, Myadel, Volozhin districts. The key investment projects of the Minsk Region will be construction of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park Velikiy Kamen, the mining and processing plant of Slavkaliy FLLC in the Luban District, the car manufacturing plant of Belji CJSC, the milk processing plant of Nesvizh Baby Food Plant LLC, the transport and logistics complex in the territory of the Minsk free economic zone, and reconstruction of the ampoule production facility of Borisov Medical Preparations Plant OJSC.

Mogilev region will develop through chemical production, production of rubber and plastic products, construction materials, food products, woodworking with centers of economic growth in Mogilev, Bobruisk, as well as in the districts - Mogilev, Bobruisk, Osipovichi, Shklov, Bykhov, Goretzky. In the region it is planned: to reconstruct the production facilities for the production of rubber products in Krichev with an increase in the production of model shoes made of polyvinyl chloride to 250 thousand pairs per year; to build a complex for the production of polyester products in OJSC "Mogilevkhimvolokno"; to expand the production of broiler chicken in the branch "Servolux Agro" CJSC "Servolux"; to upgrade the casting and machining equipment of OJSC "Bobruisk machine building plant"; to continue implementing the Program of social and economic development of the south

Finally, the priority development in **Minsk** will be given to mechanical engineering, science-intensive areas - microelectronics, instrumentation, computing and telecommunications equipment, pharmaceuticals, as well as medicine and services.

The largest project implemented with the participation of foreign capital in the Belarusian capital should become a construction of an experimental multifunctional complex "Minsk-Mir", which "provides for the construction of over two million square meters of housing, 600 thousand square meters of administrative and public and business areas, including the international financial center.⁶ This will allow to create a strategic area for doing business in the Republic of Belarus and promote the development of the domestic financial market and related services such as tourism, banking, insurance, outsourcing, which will be an additional incentive to attract foreign investors. "The project investments will amount to about USD 3.5 billion."⁷

In mechanical engineering due to a comprehensive modernization a number of enterprises in the capital will be brought to a new level. Among them are: JSC "Minsk Motor Plant holding management company" - due to mastering of production of high-precision, high-strength cast iron and development of low-capacity diesel engines with up to 75 horsepower; JSC "Minsk Automobile Plant" - managing company of Belavtomaz holding - due to reconstruction of production of cabin frames for MAZ family vehicles; "MAZ-Kupava" Plant of Automobile Trailers and Bodies LLC - due to implementation of hydrocarbon foaming technology in production of isothermal panels of trans

In the field of microelectronics and instrument-making it is planned to implement projects to develop a branch of the Scientific and Technical Center "Belmicrosystems" of JSC "Integral" - the managing company of the holding company "Integral", to create promising technology for packaging integrated circuits and integration in the production of industrial, special and dual-use products, to develop production of epitaxial structures and development of bipolar technology on plates with a diameter of 150 millimeters. Till 2020 it is planned to realize a pilot project aimed at creation in the Belarusian capital of an innovation-industrial cluster of high technologies in the field of complex medical equipment, security systems, non-destructive control equipment and analytical instrument-making which will unite high-

⁶ Program of socio-economic development of the city of Minsk for 2016-2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=D917o0083491&p1=1&p5=0>

⁷ Ibid.

tech instrument-making organizations of Minsk, as well as scientific organizations and educational institutions with powerful research facilities and significant personnel potential. The realization of this pilot project by 2020 should "provide earnings from sales of goods (works and services) in the amount of 450 million dollars, create 1000 new jobs, increase the share of shipped innovative products in the total volume of shipped products to 90 percent"⁸. In general, the economy of the Belarusian capital for five years until 2020 "will attract at least \$38.1 billion of foreign investment, including more than \$4.8 billion of direct foreign investment (FDI) on a net basis."⁹

The deepening of cross-border cooperation between Belarusian regions should be organically integrated into the development of international cooperation and external economic relations of the Republic of Belarus as a whole, the most important criteria of which are sustainable growth rates of exports of goods and services and the achievement of a positive balance of foreign trade in goods and services. In this connection till 2020 the attention of Belarusian regions will be focused on: expansion and diversification of trade and economic relations with different countries, regional unions and international economic organizations; development of economic integration within the Eurasian Economic Union; maintenance of good-neighborly relations and close cooperation with the Russian Federation; expansion of comprehensive cooperation with the countries of the European Union, including the Eastern Partnership initiative; further intensification of trade and economic relations between Belarus and Russia. In the second phase - until 2030 - it is the deepening of cross-border cooperation in all areas of trade, economy, science and technology, and environmental protection that should become an essential factor of sustainable development. This will contribute to the creation of flexible commercial structures with the attraction of external investments to improve infrastructure; improvement of cross-border trade, tourism; effective cooperation in the cultural, social and environmental

⁸ Program of socio-economic development of the city of Minsk for 2016-2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=D917o0083491&p1=1&p5=0>

⁹ Minsk plans to attract at least \$38 billion in foreign investment in 2016-2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-planiruet-privlech-v-2016-2020-godah-ne-menee-38-mlrd-inostrannyh-investitsij-25_2054-2017/.

spheres; formation of a common socio-cultural space; the development of a joint cross-border regional policy. In these conditions, it is the regional media that should become the most important part of mass communication in order to play their socio-political role of consolidating the society in terms of solving large-scale development tasks of the Belarusian regions in the next 12-15 years.

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2. Belarus - Eurasian Economic Union: interaction of regions and media

Today, the Belarusian regional press is facing large-scale creative tasks to cover all stages of implementation of the state policy of development of Belarusian regions, "one of the most important components of which is the deepening of cross-border cooperation with foreign partners, which implies, among other things, adequate development of the international segment of Belarusian regional journalism."¹⁰ At the same time, interaction of Belarusian regions with foreign partners should be organically integrated into the development of international cooperation of the Republic of Belarus as a whole, the main criteria of which are sustainable growth rates of exports of goods and services, as well as the achievement of a positive balance of foreign trade in goods and services.

In this regard, the Belarusian regional media have a very broad thematic spectrum, which in the near future should be fully reflected on the pages of city, district and regional newspapers. Let's single out those directions, which emphasize the geography of interregional cooperation and which are mentioned in the National Strategy of sustainable socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2030¹¹: expansion of comprehensive cooperation with the regions of the European Union and especially within the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative, as well as with the regions of "good neighbourhood belt" countries - Poland, Lithuania, Latvia; deepening cooperation with the regions of countries participating in the mega project "One Belt, One Road" and "One Road". But perhaps the most real development of large-scale economic integration so far has been observed with the regions of the Eurasian Economic Union (Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan) and especially with the Russian subjects of the federation within the Union State.

As for **the Eurasian Economic Union, from the** very beginning of its existence

¹⁰ Zalesskii, B. Reflection in the media of the peculiarities of transboundary cooperation of the regions of Belarus / B. Zalesskii // Journal yutyka-2018: status, problems and prospects : materyaly 20-th International Scientific and Practical Conference, Minsk, 15-16 lut. 2018 / edited by: V.M. Samusevich (ed.) [i sch.]. - Mshsk : BDU, 2018. - C. 291.

¹¹ National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2030. - Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus. - Minsk, 2017. - C. 137.

in terms of the development of integration measures, it was believed that the level of regional cooperation is an indicator of the relevance and effectiveness of measures of supranational regulation, because historically there is an economic basis for implementing integration measures to promote regional development and interregional cooperation, as well as the potential to expand cooperation in various areas and spheres of economy at the level of regions of EAEU member states. As a result, "consideration of regional aspects makes it possible to more effectively implement measures to stimulate new areas of mutual trade, build sectoral production chains, form transport corridors and plan the location of infrastructure facilities, and in the future to ensure social development and improve living standards."¹²

If we talk about the bilateral format of interregional cooperation within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union, the unconditional leader and impetus for the development of the entire Eurasian integration here is the interaction between Belarusian and **Russian** regions within the framework of the Union State. Suffice it to say that by mid-2018 Belarusian regions maintained "direct trade and economic relations with 80 regions of the Russian Federation, including 70 on the basis of concluded agreements on long-term cooperation,"¹³ and the top ten major trading partners included Moscow and St. Petersburg, the republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, Perm Territory, as well as the Bryansk, Kaluga, Moscow, Smolensk and Tyumen regions.

The growing potential for Belarusian-Russian interregional cooperation was demonstrated by the Fifth Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which was held in Mogilev in October 2018 and covered such key thematic areas as: agricultural policy, unification and harmonization of legislation, digital economy, youth policy, international activities, and economic security. It should be noted that today it is largely at the instigation of the Belarusian and Russian media that the Forum of Regions is

¹² The main directions of economic development of the EAEU until 2030. - Eurasian Economic Commission. - M., 2015. - C. 42.

¹³ Myasnikovich, M. Work for result / M. Myasnikovich // Priority directions of regional cooperation as a key factor of union construction: inform.-integrats. project / compiled, interviewed by: K. Gusev, B. Zalesky. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2018. - C. 5.

defined as "a key project of regional cooperation between Belarus and Russia, an effective platform for a partnership dialogue on economic integration and interregional cooperation."¹⁴ And this is not an unfounded assertion. Suffice it to say that contracts worth more than half a billion dollars were signed at the aforementioned forum in Mogilev.

The fact that within the framework of the fifth forum 76 documents were added to the legal base of Belarus-Russia interregional cooperation speaks volumes. In particular, the Mogilev regional council has signed agreements on cooperation and development of relations with the legislative assemblies of Kaluga region and Krasnodar Krai. Grodno Regional Council will cooperate in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural spheres with the Kaliningrad Regional Duma. Similar areas of cooperation have been defined for the Gomel Regional Council and the Legislative Assembly of Nizhny Novgorod region, as well as the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee and the Government of Novosibirsk region. But we are also talking not only about the integration of regional or provincial level, but also about the fact that "small towns are also involved in this process, which cooperate quite actively, and not only in the field of humanitarian relations, but also building economic ties."¹⁵ As a result, it turns out that Belarusian regions have already established cooperation at the interregional level with the vast majority of the subjects of the Russian Federation. But to what extent is it fully reflected in the regional press of Belarus? This is a topical issue with a lot of unrealized potential.

The Belarusian regional press should cover cooperation between the regions of Belarus and its partners in **Kazakhstan**, another member country of the Eurasian Economic Union, with which in November 2017 it signed an agreement on socio-economic cooperation until 2026, aimed at implementing a qualitatively new stage in

¹⁴ Myasnikovich, M. Forum of regions became an effective platform for dialogue on integration and interregional cooperation / M. Myasnikovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.sovrep.gov.by/ru/interview-ru/view/forum-regionov-stal-effektivnoj-ploschadkoj-dlja-dialoga-po-voprosam-integratsii-i-mezhregionalnogo-256/>.

¹⁵ Matveev, V. More than 70 regional agreements signed at the V Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/bolee-70-regionalnyh-soglashenij-podpisano-na-v-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-rossii-321404-2018/>.

bilateral relations, including at the regional level. Here it is appropriate to recall that back in 2000 Belarus and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of press and information, which in 2017 was supplemented by a provision that attaches "special importance to expanding media cooperation between the two states,"¹⁶ which came into force in October 2018.

The thematic range of publications in the regional press in this regard could be very broad. This includes the activities of joint assembly facilities in Kazakhstan with the participation of the Belarusian side, of which there were eight at the end of 2018, including the production of BelAZ, MTZ, Gomselmash, MAZ, Bobruiskagromash for the production of mining, mine, special municipal and fire fighting equipment, tractors, combines, engines, press-pickers, medical equipment. This includes the implementation of the Kazakhstan-Belarusian Industrial and Technological Park of Agricultural and Municipal Machinery in Kokshetau, Akmola Region, the first phase of which was put into operation in 2016. This also includes the implementation in Kazakhstan of several dozen joint scientific and technical projects with extensive use of Belarusian technologies, innovations and scientific developments. In this regard, we recall that Belarus and Kazakhstan should reach a volume of trade of at least one billion dollars in 2020. Minsk and Astana believe that "to achieve this goal, it is necessary to use the potential of inter-regional cooperation."¹⁷

The topics of Belarus-Kazakhstan interregional cooperation may be especially relevant for the press of the Gomel, Grodno, and Mogilev regions. In particular, in 2014, the Memorandum of Cooperation in Agriculture was adopted by the Grodno and Akmola regions. In November 2016 the Gomel regional executive committee signed a cooperation agreement with the akimat of Pavlodar region. Mogilev region signed similar agreements with South Kazakhstan (2003) and East Kazakhstan (2009) regions. Belarusian Mogilev and Kazakh Semey also have a cooperation agreement. The

¹⁶ Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on cooperation in the field of mass media [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=f01700071&p1=1>

¹⁷ Belarus is interested in creating new joint ventures with Kazakhstan - Myasnikovich [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteressovana-v-sozdanii-novyh-sovmestnyh-predpriyatij-s-kazhstanom-mjasnikovich-323707-2018/>.

efficiency of interregional cooperation of Mogilev region with Kazakh partners is evidenced by the following figures. In the three quarters of 2018, "the foreign trade turnover between economic entities of the region and Kazakhstan increased by 57% and amounted to \$82.8 million, while exports to Kazakhstan increased by 52.4%."¹⁸ In many ways, such weighty indicators were the reason for the opening of the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Mogilev in November 2018, which will help give new impetus to the development of Belarusian-Kazakh interregional cooperation. But what reflection do all these documents and results have in the regional press? "Far from always they get an adequate reflection in the media sphere. And this then affects the decrease in the interest of the partners and the continuation of cooperation as a whole."¹⁹

Increasing the intensity of interregional interaction is an important component in strengthening bilateral trade, economic and cultural cooperation with another member state of the Eurasian Economic Union, **Armenia**. Suffice it to say that at present 21 agreements on twinning have been signed between cities and regions of Belarus and Armenia.²⁰ For instance, back in 2008 Borisov, Niasvizh, Soligorsk, Slutsk and Myadel regions signed twinning agreements on cooperation with such Armenian cities as Kapan, Goris, Agarak, Sisian and Meghri respectively. Moreover, "in May 2011 the list of Belarusian and Armenian regional partners was added to the Osipovichy district and the city of Sevan, in June 2012 - to Vitebsk region and the Doria region, the cities of Orsha and Spitak, Vitebsk and Vanadzor, and in October 2012 - to Lepel district and Tashir, Braslav district and Stepanavan".²¹

Given the fact that in recent years the Belarusian-Armenian trade turnover has been growing, what are the parties to maintain this positive

¹⁸ Kuliagin S. Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Kazakhstan opened in Mogilev / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/politics/view/pochetnoe-konsulstvo-respubliki-kazahstan-otkryli-v-mogileve-325498-2018/>.

¹⁹ Zalessky, B. International Relations and the Media. Multi-vector foreign policy in a global crisis of confidence / B. Zalesskii. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2018. - C. 57.

²⁰ Trade and economic relations [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL: http://armenia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/

²¹ Zalesskii, B.L. Belarusian International Journalism: Peculiarities, Trends, Perspectives: Textbook / B.L. Zalesskii. - Minsk: Belarusian State University, 2014. - C. 221.

tendencies to reach a higher level of cooperation and create joint productions, and Belarus is ready to take part in the renovation of Armenia's passenger vehicle fleet and in the elevator renovation program. Parliamentarians of the two countries intend to update the agenda of inter-regional Belarusian-Armenian cooperation in 2019. In particular, they say that "the work on the agreement on twinning relations between Minsk and Yerevan will be accelerated. Now it is being considered by the Armenian party"²². Turning to the analysis of the implementation of the existing agreements, the regional press of Belarus and Armenia could proceed from the fact that Belarusian-Armenian interregional cooperation in general promotes the intensification of joint business activities, the restoration of lost production ties, humanitarian and human contacts, ensures the promotion of bilateral economic projects and the creation of joint competitive products that are in demand both in the domestic markets and in third countries.

Finally, in July 2018, Belarus signed an agreement on cooperation in the sphere of information with another Eurasian Economic Union member country, **Kyrgyzstan**, to encourage a regular exchange of informational materials on the political, economic, social, and cultural life of both states, as well as to develop cooperation between editorial boards. At the same time, "the Kyrgyz side also proposed a new direction for cooperation in the field of information. In particular, we are talking about cooperation at the level of regional journalism."²³ The fact that the thematic portfolio of publications in the regional press of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in this regard can be very diverse is confirmed by many facts, based on the statement that "Kyrgyz-Belarusian relations are dynamically developing on a wide range of issues, including political and diplomatic, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres."²⁴

²² Belarus is ready to participate in the renewal of Armenia's passenger vehicle fleet [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-uchastvovat-v-obnovlenii-parkapassazhirskoj-tehniki-armenii-334782-2019/>.

²³ Belarus and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of information [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kyrgyzstan-podpisali-soglashenie-osotrudnichestve-v-sfere-informatsii-309989-2018/>.

²⁴ Matveev, V. Heads of Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan confirmed the intention to intensify bilateral cooperation / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/glavy-mid-belarusi-i-kyrgyzstana-podtverdili-namerenie-aktivizirovat-dvustoronnee-sotrudnichestvo-324657-2018/>.

For example, in 2017, Belarusian exports to this Central Asian country exceeded 300 commodity items: from dairy products and trucks to particle boards, furniture, and wallpaper. There are more than 50 representative offices of entities of the commodity distribution network and distributors of Belarusian companies. In November 2016, it opened an assembly facility for MTZ tractors and a service center for agricultural equipment on the basis of the Bishkek enterprise "Avtomash-Radiator. At the same time, Niva-Holding (Soligorsk) registered with the Ministry of Justice of Kyrgyzstan a Belarusian enterprise, Niva-Shakhtospetsstroy LLC, which plans to produce equipment for the mining industry and hydraulic engineering from components manufactured by Niva-Holding.²⁵ There are plans to establish assembly production of Belarusian grain harvesters in Kyrgyzstan, which is mentioned in the signed Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of Kyrgyzstan, Gomselmash OJSC and the dealer of the Belarusian company Avtomash-Radiant LLC.

In addition, at the eighth meeting of the Kyrgyz-Belarusian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, held in Bishkek in October 2018, the Belarusian side proposed to its Kyrgyz partners to implement a joint project to establish a milk processing enterprise, in which the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Reclamation of the Kyrgyz Republic immediately expressed its interest. In this case, we are talking about organizing an enterprise in the territory of this Central Asian country, which could produce milk, ice cream, dairy products - kefir, yoghurt, sour cream, cottage cheese, soft cheeses on the basis of Belarusian raw materials and specially developed technology in Belarus. And "in the future it is planned to enter the Chinese market with the products of these enterprises.²⁶ In addition, consistently developing regional economic ties with partners in Kyrgyzstan, the Belarusian side in August 2018 delivered to the Kyrgyz capital 15 low-floor trolleybuses manufactured

²⁵ Interview of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus in the Kyrgyz Republic A. Strachko to the information and analytical magazine "Market Conditions" (№1, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/ba775717cb6a991b.html>

²⁶ Belarus offers Kyrgyzstan a joint project to create a milk processing plant [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus- predlagaet-kyrgyzstanu-sovmestnyj-proekt-po-sozdanij-u-molokopererabatyvaj-uschego-predpriy-atij-a-322349-2018/>.

by JSC Belkommunmash, which will also provide training for drivers of the Bishkek Trolleybus Department. An interesting detail: this "equipment was purchased under the project "Development of public transport in Bishkek," financed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development."²⁷

The Agreement on Cooperation between the Belarusian National Center for Marketing and Price Study and the exhibition company BI Expo from Bishkek is aimed at expanding Belarusian-Kyrgyz cooperation in exhibition and fair activities, which encourages Belarusian exporters to actively participate in international exhibitions and fairs held annually in Kyrgyzstan. In 2018, the exposition of manufacturers from Belarus has already been presented at the international food industry exhibition FoodExpo Kyrgyzstan, which is the most important industry event in this country. JV JSC "Spartak", JSC "Agrokombinat Skidelski", JSC "Oshmyansk meat processing plant", SE "Managing company of the holding "Concern Brestmyasomolprom", "Smorgon dairy products" - a branch of JSC "Lida dairy plant", JSC "Pinsk meat processing plant" demonstrated their products in the Kyrgyz capital. Apart from Belarusian exporters, the forum was attended by companies from Bulgaria, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, France, Sri Lanka. This business forum was attended by about three and a half thousand people, 95 percent of whom were food industry professionals.

Perhaps due to this exhibition, "trade turnover between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in January-October 2018 amounted to \$98.49 million, most of which accounted for Belarusian exports (\$90.96 million)²⁸," because the most important positions in the Belarusian supplies to the Kyrgyz market are milk and dried condensed cream, butter, cheese and cottage cheese sugar. It should be noted that in April 2019 the exposition of the Belarusian enterprises will be presented at FoodExpo Kyrgyzstan-2019 again within such thematic sections as food products, equipment for the food industry, goods

²⁷ Bishkek received 37 trolleybuses made in Belarus and Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-bishkek-postavili-37-trollejbusov-belorusskogo-i-rossijskogo-proizvodstva-313496-2018/>.

²⁸ Belarus will take part in the exhibition Food Expo Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-vystavke-foodexpo-kyrgyzstan-v-bishkeke-333552-2019/>

and services for catering equipment, packaging products, halal industry.

In April 2018, Belarusian export enterprises also took part in the International specialized exhibition MedExpo in Bishkek. They included Belsept ALC, Gomselmash OJSC, the Republican Scientific and Practical Center of Neurology and Neurosurgery of the Ministry of Health of Belarus, Exon OJSC, and Arvitmedical LLC. Representatives of the Belarusian medical and pharmaceutical industries were brought to Kyrgyzstan by the fact that in 2017 in this country began the implementation of the state program to modernize the healthcare system, in connection with which here by the end of 2018 planned to "purchase modern medical equipment and quality medicines for \$7 million."²⁹ That is why the presentation of medical and pharmaceutical products was very appropriate.

To summarize. In this study, we have cited the facts of the rapid development and increase in the volume of interregional cooperation between Belarus and partners only from the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union - Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan. If we add to them the similar trends observed today in the regions of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the European Union, the "far arc", the Silk Road Economic Belt, they all convincingly testify to the obvious: even in the professional media environment, such an unfamiliar concept as "international regional journalism" should gain its real contours in the media practice of information and communication space of Belarus regions as soon as possible, so that its representatives could competently engage in³⁰ the

²⁹ Belarus will take part in the exhibitions MedExpo and FoodExpo in Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-vystavkah-medexpo-i-foodexpo-v-kyrgyzstane-297380-2018/>

³⁰ Zalessky, B. Belarus - Russia: the Edge of Integration. Chronicle of Union Building / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2016. - C. 96.

3. Belarus-China: decisions of the cooperation committee as a topical media issue

In November 2018, Beijing hosted the third meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese intergovernmental cooperation committee, during which the parties agreed to: first, expand mutual trade; second, increase mutual investments; third, strengthen interregional ties; and fourth, sign an action plan for the Year of Education of Belarus and China in 2019. We should say at once that the necessary prerequisites for successful implementation of each of these vectors of development are undoubtedly in place, which makes them the object of close attention of representatives of the international segment of Belarusian and Chinese journalists, whose professional duty is to adequately cover implementation of the entire set of plans aimed at achieving the level of comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation in Belarusian-Chinese relations.

As for **the expansion of mutual trade**, the goal set by the Belarusian side is as follows: "The volume of Belarusian exports to China should reach \$5 billion in the medium term.³¹ It is planned to move towards that goal in several areas at once, one of which is to increase supplies of Belarusian agricultural products to Chinese consumers. Suffice it to say that in three quarters of 2018, Belarus sent \$52 million worth of food to China. And before the end of the fourth quarter, this figure should actually double. At the same time, "the leading position in Belarusian exports is occupied by dairy products, the supply of which, compared to the same level of 2017, has grown 9 times.³² The fact that in November 2018, the third train with Belarusian dairy products, consisting of 41 containers with a total weight exceeding one thousand tons, arrived in the Chinese city of Chongqing contributed to such rapid dynamics. Encouraging in this regard is the fact that "the parties have agreed to soon reach a weekly schedule of

³¹ Grishkevich, A. The volume of Belarusian exports to China in the medium term should reach \$5 billion - Snopkov / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://news.21.by/economics/2018/11/06/1648136.html>

³² Ministry of Agriculture: export of Belarusian agricultural products to China by the end of the year will reach \$100 million [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minselhozproduktport-belorusskoi-selhozproduktov-sii-v-kitai-po-itogam-goda-dostignet-100-mln-324799-2018/>

sending trains to Chongqing with Belarusian agricultural products.³³ In addition, the Belarusian Meat and Dairy Company CJSC and the joint Sinoby Agriculture signed a contract for the supply of dairy products in 2019 for \$30 million.

The joint Hebei Agricultural Machinery Enterprise Zongshen-Gomel LLC, which is based on the joint capital of Gomselmash OJSC and Zongshen Industrial Corporation, will make a significant contribution **to the expansion of mutual investments in 2019**. As a reminder, a framework agreement on the establishment of this enterprise was signed in 2014, and a year later there was a strategic agreement, the implementation of which led to the launch of joint production - forage and bob harvesting machines - in 2016. In three years, Gomselmash has assembled about five hundred harvesters. By April 2019, the company plans to add 290 and 450 horsepower forage harvesters to its product line. For this purpose, a new production building has already been built in Weixiang county, Hebei province, which will make it possible to increase the production of agricultural machinery to 1,500 per year. "The Chinese partners are planning to build another building, which will expand the production capacity to 3 thousand harvesters."³⁴

In terms of **strengthening interregional ties**, cooperation between the Mogilev Region and Hunan Province can be very effective and promising, where the parties intend to focus on such strategic directions as economy, investments, and tourism. At the first stage, the efforts of the region and the province will be focused on the accelerated development of tourism. The fact is that the parties are confident: "There is a link between tourism development trends and the overall state of the economy, so this area has been chosen as one of the strategic areas to strengthen and develop joint cooperation"³⁵. That is why in terms of implementation of infrastructure projects

³³ A train with Belarusian dairy products arrived in Chongqing [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/poezd-s-belorusskoi-molochnoi-produktsiei-pribyl-v-chuntsin-324784-2018/>

³⁴ Zunshen-Homel, an agricultural machinery company, intends to expand in 2019 product line [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatje-selhozmashinostroenija-tszunshen-gomel-namereno-v-2019-godu-rasshirit-linej-ku-produktsii-325-877-2018/>

³⁵ Kuliagin, S. Mogilev region and the Chinese province of Hunan intend to accelerate development Mutual tourism / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-hunan-namereny-uskorit->

business people from Hunan province have already been offered to build hotels, cultural and entertainment complexes, even a restaurant of Chinese cuisine, where tourists from China could feel comfortable. And the next step in the development of this interregional investment cooperation could be projects for the processing of local raw materials and food production, with the prospect of exporting them to China and other countries. About two hundred sites are already being offered to Chinese investors for this purpose.

In November 2018, Minsk and Shanghai signed an agreement of intent to establish friendly relations. According to the parties, the document is very important for the development of closer trade contacts and the implementation of specific projects: "It will become a platform for the development of our relations in all spheres."³⁶ Representatives of the Chinese city are interested in Minsk's experience in manufacturing, metalworking, mechanical engineering. The Belarusian capital is interested in partnership with investors from Shanghai "in terms of managing urban infrastructure, the system of the "Smart City", the transport system, landscaping, solid waste management.³⁷ Minsk has already signed twinning agreements with such Chinese cities as Changchun, Beijing, and Shenzhen, as well as agreements to establish cooperation with Shenyang.

An important detail: the signing of the November agreement was preceded by the Sail of Shanghai trade and economic forum held in Minsk in September 2018, at which representatives of this Chinese city said that "given the current good Belarusian-Chinese relations, the implementation of new joint projects, including with Shanghai businessmen, has huge prospects."³⁸ The trade and economic forum gathered in the Belarusian capital over 130 Belarusian and Chinese companies interested in

[razvitie-vzaimnogo-turizma-325776-2018/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minsk-rasschityvaet-na-pomosch-shanhajja-v-modernizatsii-gorodskoj-infrastruktury-321799-2018/)

³⁶ The agreement on cooperation between Minsk and Shanghai will take the partnership to a new level - Jiang Ping [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-minska-i-shanhaj-a-vyvedet-partnerstvo-na-novyj-uroven-tszj-an-pin-321797-2018/>

³⁷ Minsk counts on Shanghai's help to modernize urban infrastructure [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minsk-rasschityvaet-na-pomosch-shanhajja-v-modernizatsii-gorodskoj-infrastruktury-321799-2018/>.

³⁸ Grishkevich, A. Forum "Shanghai Sail" in Minsk will contribute to the implementation of joint projects / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/forum-parus-shanhajja-v-minske-posposobstvuet-realizatsii-sovmestnyh-proektov-lin-sjan-317232-2018/>

cooperation in the machine building industry, construction, information technologies, chemical industry, environmental protection, light industry, food and jewelry production. Chinese manufacturers of electronics and household appliances, clothing and fabrics, medical equipment packaging, cosmetics, toys, and jewelry, as well as importers of cars, electrical and welding equipment, and computer equipment interested in finding business partners in Belarus came to Minsk to participate in the forum.

It is symbolic that the signing of this agreement took place during the first China International Import Expo, held in Shanghai, where a solid list of Minsk enterprises and organizations was presented. Among them - Minsk Tractor Plant, Minskkhlebprom, Kommunarka, Minsk Automobile Plant, Integral, Minsk Dairy Plant №1. The Belarusian State University, located, as you know, in Minsk, has demonstrated in Shanghai a large portfolio of its developments in the field of instrumentation, industrial automation, medicine, agriculture - more than thirty. In particular, at the exhibition of imported goods and services its medical unit of general hyperthermia "Ptich-M" designed for complex treatment of various forms of oncological diseases in specialized clinics was demonstrated. The BSU innovations in Shanghai also included "phytosols for correction of increased threshold of taste sensitivity to table salt, edible packaging films, a series of veterinary biopreparations for treatment and prevention of diseases of agricultural and domestic animals, anti-tumor drugs, hardware and software complex "Calibration".³⁹

Interaction between Minsk and Shanghai can continue interestingly at the level of partnerships between individual districts of these cities. In this case, we are talking about the Soviet District of the Belarusian capital and the Changning District of Shanghai, which in September 2018 signed a framework agreement on cooperation. Interestingly, "cooperation between the two districts began in 1994, when the first agreement on cooperation was signed. During this time, the trade turnover has grown

³⁹ More than 30 scientific and technical developments will present BSU at the import exhibition in China [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-30-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-razrabotok-predstavit-b-gu-na-vystavke-importa-v-kitae-324163-2018/>

many times over."⁴⁰ This time the parties have expressed interest in implementing a number of joint projects. In particular, Magiya Sveta LLC offered Chinese businessmen a partnership in the production of protective holograms. Minsk-based OJSC Promsvyaz also expects to find partners in Shanghai to participate in the project for relocation of its production facilities to the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park Velikiy Kamen. The company "Medical Initiative" made an investment proposal to create a multifunctional medical and scientific-practical center.

Apparently, one more district of Minsk - Frunzenski District - will significantly intensify the Chinese vector of its international contacts in the near future. In September 2018, it signed an agreement on twinning with the Chinese city of Jilin, located in the province of Girin. The document adopted by the parties provides for the development of trade and economic relations and cultural exchange. Joint projects in the construction industry, education, tourism, and food supplies are among the promising areas.⁴¹

The interaction between China's Zhejiang Province and Belarus's Minsk Region, which signed an agreement on the establishment of friendly relations back in May 2015, promises to be very effective. Then, assessing the prospects of development of these bilateral interregional ties, the Chinese side said that "Zhejiang Province intends to send significant investments to the economy of Minsk Region,"⁴² will encourage its businessmen in every way, and suggested that the partners from the capital region "jointly develop tourism."⁴³ One year later, the Borisov plant of medical preparations, located in Minsk Region, started negotiations with the company Menovo from Zhejiang Province to implement a joint project to produce pharmaceuticals. And today

⁴⁰ Sovetsky District of Minsk and Changning District of Shanghai signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sovetskij-raion-minska-i-rajon-channin-shanhaja-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-317462-2018/>.

⁴¹ Frunzenski District of Minsk and Jilin of China signed an agreement on twinning [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/frunzenskij-rajon-minska-i-kitaj-skij-tszilin-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazj-ah-318157-2018/>

⁴² Zhejiang Province intends to send significant investments to the economy of Minsk Region [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://investinbelarus.by/press/news/provinciya-chjeczyan-namerena-napravit-v-ekonomiku-minskoy-oblasti-znachitelnye-investicii/>.

⁴³ Zhejiang province offers Minsk region to cooperate in tourism [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/provintsija-chzhetszjan-predlagaet-minskoj-oblasti-sotrudnicat-v-sfereturizma-2646-2015/>.

this project is already starting to take shape more and more clearly.

In January 2018, another result of the interaction between Minsk and Zhejiang was the opening of a center for traditional Chinese medicine at the Minsk Regional Clinical Hospital in the village of Lesnoy, Minsk District, where Chinese colleagues have already begun to transfer many years of experience in traditional medicine and their skills, which allows Belarusian specialists to improve and expand the list of medical services provided. More specifically, in four treatment rooms and the office of reflexologists "patients are offered to undergo the procedure of classical acupuncture (acupuncture), laser acupuncture, electro-puncture, vacuum reflexology, hirudotherapy, auriculoreflexotherapy.⁴⁴ In addition, "the Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine is also planned to open on the basis of the Minsk Regional Medical Rehabilitation Center "Zagorye".⁴⁵

In November 2018, already the Belarusian capital region, given the interest of Chinese partners in supplies of dairy and meat products from Belarus - ice cream, beef, and poultry - said it was ready to load container trains that return from Europe to China with its agro-industrial products. As for the prospects of this interaction, the partner regions "plan to implement joint projects in tourism, trade, industrial production, agriculture, medicine, culture and transport logistics.⁴⁶

Another important point is that the cities and districts located on their territory are beginning to provide significant support to the interaction between the Belarusian region and the Chinese province. In particular, in 2015, Smolevichi District and the city of Yiwu signed a memorandum on the establishment of friendly relations. Interestingly, twenty years ago, this Chinese city in Zhejiang Province was "a little-known agricultural settlement, but nowadays it is a rapidly developing center of

⁴⁴ The Center for Chinese Medicine was created on the basis of Minsk Regional Hospital [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.zviazda.by/ru/news/20180112/1515764769-centr-kitayskoy-mediciny-sozdan-na-baze-minskoy-oblastnoy-bolnicy>

⁴⁵ The Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine opened in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://politring.com/region/12002-v-minske-otkrylsya-centr-tradicionnoy-kitayskoy-mediciny.html>

⁴⁶ Minsk region expects to implement a project with China's Ningbo to produce medicines [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaia-oblast-rasschityvaet-realizovat-s-kitajskim-ninbo-proekt-po-vypusku-medpreparatov-326994-2018/>

international medium and small wholesale trade.⁴⁷ Here, in southeast China, is the largest indoor wholesale market in the world, "Yiwu International Trade City," which is unique in the fact that without leaving the walls of the trading complex, customers can select the desired goods from a huge range, make a wholesale transaction and arrange for shipment of products to any destination. In this case, "a huge range of goods is presented in the ultramodern Futian complex on an area of 2.6 million square meters. About 58 thousand trade stands are located on 5 floors. The length of the building itself is about 4 km."⁴⁸ It is now clear why today the Belarusian side is already discussing issues of "increasing supplies of dairy and other types of food products from Minsk Region to the Chinese market through the site of the Belarusian goods pavilion of Kingston in the Yiwu International Commodity Market."⁴⁹

In November 2018, Belarus' Borisov and China's Ningbo entered into an agreement to establish friendly relations. "The parties agreed to develop multilateral ties and cooperation in trade, economy, education, culture, tourism, sports, healthcare, urban development, environmental protection, and to promote mutual prosperity."⁵⁰ Apparently, the parties have the potential to implement such a scenario. After all, Ningbo is a major Chinese port city in Zhejiang Province. Four seaport complexes are located here. One of the largest is Beilun, where Jili automobile plants, which are well-known in Belarus, are located. And the city's gross domestic product in 2017 reached almost \$145 billion, a figure that speaks for itself. In short, there is also much to learn from this city. And not only to Borisov.

Speaking about the plan of events for the **Year of Education of Belarus** and

⁴⁷ Belarus plans to sell goods in the Chinese center of medium and small wholesale trade Yiwu [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-realizovyvat-tovary-v-kitajskom-tsentre-srednej-i-melkooptovoj-torgovli-iu-242556-2017/>

⁴⁸ Grishkevich, A. International trade city of Chinese goods may appear in Bolbasovo / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mezhdunarodnyj-torgovyj-gorodok-kitajskih-tovarov-mozhet-poj-avitsja-v-bolbasovo-262012-2017/>

⁴⁹ On interregional cooperation between Minsk region and Zhejiang province [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://minsk-region.gov.by/ru/glavnyj-novosti/item/36377-nikolay-rogaschuk-chtoby-nazad-konteynery-ne-shli-pustymi>

⁵⁰ Borisov and the Chinese city of Ningbo established friendly relations [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/borisov-i-kitajskij-gorod-ninbo-ustanovili-druzhestvennye-svjazi-326980-2018/>

China in 2019, signed during the third meeting of the Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation, we note that the opening of the Year of Education itself is scheduled for January 2019 at Dalian Polytechnic University, which should continue the implementation of a set of measures to establish direct ties between Belarusian universities and Chinese higher education institutions and eventually raise the whole range of the Belarusian-Chinese education to a qualitatively new level

Speaking of the development of partnerships in this field, it is impossible not to note that "the Chinese educational system is unique in its own way. Unlike Western Europe, it cultivates not so much individuality as discipline and devotion to collective interests. This model has proved its worth: the overall level of educational development in China exceeds the world average.⁵¹ In this regard, the obvious interest of the Belarusian side in the planned activities is not only to get closer to the Chinese experience, but also to compare it with its own. For this purpose, it is planned to significantly intensify work in 2019 to expand the presence of Belarusian educational institutions in the Chinese educational market through such formats of cooperation as opening representative offices of universities, joint faculties, centers for studying Belarus. In addition, the Belarusian national exposition "may take a central place at the largest international exhibition China Education Expo, which is traditionally held in October consistently in four major Chinese cities: Beijing, Chengdu, Shanghai, and Guangzhou.⁵²

As for new forms of interaction between higher educational institutions of the two countries and its new participants, a number of promising projects were implemented by the parties back in 2018. For example, such projects include the agreement signed by the Skaryna Gomel State University and the Nanjing University of Science and Technology in December 2018 on the joint training of highly qualified researchers (candidates of science) and on dual international guidance for writing and defending PhD theses, according to which "the parties will organize joint training of

⁵¹ China [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://export.by/china>

⁵² Features of the organization of ideological and educational work in higher education institutions in the 2018/2019 academic year. - RIVSH, 2018, - P. 7.

highly qualified researchers in the most promising areas: physics, chemistry, physico-chemistry.⁵³ The base element of this training will be postgraduate schools of these universities, and themes of PhD dissertations will be determined by partner universities. The result of this cooperation will be an opportunity to obtain a PhD degree in both Gomel and Nanjing Universities. The results of research will become the property of the two universities and will be published in international scientific collections.

In October 2018, Baranovichi State University and Nanchang Technological Institute signed a cooperation agreement, which "intend to develop cooperation in the technical profile - in information systems and technologies, automation of technological processes."⁵⁴ In addition, the Chinese side expressed interest in studying the Belarusian methods of ion-plasma nitriding, the environment, and mechanisms of socio-economic sustainability. As a result, the partners agreed to form a joint team of scientists in each of the selected areas.

In September 2018, the Center for Belarusian Studies opened at Anhui University with the assistance of the Consulate General of the Republic of Belarus in Shanghai and Brest State University named after A.S. Pushkin. It is expected that it will become "a broad platform for the development of interuniversity research, educational and cultural cooperation, as well as strengthening and expanding regional ties between the Brest region and the Chinese province of Anhui."⁵⁵ In turn, the center for the study of China is planned to open in the Brest State University named after Alexander Pushkin. Thus, Brest residents will put into practice the provisions of the agreement signed in September 2017 on cooperation with Anhui University. According to the parties, the opening of such centers will contribute to a deeper understanding of

⁵³ Gomel and Nanjing Universities will begin joint training of PhDs [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/gomelskij-i-nankinskij-universitety-nachnut-sovmestnuju-podgotovku-kandidatov-nauk-328395-2018/>

⁵⁴ Baranovichi State University will cooperate with Nanchang Institute of Technology [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/baranovichskij-gosuniversitet-budet-sotrudnichat-s-nanchanskim-technologicheskim-institutom-320995-2018/>

⁵⁵ Grishkevich, A. Center for the Study of Belarus opened at Anhui University in China / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsentr-izuchenija-belarusi-otkrylja-anhojskom-universitete-v-kitae-318426-2018/>.

the cultural traditions of the Belarusian and Chinese peoples, strengthen the relationship between the region and the province in the humanitarian sphere, as well as open "new opportunities for academic exchange of students, teachers' cooperation in the scientific field."⁵⁶ We should add to the above that the first center for the study of Belarus in China opened back in 2012 at the East China Pedagogical University in Shanghai, with which in November 2018 a "cooperation program of Belarusian universities was signed <...> to develop the Center for the Study of Belarus."⁵⁷

As we can see, the thematic range of Belarus-China interaction is expanding like a chain reaction. This puts the journalists of the two countries to very difficult tasks in terms of adequate media articulation and prompt and high-quality coverage of the processes of cooperation between Belarus and China. In order to successfully cope with these challenges, representatives of the Belarusian and Chinese media are also trying to find new solutions to strengthen their partnership. One of them, in particular, is the cooperation agreement signed in September 2018 between the Publishing House "Belarus Today" and the Chinese news agency Xinhua. Even though this was not the first document of such a plan, because about 20 years ago an agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian Telegraph Agency ELTA and Xinhua was signed. But "that cooperation was filled with projects of interest to the two sides, BELTA had a newswire in Chinese."⁵⁸ That is why the current agreement should be viewed as a new level of cooperation between the Belarusian and Chinese media. Especially since it deals not only with the exchange of informational materials, but also multimedia materials and creation of new columns dedicated to cooperation between Belarus and China. In particular, in the newspapers of the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House such a rubric should be called "Window to China. We believe that this experience of creative

⁵⁶ The Center for Chinese Studies plans to open at Brest State University [Electronic mode]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/tsentr-izuchenija-kitaia-planiruiut-otkryt-v-brestdskom-gosuniversitete-314837-2018/>.

⁵⁷ Grishkevich, A. Belarusian and Shanghai universities agreed to expand cooperation / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-i-shanhajskie-vuzy-dogovorilis-rasshirjat-vzaimodejstvie-324436-2018/>.

⁵⁸ "Belarus Today and Xinhua news agency will cooperate [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-segodnia-i-informagentstvo-sinhua-budut-sotrudnichat-317352-2018/>

cooperation with colleagues from China will be continued in the publications of regional and departmental level in Belarus.

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4. Belarus-France: from deepening dialogue to effective solutions

The Republic of Belarus traditionally considers its relations with France in the context of constructive interaction on all issues of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, counting on "further deepening the dialogue and increasing the level of contacts"⁵⁹. And in 2018, the parties made a number of important steps in this direction. First, the French Senate and the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus agreed to significantly intensify bilateral interparliamentary cooperation. They singled out "the promotion of economic ties, as well as the attraction of French investment in economic projects in Belarus"⁶⁰ as the most important priorities for the development of partnership relations. Second, in 2018, for the first time in the history of bilateral relations, friendship groups were created in the Council of the Republic and the French Senate, which demonstrates the desire of the Belarusian and French sides to give a new impetus to bilateral relations. Thirdly, the Joint Belarusian-French Commission on economic cooperation and the regular business forum of business people of the two countries noticeably activated their activity in terms of coordination of bilateral partnership relations. The third meeting of the joint commission and the fifth business forum held in Minsk in October 2018 were quite eloquent proof of this.

Participants of the meeting of the commission summed up the results of joint work for the last two years in the sphere of trade-economic and investment cooperation and outlined the priority directions of partnership development, including trade, environment, agriculture, transport, tourism, banking and financial sectors, as well as "interregional relations and development of legal base of bilateral cooperation"⁶¹.

Speaking of the results, the sides noted several positive trends in the

⁵⁹ Congratulations to French President Emmanuel Macron [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL:

http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-frantsii-emmanuelju-makronu-19118/

⁶⁰ Problems of regional security discussed at the meeting of Myasnikovich with the president of the French Senate [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/problematika-regionalnoi-bezopasnosti-obsuzhdena-na-vstreche-mjasnikovicha-s-prezidentom-senata-325177-2018/>

⁶¹ On holding the third meeting of the Joint Belarusian-French Commission on economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfaZdff75390f947ce6c.html

development of Belarusian-French partnership relations. First, the volume of mutual trade between the two countries has been steadily increasing for the last two years: in 2017 - by 28 percent, in eight months of 2018 - by almost 15 percent more, exceeding \$260 million. Meanwhile, back in 2017, "the growth of Belarusian exports amounted to 155 percent, the positive dynamics of exports in 2018 as well."⁶² This happened primarily due to such items as transport, computer, telecommunication and information services. In addition, goods of 250 items are now supplied from Belarus to France. An interesting detail: at the meeting in Minsk, the French side suggested doubling the trade turnover with its Belarusian partners in the next five years, believing that "agriculture, insurance, transport, equipment and machinery supplies may become promising areas for cooperation"⁶³.

Second, positive developments are also observed in terms of attracting French investments in the Belarusian economy, which in the first half of 2018 increased by more than 75 percent and amounted to four and a half million dollars. At the same time, "40 organizations with French investments are registered in Belarus."⁶⁴

As for the development of the legal framework of Belarusian-French relations, until recently it included 21 documents: from the Protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations (1992) to the Memorandum on cooperation between the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus and the French National Chamber of Bailiffs (2017). At the third meeting of the joint commission, the parties supplemented this list of bilateral documents with an intergovernmental agreement on international road transport of passengers and goods, the draft of which was agreed in the 1990s, and now "legally consolidates the existing agreements between Belarus and France in the field of international road transport."⁶⁵

⁶² Interview by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the "Minsk-Novosti" agency (October 26, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

⁶³ France proposes to double trade turnover with Belarus in the next five years [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/frantsiia-predlagaet-v-blizhaishie-piat-let-udvoit-tovarooborot-s-belarusju-323245-2018/>

⁶⁴ Igor Petrishenko met with the Secretary of State to the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8349>

⁶⁵ Belarus and France signed an intergovernmental agreement on international road transport [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-frantsiia-podpisali->

The trade and economic and investment components in the activities of the joint commission were complemented by the fifth Belarusian-French business forum held in Minsk during the same October days with 40 French businessmen interested in cooperation with Belarusian partners in such areas as energy, food, woodworking and light industries, construction and mechanical engineering, petrochemical industry, tourism, legal and consulting services, aircraft building, IT technologies, etc. This is evidenced by the documents adopted on the margins of the business forum.

First, the National Center for Marketing and Price Study of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the French business association MEDEF International signed a memorandum of understanding, which "will help increase the number of French investments in the Belarusian economy"⁶⁶ and help develop cooperation in agriculture, energy, and construction. Second, the forum participants signed two framework agreements in education and culture.

Third, a specific result of the fifth business forum was the contract that the Domostroenie branch of the RUE Newsprint Factory (Shklov) signed with the French company SARL Logibat, engaged in the construction of residential settlements in their country, for the delivery of about 60 sets of frame and panel houses worth a total of one million euros in 2018-2019. Interestingly, "the first two houses from Shklov, Belarus, were sent to France back in 2015"⁶⁷. In the next five years, the company plans to sell about 650 houses in France. All in all, in the first eight months of 2018, Concern Bellesbumprom, which includes Domostroenie, exported products worth three million dollars to the French market - furniture, wooden structures, windows and doors.

As we can see, the development of interregional relations became one of the priorities on the agenda of the fifth Belarusian-French Business Forum and the third meeting of the Joint Belarusian-French Commission on Economic Cooperation. This

mezhpripravosoglashenie-o-mezhdunarodnyh-avtomobilnyh-perevozkah-323221-2018/.

⁶⁶ The National Marketing Center and the French Business Association signed a memorandum of understanding [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyi-tsentr-marketinga-i-biznes-assotsiatsiia-frantsii-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-323213-2018/>

⁶⁷ Shklov "Domostroenie" will deliver a new batch of wooden houses to France [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shklovskoe-domostroenie-podpishet-soglashenie-o-postavke-novoj-partii-dereviannyh-domov-vo-frantsii-323174-2018/>

is explained by the fact that it is the regions of the two countries that make the most important contribution to the growth of mutual trade between Belarus and France observed over the last two years, as "people in the regions understand the pragmatism of relations. People just walk on the ground there."⁶⁸ Specifically, the twinning relationship currently links such cities of the two countries as Minsk and Lyon, Gomel and Clermont-Ferrand, Brest and Brest, the Partisan district of Minsk and Tourcoing, the Central district of Minsk and Nevers.

The Belarusian capital is the undisputed flagship of interregional cooperation with French partners, where 39 business entities with French capital are registered, including 24 joint ventures and 15 foreign enterprises. In the first eight months of 2018, trade turnover between Minsk and France grew by a quarter, and exports even grew by 37.1 percent. During the same period, the Belarusian capital's economy received more than one million dollars of direct French investment, twice as much as during the same period in 2017. Here it is appropriate to recall that Minsk and Lyon signed an agreement on friendly relations more than forty years ago. In 2016, under the auspices of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of these twinning ties to intensify trade, economic and investment cooperation between the regions of the two countries, "the First Belarusian-French Interregional Forum was held in the Belarusian capital, which was attended by over 50 representatives from the French side and about 80 from the Belarusian side."⁶⁹

Today Minsk offers its French partners to implement several joint projects at once. The Belarusian capital understands that "an important sector of innovation in France is the sphere of ecology,"⁷⁰ and the green economy is considered there as an engine of economic growth. In particular, we are talking about the possible

⁶⁸ We are at the crossroads of mutual interests: Latushko on cooperation with France [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-ulitki-perekrestok- interesov-i-sharl-de-goll-latushko-o-razvitii-sotrudnichestva-s-222884-2016/>.

⁶⁹ Minsk offers French companies to participate in projects to reconstruct the wastewater treatment plant and waste recycling [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk- predlagaet-frantsuzskim-kompanijam-uchastie-v-proektah-rekonstruktsii-ochistnoj-stantsii-i-323285-2018/>

⁷⁰ French ambassador about visa-free regime, Minsk agreements and Belarusian language [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/posol-frantsii-o-bezvizovom-rezhime-minskih-soglashenijah-i-beloruskom-jazyke-237950-2017/>.

participation of French companies in the reconstruction of the Minsk wastewater treatment plant and the construction of a waste processing plant. The authorities of the Belarusian capital city are planning to start reconstruction of the Minsk wastewater treatment plant, a complex industrial complex for domestic and industrial wastewater treatment, in 2019 to improve the efficiency of wastewater treatment, to reduce the environmental impact of the whole facility, and to build a biogas complex and waste incineration plant. As for the implementation of the project in the field of solid municipal waste management, it is planned to build a waste processing plant with a volume of processing up to 800 tons per year.

The French are known to have state-of-the-art technologies in this area. In addition, Belarus and France already have experience in mutually beneficial partnerships in the field of environmental protection, including in the field of hazardous waste management. "In 2012, 823 tons of waste containing hazardous chemicals were taken to the plant of the French company Tredy and destroyed there. This reduced by 17% the total amount of waste in Belarus containing polychlorinated biphenyls."⁷¹ In addition, the above-mentioned company participated in the implementation of an international technical assistance project to eliminate a temporary storage site for pesticides potentially hazardous for human health and the environment in the village of Mizgiri, Slonim District, Grodno Region. Additional impetus to the Belarusian-French cooperation in this area can and should be given by the agreement signed back in 2016 between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus and the French Ministry of Environment, Energy and Sea on cooperation in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development.

The fact that the Belarusian capital's cooperation with French partners may soon expand significantly is evidenced by this fact. In November 2017, a representative delegation of French companies visited Minsk, which consider the Belarusian market potentially interesting for its development. Announcing the visit, the French side did not hide the fact that "the geographic location of Belarus, its economic, scientific, and,

⁷¹ Belarus and France will develop cooperation in the environmental sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-frantsija-budut-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-prirodohrannoj-sfere-311222-2018/>.

of course, human resources are important arguments for French exporters and investors.⁷² In particular, the company JT Finances, which "supplies haulers with transporters for automatic road-tolling,"⁷³ did not rule out the possibility to set up an enterprise in Belarus. Other well-known brands - Alteo, Atos, Airbus Helicopter Vostok, La Fonte Ardennaise, Secmair, Servier, and Schneider Electric - also brought interesting proposals to Minsk.

The fact that intensification of Belarusian-French interregional interaction has become one of the important components of the positive dynamics of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries today is confirmed by the fact that for the last two years the number of French and French-Belarusian companies working in Belarus, including such large companies as "Renault", "Lactalis", "Danone" has increased from 40 to 63, and the list of Belarusian export items to France, as was mentioned above, is already two and a half years old. But the parties still believe that "Belarusian-French trade and economic relations do not meet the potential of the two countries."⁷⁴ And today not only Minsk, but also other regions of both Belarus and France can and should make their significant contribution to increasing the volume of bilateral trade. They certainly have the necessary potential for this.

Thus, in November 2018, in the French city of Villroux, located in the region of Lorraine, a block of Belarusian wooden houses was opened. Interestingly, at the suggestion of the Belarusian side, this quarter was named after Jean Gilbert - an outstanding physician, botanist, biologist. "This man was the creator of one of the first hospitals, a hospital in Grodno, as well as one of the first botanical gardens in Eastern Europe. A monument in honor of Jean Gilbert has been erected in Grodno, and there

⁷² Grishkevich, A. Representatives of major French companies will visit Belarus on November 14-15 / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predstaviteli-krupnei-shih-frantsuzskih-kompanij-14-15-noj-abrja-posetjat-belarus-275346-2017/>

⁷³ Michalchuk, L. Business France: Many French companies are just discovering Belarusian market / A. Mikhalchuk // [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <http://www.belrynok.by/2017/11/18/business-france-mnogie-frantsuzskie-kompanii-tolkotkryvayut-dlya-sebya-belorusskfj-rynok/4133/>

⁷⁴ Belarus and France intensify inter-parliamentary cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-frantsiia-aktiviziruiut-mezhparlamentskoe-sotrudnichestvo-325720-2018/>

is a park of the same name."⁷⁵ A total of 71 residential buildings in Lorraine had been built from Belarusian materials as of mid-November 2018. In particular, in the town of Aucoeur-Moulin, "a street of 17 Belarusian houses has already been built"⁷⁶, where the first tenants moved in back in the first quarter of 2018.

These wooden houses are manufactured by the "Domostroenie" branch of the Shklou Newspaper Factory. They have good thermal insulation characteristics, and it takes up to three months to install them together with other construction works. Since all the basic elements of a frame-panel house are manufactured in Shklov, it only remains to mount the finished structures on the construction site in Lorraine. "Such a house does not give shrinkage and can be erected at any time of the year. <...> Their service life with full observance of construction technology is 30-50 years."⁷⁷ Perhaps for these reasons, too, Lorraine now has plans to increase the development to 132 houses by the end of 2019, to sign a contract for the supply of Belarusian tiles to be used in finishing houses, as well as kitchens made in Belarus to equip the houses. In general, "in 2017, \$16 million worth of Belarusian furniture, houses and other wooden products were delivered to France, and for the first nine months of this year, it was already worth over \$17 million."⁷⁸

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

⁷⁵ Interview by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the "Minsk-Novosti" agency (October 26, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

⁷⁶ The first stone was laid in France in the construction of the block of Belarusian wooden houses [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervvi-kamen-zalozhen-vo-frantsii-v-stroitelstvo-kvartala-iz-belorusskih-derevi-annyh-domov-276022-2017/>

⁷⁷ Kuliagin, S. Shklou "Domostroenie" plans to double the export of frame-panel houses to France / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/shklovskoe-domostroenie-planiruet-velichit-vdvoe-eksport-karkasno-panelnyh-domov-vo-frantsiiu-228449-2017/>

⁷⁸ A quarter of Belarusian wooden houses appeared in the French Villeur [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kvartal-belorusskih-dereviannyh-domov-poiavilsia-vo-frantsuzskom-vilrj-u-324661-2018/>

cooperation and partnership in the processing of household waste and purification of drinking water.⁷⁹

Among other Belarusian regions seriously interested in the development of cooperation with partners from France is Brest region, where three enterprises with French capital operate. They are a subsidiary firm of the already mentioned above well-known corporation Danone Pruzhany and two small enterprises in Brest. Cooperation in mechanical engineering, light industry, chemical and perfumery-cosmetic industry, in which France is one of the world leaders, appears to be promising in this respect.⁸⁰ In addition, the Brest branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the summer of 2018 expressed its great interest "in establishing ties with units of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This could be Brest, Lyon, Strasbourg."⁸¹

Another area of partnership between Brest region and France is medicine. At the end of 2017, the Brest Regional Hospital and the University Hospital of Strasbourg came to the conclusion that it was necessary to sign a cooperation agreement to "give it a new impetus and systematic nature."⁸² And this cooperation began when ten employees of the Brest Regional Hospital - seven doctors and three nurses - underwent training in Strasbourg, which lasted up to a month and a half. Brest surgeons, anesthesiologists and pulmonologists mastered new methods in diagnosing and treating lung diseases and providing anesthesiological assistance during surgeries. As a result, the ties between Brest and Strasbourg medics, based on personal contacts, have reached the level of a significant social project.

Back in 2016, the intention to "sign an agreement between the Minsk region and

⁷⁹ Kuliagin, S. Mogilev region and France intend to emphasize the development of economic Cooperation / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-frantsija-namereny-sdelat-aktsent-na-razvitii-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-251920-2017/>

⁸⁰ Vechorko, S. French businessmen are offered to invest capital in Brest region / S. Vechorko // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/frantsuzskim- biznesmenam-predlagajut-vkladyvat-kapital-v-oao-brestskoj-oblasti-227920-2017/>.

⁸¹ Development of interregional ties strengthens relations between Belarus and France - Lejeune [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/razvitie-mezhregionalnyh- svjazej-ukreplit-otnoshenija-belarusi-i-frantsii-lezhen-308504-2018/>.

⁸² Brest Regional Hospital and the University Hospital of Strasbourg will sign a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskaja- oblastnaja-bolnitsa-i-universitetskaja-klinika-strasburga-podpishut-dogovor-o-277163-2017/>

the region of Upper France"⁸³ was announced. And in early December 2018, a representative delegation of business leaders from the region came to Minsk to continue these contacts and to enter into possible joint projects. The seriousness and versatility of the intentions of business people from Upper France is evidenced by the fact that "the areas of interest of the French delegation include automotive and international transportation, distribution of industrial materials and packaging equipment, industrial cooperation, services for industrial enterprises, credit and financial services, decorating and sales of luxury cosmetic products."⁸⁴ Another partner of the Minsk region in France may appear in the Center - Loire Valley region, where a demonstration of the possibilities of the Belarusian capital region in the trade and economic spheres, as well as "a presentation of products of the food industry enterprises of Minsk region, investment and tourist potential of the region"⁸⁵ was held in the Endre-et-Loire department in September 2018.

The French side is also interested in intensifying cooperation with the Vitebsk region, where joint projects in flax processing, an industry where France has advanced technologies, may become a real sphere of cooperation. In addition, both sides see promising cooperation in the production of medicines. The starting point here is that "annually about \$20 million worth of medicinal raw materials are supplied to the Vitebsk region by French producers"⁸⁶.

The current practice of establishing honorary consulates contributes to the establishment and development of interregional Belarusian-French ties very effectively. It should be noted that the Republic of Belarus views the existing format

⁸³ Minsk region may establish twinning relations with the region of Upper France [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minskaja-oblast-mozhet-naladit-pobratimskie-otnoshenijs-region-verhnjaja-frantsija-221581-2016/>.

⁸⁴ Grishkevich, A. Cooperation with Belarus in IT-sphere is attractive for France - Ambassador / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dlja-frantsii-privlekatelno-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusiju-v-it-sfere-posol-327534-2018>

⁸⁵ Minoblispolkom and the French department of Endre-et-Loire plan to expand trade and economic relations [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minoblispolkom-i-frantsuzskij-departament-endre-e-luar-planiruiut-rasshirjat-torgovo-ekonomicheskie-318037-2018/>

⁸⁶ Bogacheva, O. France is interested in intensifying cooperation with the Vitebsk region / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/frantsija-zainteresovana-v-aktivizatsii-sotrudnichestva-s-vitebskoj-oblastju-299991-2018/>.

of honorary consulates in general as an important and effective tool for expanding the Belarusian presence abroad, "searching for new opportunities for economic growth and new partners to implement a new strategy to ensure the systematic diversification of foreign trade.⁸⁷ So it is the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in France that has accumulated an interesting experience of creating a whole system of similar structures in one state. In the opinion of the head of the Belarusian diplomatic mission in this European country P. Latushko, "we can develop economic relations exactly through honorary consulates, through regional contacts"⁸⁸. That's why "the opening of honorary consulates is an important and necessary tool to intensify the dialogue between people and countries."⁸⁹

As a reminder, the first Honorary Consulate of Belarus in France opened in 2015 in Lyon - one of the largest administrative, political, economic and cultural regional centers in France, whose agglomeration has 1 million 253 thousand residents and with which Belarus has longstanding historical ties. The honorary consul in Lyon works in the consular district, which includes the Rhône-Alpes region, and his main task is to "promote economic cooperation through contacts between business circles of the two countries, implementation of joint cultural and educational projects, consular and legal assistance to citizens of Belarus."⁹⁰ Already in 2016, at the initiative of the Honorary Consul in the region, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after M. Tank and the Lyon Graduate School of Teaching and Education of the Academy of Lyon.

The second honorary consulate of Belarus in France opened in October 2017 in the city of Bordeaux, with the New Aquitaine region - the third largest gross domestic

⁸⁷ Zalessky, B. Frontiers of Sustainable Partnership. Part II / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. - C. 4.

⁸⁸ Transcript of the interview of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to France Pavel Latushko to the program "The Picture of the World" on the TV channel "RTR-Belarus" (December 12, 2015) [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/d0ab2a8cf81749f7.html>

⁸⁹ Interview by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the "Minsk-Novosti" agency (October 26, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

⁹⁰ The Honorary Consulate of Belarus opened in Lyon, France [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/pochetnoe-konsulstvo-belarusi-otkrylos-vo-frantsuzskom-lione-173804-2015>

product in that country - as its territory of operation. The primary project that the new structure immediately undertook was to study the possibility of "export deliveries of products from the Neman Glassworks and mineral water from Belarusian companies."⁹¹ In addition, there is great potential for cooperation between Belarusian partners and this region of France in agriculture, mechanical engineering, and scientific and educational spheres.

In December 2017, a third similar structure appeared in Marseille, one of France's largest industrial, scientific and cultural centers and the country's second most populous city. The Honorary Consulate in Marseille extended its activity to the district, which "includes the departments of Bouch du Rhône, Var, Haute Alpes, Vaucluse, Alpes Haute-Provence of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region,"⁹² which is generally one of the key commercial and economic regions of France. Its gross domestic product exceeds 150 billion euros.

The fourth French city, where another honorary consulate of the Republic of Belarus opened in December 2018, was Biarritz, located in southwest France near the border with Spain, in the historic region of New Aquitaine, and washed by the waters of the Bay of Biscay. Since 1912 it has had the official status of a climatic and balneological resort in France and is famous for its mild climate, sandy beaches, unconventional medicine and mineral waters. This is why "employment in Biarritz is mainly related to the tourism sector"⁹³.

In addition, the Belarusian side plans to open another number of honorary consulates in several French cities, including Metz, "one of the regional capitals of France. Perhaps this will happen in 2019"⁹⁴. It is worth recalling that Metz is the "economic heart" of the Lorraine region in northeastern France, which is the country's

⁹¹ Honorary Consulate of Belarus opened in Bordeaux, France [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://naviny.by/new/20170930/1506782954-vo-francuzskom-bordo-otkryto-pochetnoe-konsulstvo-belarusi>

⁹² About the opening of the Honorary Consulate of Belarus in Marseille [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://france.mfa.gov.by/be/embassy/news/a7c1eb9186dc9eb8.html>

⁹³ The City of Biarritz in France [Electronic resource]. 2015. -- URL: <http://www.gorodamira.biz/goroda/159-gorod-biarric-vo-francii.html>

⁹⁴ Interview by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the French Republic P. Latushko to the "Minsk-Novosti" agency (October 26, 2018) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b683fba5967f5743.html>

leader in iron ore and coal mining, iron and steel production, and which is characterized by diverse ties with Germany: "This neighboring country is where thousands of Lorraineans go to work every day <...> and where the industrial enterprises that continue to operate successfully sell a significant part of their products."⁹⁵

One more detail: France also sees the format of honorary consulates as an important tool for promoting its national interests in Belarus. This is evidenced by the fact that in October 2014, an honorary consulate of this country opened in Brest, which was not chosen at random. According to the French side, the geographical location of Brest on the border with the European Union, as well as "its status as perhaps the most important city on the motorway connecting Paris and Moscow, is an undeniable advantage and creates all the necessary prerequisites for in-depth permanent exchanges."⁹⁶

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⁹⁵ Caldoja, E. Metz may be better than Strasbourg / E. Caldoja // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://rus.postimees.ee/3034997/mec-byt-mozhet-luchshe-chem-strasburg>

⁹⁶ On October 24, the Honorary Consulate of France opened in Brest [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://by.ambafrance.org/24-oktyabrya-v-Breste-otkrylos>

5. Belarus - Rostov region: possibilities to intensify cooperation

Rostov region in the Republic of Belarus is called one of the key partners among the regions of the Southern Federal District of the Russian Federation. This is largely due to the fact that among the main areas of the region's international activities the priority is "strengthening economic and humanitarian ties within the framework of cross-border cooperation and expansion of partnerships with the CIS countries"⁹⁷. There are about three thousand legal entities in the region - participants of foreign economic activity, which back in 2016 carried out export-import operations with 149 countries, including the Republic of Belarus, which, along with Turkey, Ukraine, Switzerland, Egypt, China and Kazakhstan, is among the first seven states - the main trading partners of the Rostov region.

The agreement on cooperation in trade and economic, scientific and technical and cultural spheres was signed by the parties in April 2002. Since that time the relations between the Republic and the Rostov region have been developing consistently and systematically, which is largely facilitated by the activities of a joint working group, the regulations of which provide for holding annual joint meetings to discuss issues of cooperation between enterprises and organizations of the Republic of Belarus and the Rostov region in such areas as trade and economic relations, medicine, education, culture and sports.

Productive interaction between the parties after signing the above agreement soon led to the fact that several joint ventures with the participation of the Belarusian capital were registered in Rostov Region. "This is CJSC Atlant-Yug, which sells refrigeration equipment manufactured in Belarus. This is BelarusYugService LLC, which sells and services Belarusian tractors and other agricultural machinery. This is BSW Trade House LLC, a representative of the largest metallurgical works in Belarus, which supplies construction valves to the Russian market and brings components for

⁹⁷ Activity of the Ministry - International cooperation of the Rostov region [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://mineconomikiro.ru/a25.php>

metallurgical production to Belarus. This is BelAvtoMaz LLC, which represents Minsk Automobile Plant, sells its products and provides subsequent service.⁹⁸

Since 2011 in Rostov-on-Don a branch of the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in the Russian Federation has been functioning, which contributed to the strengthening of interaction between the parties. In June 2011 the Agreement on cooperation between the Regional Information and Analytical Center and the Belarusian National Center for Marketing and Price Study RUE was signed. And in November the same year JSC NIAEP and the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of the Republic of Belarus signed a protocol on participation of the Belarusian construction complex in the construction of the Rostov NPP Units 3 and 4 for the period of 2011-2012.

In 2011, the main export positions of Rostov Region in the Belarusian market included: electrical machinery and equipment, their parts; fats and oils of animal or vegetable origin and products of their breakdown; food products; coal; chemical products; products of ferrous and nonferrous metals; lamps and electronic tubes. The following goods were actively supplied to Rostov Oblast from Belarus: engineering products; aluminum and its products; equipment and mechanical devices and their parts for boilers; ferrous metal products; rubber, rubber and their products; dairy products, bird eggs, natural honey; animal food products; vegetables; ready-made meat and fish products; plastic materials and their products; paper products; synthetic fiber and their products; electrical machinery and equipment. In addition, Belarusian manufacturers also supplied hygiene products, cosmetics, electrical goods, household appliances, and furniture.

Such enterprises of the region as OOO PK "Novocherkassk Electric Locomotive Plant", OOO "Combine Plant "Rostselmash", OAO "Energomashinostroitelny Alliance", ZAO "Don-Tex" successfully cooperated with partners from Belarus. At the same time, Belneftekhim-ROS LLC continued to supply Belarusian-made

⁹⁸ Pavlyatenko, G. It is necessary to exchange experience in providing support to small and medium enterprises / G. Pavlyatenko // Belarus-Russia: cooperation of regions: informational-integration project / co-comp. B.L. Zalesskii, E.A. Korovkin, M.E. Kovorovkin M.E., Zalesskii B., 2010. - Minsk: BELTA, 2010. - C. 219.

polyethylene products to Rostov-on-Don enterprises. "And on October 1st, 2010 a joint Russian-Belarusian enterprise BelaRus-Yug LLC to assemble Belarus 320 tractors was opened in Rostov Region's Oktyabrsky district.⁹⁹ It was planned to create a trade and logistics center for sales of Belarusian products in the Southern Federal District on the basis of LLC Beltechetorg. A plot of land in Bataysk, Rostov Region, was even allocated for its construction.

The record trade turnover "between the region and the republic was achieved in 2012, amounting to 423.3 million dollars.¹⁰⁰ It should be reminded that in the same year a meeting between Belarusian leader Lukashenka and Governor of Rostov Region V. Golubev was held, during which it was noted that "it is necessary to reach the level of implementation of joint economically integrated projects and programs. To use the synergy effect of our manufacturing, technological, and intellectual resources.¹⁰¹ And at the same time the parties have identified the most promising areas of cooperation, one of which is the agro-industrial complex, where opportunities for joint projects in modernization and development of agricultural infrastructure, manufacturing base, the introduction of advanced technologies in production and processing of agricultural products have been outlined. The fact is that at that time the Rostov citizens came forward with an initiative to become a pilot site for implementation of the Union State programs in the agricultural sector where two programs have already been implemented aimed at introduction of modern technologies, first of all, in agriculture, development of advanced resource-saving environmentally friendly technologies, equipment for production of biologically complete fodder, as well as improvement of efficiency of food production through recycling of waste products on the basis of progressive technologies Another area of cooperation is participation of Belarusian

⁹⁹ Gavrilenko, E. The assortment of goods from Belarus is quite wide and is not limited to clothing items and food products / E. Gavrilenko // Customs Union: interaction of regions. View from Russia: informational-interactive project / co-compiler, interviewer: B. Zalesky, M. Valkovsky, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk : Theseus, 2012. - C. 164.

¹⁰⁰ Golubev, V. Significant potential for bilateral cooperation exists in the sphere of agriculture / V. Golubev // Interaction of Regions: Union State - the engine of Eurasian integration: inform.-integration project / compiled and interviewed by B. Zaleski, M. Valkovsky, A. Greshnikov. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2016. - C. 235.

¹⁰¹ Alexander Lukashenko met with the governor of the Rostov Region Vasily Golubev [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-vstretilsja-s-gubernatorom-rostovskoj-oblasti-vasiliem-golubevym-974/

organizations in programs of development of roads, implementation of transport infrastructure projects, water supply and drainage systems, as well as in construction of residential, social, cultural and sports facilities in the Russian region. The opportunities for cooperation in the transport sector aroused particular interest at that time, as such major projects as construction of an airport complex and modernization of Rostov multipurpose port were being prepared for implementation in the Rostov Region.

As a result, the parties came to the conclusion that they could significantly increase the volume of mutual trade by implementing a number of joint projects: first, by organizing assembly of Belarusian elevators in Rostov region and setting up their further service system; second, by joining efforts in agricultural machinery production; third, by implementing a large integration project on turkey meat production; fourth, by implementing joint production of metal structures and panels at the production site in Klimovichi, Belarus. The projects to establish a joint venture in Rostov-on-Don to produce confectionery products, as well as a joint venture to produce sunflower and rapeseed oil were named as promising at that time. And in the following years a number of concrete steps were taken to fulfill the plans. In particular, with the help of the Belarusian enterprise "Beltranslift" in 2013-2014, 513 elevators were replaced and installed in the housing and communal services of the Rostov region. In 2015-2016, this Russian region purchased 43 Belarusian high-capacity buses and 15 trolleybuses.

Nevertheless, in 2016, the volume of mutual trade slightly decreased to \$339 million. For this reason, when signing the Cooperation Roadmap for 2017-2019 in Minsk in May 2017, the parties clearly outlined mid-term plans to increase trade turnover: "We have every opportunity to bring it up to \$500 million within the next two years until 2019."¹⁰² At the meeting of the Belarusian leader with the governor of Rostov, both sides expressed confidence that "in the next few years the sides have every opportunity to increase the volume of trade and economic cooperation and to explore

¹⁰² Matveev, V. The potential for cooperation with Belarus is huge - the governor of the Rostov region / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/potential-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiiu-gromadnyi-gubernator-rostovskoi-oblasti-246760-2017/>

new promising avenues of interaction.¹⁰³ In particular, they discussed "revival of joint production of energy-saturated tractors in Bataysk"¹⁰⁴, implementation of plans to build a bypass road around Rostov-on-Don *with the* participation of the Belarusian party, and development of cooperation in the field of livestock breeding. As for resumption of assembly production of Belarusian tractors in Bataysk, it is worth recalling that the Trading House of Minsk Tractor Works has "a production site in Rostov Region prepared to assemble energy-saturated machinery - tractors of tractor classes 5 and 6 with a horsepower rating of 300 to 500. The Russian side is considering the possibility of subsidizing the production from the budgets of various levels."¹⁰⁵

Among the most effective ways to increase mutual trade between the Republic of Belarus and the Rostov region, the Roadmap for 2017-2019 also identifies the transition from regional cooperation at the level of the two states - Belarus and Russia - to effective partnerships at the city and district levels, which can provide new incentives and prospects, as they allow "to strengthen existing contacts and develop new economic relations, unite creative and intellectual potential, strengthen trust, mutual respect and mutual understanding.

One of the first documents in this regard - the Agreement on the Development of Partnership Relations - was signed by Rostov-on-Don and Gomel in 2009. Five years later, when this document expired, the parties adopted a new agreement, already indefinite, agreeing that "from now on the cooperation between the partner cities will be denser and meetings will be more frequent."¹⁰⁶ The main areas of interaction between

¹⁰³ Meeting with the Governor of the Rostov Region Vasily Golubev [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/search_ru/getExtendedResults/?query=&search_type=type_all_words&group=0&from_day=11&from_month=5&from_year=2017&to_day=11&to_month=5&to_year=2017&search_type=sort=desc&search_ok.x=31&search_ok.y=5&search_mode=&search_node=news&search_node_id=374&search_title_name=events

¹⁰⁴ Meeting with the Governor of the Rostov Region of Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7227>

¹⁰⁵ Rostov region is interested in the assembly production of BELARUS tractors [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/rostovskaia-oblast-zainteresovana-v-sborochnom-proizvodstve-tractorov-belarus-246848-2017/>

¹⁰⁶ Lutsik, A. Rostov-on-Don + partner cities = new prospects for constructive cooperation / A. Lucik // [Electronic resource]. 2015.-- URL: <http://rostov.mk.ru/articles/2015/09/29/rostovnadonu-gorodapartnery-novye-perspektivy-konstruktivnogo-sotrudnichestva.html>

Rostov-on-Don and Gomel were defined as "mutual supplies of agricultural machinery, road construction equipment and agricultural products."¹⁰⁷

In 2012 on the margins of the seventh joint meeting of the Working Group on cooperation of the Republic of Belarus and the Rostov region the Treaty on Twinned Relations was signed by Zernogradsky district of Rostov region and Gorky district of Mogilev region, which indicated their intention to develop comprehensive cooperation not only in culture but also science, between agricultural universities working in these areas: "They have already found common points of contact. They have plans for further development in the field of economy. There is a breeding center in Zernogradsky district where new varieties of wheat and cereals are being bred, they are interested in Belarusian corn and winter crops. In the future there will also be established ties here."¹⁰⁸

Then, in 2012, the agreement on the establishment of direct cooperation was signed by Kogalnitsky district of Rostov region and Smolevichsky district of Minsk region - to direct their efforts "to intensify the exchange of information and mutual cooperation in the promotion of economic development, management, health, education, culture, regional planning, environmental protection, development of areas in general, the expansion of direct contacts between representatives and public organizations of the twin districts"¹⁰⁹.

Finally, at the end of June 2018, Minsk and Rostov-on-Don signed a twinning agreement aimed at improving trade and economic relations, cooperation in the social sphere, and partnerships. According to the parties, this document "opens even more opportunities for the two cities, including the implementation of projects in the management of urban economy, cooperation of secondary and higher educational institutions, holding sports events and festivals. In addition, the development of fair

¹⁰⁷ Signing agreements on cooperation between the city of Rostov and the cities of Gomel, Volgograd and Glasgow [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.don-plaza.ru/ru/press/news/881/>

¹⁰⁸ Belarusians in Russia: a View from Rostov-on-Don [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://www.soyuz.by/news/region/1054.html>

¹⁰⁹ Smolevichi [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://kagl-rayon.donland.ru/news/2012/09/05.aspx>

trade is planned."¹¹⁰ The facts show that in the past Minsk and Rostov citizens have had a longstanding and mutually beneficial relationship. Rostov companies exported sunflower oil, women's clothing, paintwork to the Belarusian capital. Food and footwear, engineering and chemical products were supplied to the Don from Minsk. In 2017 alone, the Rostov administration purchased 75 low-floor large-capacity buses from Minsk to transport tourists and city residents during the 2018 FIFA World Cup. As a result, "the turnover of Rostov-on-Don companies with Belarusian companies in 2017 amounted to \$143.6 million."¹¹¹ In April 2018, direct flights between Minsk and Rostov-on-Don were opened. Since then, planes of the Belarusian air carrier regularly depart from Platov airport in Rostov on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, and from Minsk on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. It should be assumed that the opening of direct flights and signing of the Twinning Agreement will allow the enterprises of Minsk and Rostov-on-Don to cooperate more actively, create new joint projects, which, in turn, will lead to an increase in bilateral trade turnover.

Among other areas of cooperation the parties intend to pay attention to the development of cooperation in scientific and educational spheres. Especially since the Southern National Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences has been cooperating with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus for many years. "The most dynamically developing interaction with the Belarusian scientists is within the framework of the Agreement on scientific and technical cooperation between the state scientific institution "Belogo Institute of Mechanics of Metal and Polymer Systems of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus". V.A. Belogo National Academy of Sciences of Belarus" and the Southern National Center of RAS and the International project on assessment of large-scale environmental risks by testing methods "ALARM", supported by the 6th Framework Program of the European Commission <...>, with participation of scientists of the Republic of Belarus, Germany, Lithuania,

¹¹⁰ Pivovar, E. Minsk and Rostov-on-Don established twinning relations / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-rostov-na-donu-ustanovili-pobratimskie-otnoshenija-308489-2018/>.

¹¹¹ Will Minsk and Rostov-on-Don become sister cities? [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://regnum.ru/news/2371856.html>

Russia and other countries"¹¹².

Cooperation of Belarusian and Rostov scientists in the field of agriculture seems very promising, where the Federal State Budgetary Scientific Institution "All-Russian Research Institute of Viticulture and Wine named after Y.I. Potapenko" signed a contract on scientific cooperation with the Republican Scientific Production Unitary Enterprise "Institute of fruit growing", which provides for the exchange of initial breeding material of fruit, berry crops and grapes. In addition, back in 2015, the A.K. Kortunov Novochoerkassk Reclamation Engineering Institute of the Don State Agrarian University and the Belarusian RUE "Institute of Reclamation" were working on the exchange of experience in research work and participation in scientific and practical conferences. And the Zhdanov Don experimental station of the All-Russian Research Institute of Oil Crops named after V.S. Pustovoit since 2016 established cooperation with the Belarusian enterprises on the issues of breeding, variety testing of early maturing hybrids of sunflower, oilseed flax, rape and soybean.

About three dozens of signed agreements and contracts count cooperation of higher educational institutions of Rostov region with Belarusian educational and scientific institutions. These documents provide for the development and implementation of joint research projects and training programs to improve education on the basis of new information and pedagogical technologies and concepts, implementation of joint publications, exchange of published scientific and methodical literature, scientific seminars, conferences and symposia to share best practices. In particular, in April 2011 there was signed the Agreement about cooperation between the Department "Nanotechnologies and composite materials" and the Department "Technology of constructional materials" of Don State University and Belarusian Institute of powder metallurgy, which provides the carrying out of innovative, research and developmental works, increase of scientific and technical and professional level of employees. Fruitful creative ties are also established between Rostov and Belarusian

¹¹² Bartenev, V. Creation of joint production of sunflower and rapeseed oil seems promising / V. Bartenev // Common economic space: integration of regions: inform.-integr. project / compiled, interviewer: B. Zalesky, M. Valkovsky, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2013. - C. 200.

State Universities of Economics.

All these facts testify to the fact that the Republic of Belarus and the Rostov region have a lot of opportunities for expanding mutually beneficial cooperation, developing new promising areas of interaction and deepening existing partnerships in both trade and economic, industrial and cooperative, as well as scientific and technological areas in order to successfully meet the objectives of increasing mutual trade turnover in the coming years.

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6. Belarus-Kazakhstan: topical media topics of bilateral interaction

Belarus and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on cooperation in press and information back in 2000. In this document, the parties agreed to support and encourage partnerships between media outlets and news agencies in order to promote "the formation of a single or common information space and the strengthening of friendly relations between the two brotherly peoples - the Belarusian and Kazakhstani peoples."¹¹³ In April 2014, the legal framework of Belarusian-Kazakh relations in the media sphere was supplemented by another document - an agreement between the Belarusian Telegraph Agency and the Kazinform Agency, which "implies cooperation in the exchange of information, photo materials and other media content, in addition, the parties agreed on internships for journalists."¹¹⁴ And in November 2017, a new version of the intergovernmental agreement was already adopted, with the preamble stating that the parties attach "special importance to expanding media cooperation between the two states."¹¹⁵ And this reflects the current stage of development of the information spaces of Belarus and Kazakhstan, as well as laying a serious legal foundation for expanding interaction between the agencies and organizations of the two countries toward mutual presence in each other's media space.

The emergence of the new media cooperation agreement is significant because it took place in the year of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Belarusian-Kazakh diplomatic relations - in November 2017, when the presidents of Belarus and Kazakhstan signed the Treaty on Social and Economic Cooperation until 2026 with a program of specific activities for its implementation for the same period. "This program document is designed to consolidate the promising relations between the two countries

¹¹³ Zalesskii, B.L. Belarusian International Journalism: Features, Trends, Perspectives / B.L. Zalesskii. - Minsk, Belarusian State University, 2014. - C. 186.

¹¹⁴ BelTA and Kazinform agreed on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://bsj.by/2014/04/belta-i-kazinform-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve/>

¹¹⁵ Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on cooperation in the field of mass media [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://egov.kz/wps/portal/!ut/p/b0/04_Sj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfic7PyChyKtUvKTS3NT80r0w_Wj9K_NgPM8U_cgAQzMEDEdAzMQBJ5STmpZcmpqfQXaV6hfk5lqUOyoqAgAahz7G/#z6

and open up new opportunities in the development of comprehensive interaction,"¹¹⁶ as the parties came to the conclusion that the base of bilateral partnerships that has been formed since 1992 allows today Minsk and Astana to move to a new technological level of interaction with an emphasis on innovation and high technology. Especially since the trade turnover between the countries increased immediately by almost 65 percent and amounted to about \$500 million in the first three quarters of 2017. However, according to the heads of state, even this positive trend does not yet correspond to the potential of integration cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan. This is why the governments of both countries have set an intensive task - within the next two or three years to bring the volume of mutual trade to one billion dollars through the implementation of promising projects in various fields: petrochemistry, agriculture, energy, transport, logistics and new technologies. In this case, the main engine of bilateral economic cooperation will remain industrial cooperation, in which the Belarusian side declared its readiness to increase the level of localization of jointly produced products in Kazakhstan, which will create additional jobs there. By the way, "today there are 260 Belarusian enterprises working in Kazakhstan."¹¹⁷ In fact, this document determines the current focus of the Belarusian and Kazakhstani mass media on the coverage of the bilateral cooperation, which should get a powerful development in the next few years.

Specific ways to solve the task of increasing the volume of Belarusian-Kazakh mutual trade were thoroughly discussed by the parties at the largest business forum in the history of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan, held in Minsk in November 2017, which was attended by about 400 representatives of business circles of both countries, and at the parallel exhibition 55 Belarusian companies presented more than 100 advanced developments, each of which deserves attention of the media sector.

¹¹⁶ Official talks with President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnye-peregovory-s-prezidentom-kazaxstana-nursultanom-nazarbaevym-17546/.

¹¹⁷ Relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan have reached a high strategic level - Nazarbayev [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/otnoshenija-belarusi-i-kazaxstana-vyshli-na-vysokij-strategicheskij-uroven-nazarbaev-278130-2017/>.

There are great prospects for increasing Belarusian supplies to Kazakhstan, for example, in the woodworking industry. Suffice it to say that between January and September 2017, the enterprises of the Belarusian concern Bellesbumprom increased their exports to the Kazakhstani market by 42.3 percent, or up to \$18.3 million. It is noteworthy that "the Concern's enterprises supply almost all types of woodworking products to Kazakhstan, primarily furniture, which accounts for more than 60 percent of total exports. Particle boards are on the second position in terms of sales."¹¹⁸ Next come fiberboard, plywood, lumber, doors, windows, wallpaper, paper, cardboard, and matches. And almost each of these export positions in the Kazakhstani market demonstrates a systematic growth in volumes.

Another major export item from Belarus to Kazakhstan is trucks and agricultural machinery. So, within the framework of the already mentioned Belarus-Kazakhstan business forum, the Belarusian Automobile Plant and AstanaBelAZService LLP signed a contract to supply 25 dump trucks worth nearly \$25 million to this Central Asian country. In addition, in accordance with the signed memorandum between the Minsk Automobile Plant and Hyundai Trans Auto, 100 sets of dump trucks and utility vehicles are planned to be delivered to Kazakhstan in 2018. Finally, in 2018, Minsk Tractor Plant will ship two thousand vehicles to Belarusian Tractor Trading House LLP, and Gomselmash will ship 500 sets of combines to Kazakhstan's AgromashHolding JSC. It is also important that Gomel companies granted their partners, AO Agromashholding, exclusive dealer rights to sell their entire product line in Kazakhstan, which will allow them to seriously expand the range of harvesters they export. In particular, it is planned "to supply the southern part of Kazakhstan with equipment for rice harvesting"¹¹⁹. Gomselmash has such a machine, which they are

¹¹⁸ Enterprises of Bellesbumprom in January-September increased exports to Kazakhstan by 42.3%

[Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-janvare-sentjabre-uvlichili-eksport-v-kazahstan-na-423-278065-2017/>

¹¹⁹ Dylenok, Yu. "Agromashholding" JSC became an exclusive dealer of "Gomselmash" in Kazakhstan / Yu. Dylenok // [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekskliuzivnym-dilerom-gomselmasha-v-kazahstane-stalo-agromashholding-278165-2017/>

now preparing to launch into serial production.

Belarus and Kazakhstan also have ambitious plans for cooperation in developing digital transport corridors to Western and Northern Europe, which is very important given the geographic location of both countries, located on the line of the Silk Road Economic Belt. The strategic goal here is to double container transit volumes, to transport "1 million containers a year by 2020, and 2 million - by 2025."¹²⁰ It is important that on average a container from Central Asia reaches Western Europe within two weeks. The parties intend to cope with this task, thanks to coordinated work with Chinese and Russian colleagues. This means that the topic of creating digital transport corridors becomes relevant for many years not only for international journalists in Belarus and Kazakhstan, but also for their colleagues in Russia and China.

The agreement signed in November 2017 between Belarus and Kazakhstan on social and economic cooperation until 2026 and aimed "to implement a qualitatively new stage in bilateral relations, involving mutual capital penetration with a focus on innovation and high technology,"¹²¹ as noted above, implies that the engine of the strategic Belarusian-Kazakhstani partnership will continue to be projects that enable the creation of joint products with high added value and provide employment. As of the end of 2017, there were eight joint assembly factories in Kazakhstan, where "the assembly of quarry, mine, special municipal and firefighting equipment, tractors, combines, engines, balers, and medical equipment has been established."¹²² We should note at once that the specific experience of each of them can and should constantly remain in the focus of the media attention of the two countries, both central and

¹²⁰ Dylenok, Y. Belarus and Kazakhstan intensify cooperation in the development of digital transport corridors / Y. Dylenok // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kazahstan-aktiviziruiut-sotrudnichestvo-v-razvitii-tsifrovyyh-transportnyh-koridorov-278213-2017/>.

¹²¹ Review of the results of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cases in 2017 [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/a8a5169b6e487b3b.html>

¹²² Matveeva, N. Relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan acquired an allied and strategic nature - Bulegenov / N. Matveeva // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/otnosheniya-belarusi-i-kazahstana-priobreli-soiuznicheskii-i-strategicheskij-harakter-bulegenov-266564-2017/>.

regional. But, unfortunately, this is not yet the case. But there is much to tell our readers, viewers, and listeners.

Thus, one of the obvious Belarusian leaders in the market of Kazakhstan is Minsk Automobile Plant, which in 2010 opened Trade House MAZ - Kazakhstan LLP in Astana and by now has established its distribution network in this country, which includes nine dealers, as well as a network of 12 authorized service stations for Belarusian vehicles. The logical continuation of this cooperation was the opening in June 2017 in Almaty at the automobile assembly plant of Hyundai Trans Auto, a member of Astana Motors group, the production of heavy-duty dump trucks MAZ 5516H5 and MAZ 6501H9 "with a load capacity of 20 tons. At the same time a full cycle of welding, assembling and painting is carried out."¹²³

The following example. Even earlier - in 2007 - cooperation of Belarusian Gomselmash OJSC and Kazakhstani AgromashHolding JSC started. For ten years the Belarusian-Kazakh joint assembly plant, which is located in Kostanai on the basis of "AgshromashHolding" JSC, has managed to assemble more than three thousand grain harvesters. And this is on the assumption that the capacity of the Kazakhstani market in this equipment is one thousand new machines per year. In 2018, the joint venture will master the production of two more new models of agricultural machinery. We are talking in this case about the models KZS-575 and KZS-10. "These machines will expand the line of grain harvesters produced in Kostanai, which will allow a more flexible response to the needs of the local market."¹²⁴

Another good example of the development of bilateral mutually beneficial Belarusian-Kazakh cooperative cooperation was the commissioning in 2016 of the first stage of the project to create the Kazakhstan-Belarusian Industrial and Technological Park of Agricultural and Municipal Machinery. Implementation of this large

¹²³ Production of MAZ vehicles was launched in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-kazahstane-zapuscheno-proizvodstvo-avtotehniki-maz-25-6106-2017/>

¹²⁴ Sidorchik, V. Two new models of grain harvesters to be mastered at the Belarus-Kazakhstan SP in 2018 / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <http://www.belta.by/newscompany/view/dve-novye-modeli-zernouborochnyh-kombainov-osvoiat-na-belorussko-kazahstanskom-sp-v-2018-godu-278818-2017/>

investment project started back in 2012 - with the purpose to organize in Kokshetau city of Akmola region under licenses of some Belarusian factories "full cycle of production line for assembly of trailers, balers, attachments, bale and forage tools, excavators, loaders of different sizes and modifications"¹²⁵. The first phase of the project is almost 10,000 square meters of space. "After the second stage is put into operation and the enterprise is fully loaded, about 230 new jobs will be created."^{126 127} The parties are sure that successful implementation of this project will allow creating a powerful cluster of Belarusian-Kazakh machine building in Kokshetau, and it will also serve as a good example for spreading this positive experience of industrial cooperation to other areas of interaction. In particular, "there are plans to create similar parks for the production of passenger buses, quarry and mining equipment, and road-building machinery."¹²⁸ The implementation of these plans is another topical area of publications in the Belarusian and Kazakhstani press.

All in all, several dozens of joint scientific and technical projects with extensive use of Belarusian technologies, innovations, and scientific developments are planned for the next few years. In particular, a project "to create a joint production of unmanned aerial systems"¹²⁹ with the organization of their production in Kazakhstan is planned. Joint cooperation projects in the oil sector, including geological exploration, well operation, introduction of various methods to intensify production and enhance oil recovery, which were discussed at the meeting between the heads of the governments

¹²⁵. How the economy of Kazakhstan is being raised in the field [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: https://forbes.kz/process/economy/kak_v_polevyih_usloviyah_podnimayut_ekonomiku_kazahstana/¹²⁷ In Kazakhstan the production of MAZ vehicles was launched [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-kazahstane-zapuscheno-proizvodstvo-avtotehniki-maz-25_6106-2017/

¹²⁶ Sidorchik, V. Two new models of grain harvesters will be mastered at the Belarusian-Kazakh joint venture in 2018 / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <http://www.belta.by/newscompany/view/dve-novye-modeli-zernouborochnyh-kombajnov-osvojat-na-belorussko-kazahstanskomp-v-2018-godu-278818-2017/>

¹²⁷. How the economy of Kazakhstan is being raised in the field [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL:

¹²⁷ Akashin, V. Minsk - Kokshetau: a mutually beneficial project / V. Akashin // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://apgazeta.kz/2016/10/01/minsk-kokshetau-vzaimovyygodnyj-proekt/>

¹²⁸ Interview by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Kazakhstan Anatoly Nichkasov to the Kazakhstan news agency Khabar (June 11, 2014) [Electronic resource]. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/d8d30fc5ce4d68be.html>

¹²⁹ Belarus and Kazakhstan plan a project to create a joint production of drones [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kazahstan-namechaj-ut-proekt-po-sozdaniyu-sovmestnogo-proizvodstva-bespiotnikov-278212-2017/>.

of the two countries, A. Kobyakov and B. Sagintayev, may also become new areas of successful work of Belarusian companies with Kazakhstani partners. Sagintayev in August 2017 in Astana. In total, six joint assembly facilities are still "in the active phase of formation"¹³⁰ in Kazakhstan today, which indicates a very high readiness of the parties to continue the active search for new forms of industrial cooperation. In this case, much will depend on the ability of the regions of the two countries to realize their potential for cooperation. Accordingly, the role of the regional press of the two countries in media support of the implementation of these cooperative prospects increases manifold.

As a reminder, the trade turnover between Belarus and Kazakhstan was about \$420 million in 2016. That is why at the beginning of 2017, both Minsk and Astana set an ambitious goal - to return to the record level of Belarus-Kazakhstan mutual trade in 2014, when its volume was equal to \$966.8 million. At the same time, one of the effective tools to solve this problem was outlined - the intensification of interaction between the regions of the two countries, which is an important condition for their dynamic socio-economic development and a factor that ensures the promotion of trade and economic relations within the declared free movement of goods, services, capital, technology, labor and the creation of joint ventures in the Eurasian Economic Union. The conclusion that "the regions of Belarus and Kazakhstan have many promising areas for mutually beneficial economic cooperation"¹³¹ was made by the participants of the interregional meeting of representatives of the Pavlodar region of Kazakhstan and the Gomel region of Belarus held in Gomel in April 2017.

Note that the Pavlodar region is among those Kazakhstani regions, where business interests "are developing within the framework of one of the main directions in the economic policy of Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus - the Common Economic Space. For our region this cooperation is a priority direction in foreign economic

¹³⁰ Bilateral trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/

¹³¹ Sidorchik, V. Regions of Belarus and Kazakhstan have many promising areas for cooperation - Vladimir Dvornik / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/u-regionov-belarusi-i-kazhstana-est-mnogo-perspektivnyh-napravlenii-dlja-sotrudnichestva-vladimir-243748-2017/>

activity.¹³² The seriousness of its intentions to fill partnership relations with the Belarusian regions with concrete economic content is evidenced by at least the following fact. The Pavlodar Region Akimat signed a cooperation agreement with the Gomel Regional Executive Committee in November 2016. And if for the whole 2016 the volume of mutual trade of Gomel and Pavlodar residents was marked at the level of two and a half million dollars, only "in January-February 2017, the trade turnover between the regions was \$1.4 million (growth rate - 393.8%), including export - \$0.9 million (256.1%). Main export items: condensed milk and cream, railroad track equipment, metalware, porcelain tableware and kitchenware. Ferrosilicon"¹³³ was imported from the Pavlodar region for the needs of the Belarusian metallurgical plant.

The interregional meeting in Gomel showed that the parties intend to significantly expand the framework of interregional cooperation. For example, Pavlodar residents were very interested in the Belarusian experience in the improvement of settlements, including small towns. In this regard from the Kazakhstan party even the offer to invite to Pavlodar Gomel architects and workers of housing and communal services to work there some time, transferring the experience. Another promising area for cooperation is the purchase of Gomselmash agricultural machinery: "We are talking about the KZS-5 combine designed to work on the fields of small areas, primarily in farms.¹³⁴ These promising areas of cooperation between the Belarusian and Kazakh regions can be complemented by the planned purchase of young cattle in Gomel region for the development of dairy farming in Kazakhstan and the expansion of supplies of Belarusian furniture there. Interaction between free economic zones located on the territory of the regions, the agreement on which was signed in Gomel during the interregional meeting and which can be very productive, is also in the same

¹³² Bozumbaev, K. Interaction of regions plays an important role in the development and strengthening of integration / K. Bozumbaev // Eurasian Economic Union: Regional Aspect: Informational-Interactive Project / compiled, interviewer. B. Zalessky, M. Valkovsky, A. Mostovoy. - Minsk: Biznesofset, 2014. - C. 177-178.

¹³³ Sidorchik, V. Delegation of Pavlodar region of Kazakhstan to visit Gomel region 19-20 April / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/delegatsiia-pavlodarskoi-oblasti-kazakhstana-posetit-gomelskii-region-19-20-aprelja-243412-2017/>

¹³⁴ Sidorchik, V. The head of the Pavlodar region was interested in the Belarusian experience of urban improvement / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/glavu-pavlodarskoj-oblasti-zainteresoval-belorusskij-opyt-blagoustrojstva-gorodov-243790-2017/>.

line. The matter is that the free economic zone of Pavlodar oblast invites interested partners to participate in projects on joint use of subsoils on its territory. In particular, now in this Kazakhstani region "an aluminum cluster is being created with the involvement of major companies from Germany, Poland and Turkey¹³⁵," in which the Belarusian representatives of this segment of the market could also take part.

It is important to note that the interests of the Pavlodar region to develop partnerships in Belarus are not limited to the Gomel region. Thus, in the Minsk Region, the Kazakhstani side showed great interest in cooperation on construction of dairy and cattle complexes. Representatives of the capital region of Belarus expressed readiness not only to consult them on this topic, but also to build dairy complexes in Pavlodar on mutually beneficial terms. Ekibastuz, located in the Pavlodar region, and Partizan district of Minsk, which signed an agreement in April 2017 that provides for "expansion of trade and economic cooperation, assistance in establishing contacts between business entities, holding exhibitions, fairs, business forums, as well as development of cooperation in education, culture, sports and tourism"¹³⁶, also intend to make their contribution to expanding relations of the two countries in the near future.

Relevant issue of enhancing cooperation with the Kazakh regions is also for the Mogilev region, which has concluded "agreements on cooperation with the East Kazakhstan (2009) and South Kazakhstan (2003) regions.¹³⁷ Since then, a lot of enterprises of Mogilev region have become exporters of their products to the Kazakh market: Belshina OJSC, Mogotex OJSC, Bobruisk Machine-Building Plant OJSC, Mogilev Strommashina Republican Unitary Enterprise, Osipovichi Dairy Plant OJSC, Bykhovmoloko OJSC, Legpromzavitiie KUP, Jockey-Plastic JLLC, Stl-Extrusion

¹³⁵ Pavlodar and Minsk regions are mutually interested in developing cooperation in agriculture [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/pavlodarskaia-i-minskaia-oblasti-proiavlaiut-vzaimnyi-interes-k-razvitiu-sotrudnichestva-v-selskom-243719-2017/>

¹³⁶ Partizan district of Minsk signed a cooperation agreement with the Kazakh city of Ekibastuz [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/partizanskij-rajon- minska-podpisal-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-s-kazahstanskim-gorodom-ekibastuzom-243437-2017/>

¹³⁷ Tkacheva, O. Kazakhstan is interested in intensifying interregional cooperation with Mogilev region / O. Tkacheva // [Electronic resource]. 2013. -- URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/kazahstan-zainteresovan-v-aktivizatsii-mezhregionalnogo-sotrudnichestva-s-mogilevskoj-oblastju-31160-2013>

JLLC, Babushkina krynka Company. Almost all of them are ready only to increase their supplies to Kazakhstan regions. Representatives of the international segment of mass media of Mogilev region, who have creative contacts with Kazakhstani colleagues, could well help them in advertising and media promotion of export products.

Back in 2014, Akmola and Grodno regions were going to establish close partnerships, signing a memorandum on cooperation in agriculture and noting the great potential for cooperation "in terms of investment, trade in goods and services"¹³⁸. Examples of such intentions can be continued. The question is that they are not always adequately reflected in the media sphere. And this then has the effect of reducing the interest of partners and the continuation of cooperation in general. To prevent this from happening, it is assumed that Minsk and Astana have updated the agreement on cooperation in the media sphere adopted back in 2000.

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¹³⁸ Stasiukevich, E. Akmola Region of Kazakhstan is interested in adopting the agricultural experience of the Grodno Region / E. Stasiukevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/akmolinskaja-oblast-kazahstana-zainteresovana-perenjat-selskohozjajstvennyj-opyt-grodnenskoj-oblasti-38047-2014>

7. Belarus-Georgia: new initiatives and areas for cooperation

Georgia is one of those countries in the post-Soviet space, relations with which the Republic of Belarus builds on the principles of friendship, mutual understanding and equal dialogue. Perhaps for this reason, "Belarusian-Georgian ties are getting stronger every year, filling them with new initiatives and areas for cooperation.¹³⁹ The experience of 2017 - the beginning of 2018 shows that these can include, first of all: 1) development of **parliamentary diplomacy**; 2) strengthening of **interaction** between **the regions** of the two countries; 3) increasing the effectiveness of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian **Commission on Economic Cooperation**.

In November 2017, the first ever **parliamentary visit** of a high-level delegation led by Speaker of the Georgian Parliament I. Kobakhidze took place in Minsk, which can give new impetus to the development of the entire complex of relations between the two countries. After all, they proceed from the understanding in Minsk that people's diplomacy and "strengthening of interparliamentary relations creates a very good basis for building the same trade and economic relations. It is a good basis, and without it it is impossible to create very deep, long-term relations between the countries.¹⁴⁰ This factor is especially important when we speak about Georgia, where the parliament plays its decisive role in the life of the state and the influence of the deputies in the Georgian society is great.

The visit of Georgian parliamentarians to Belarus took place at a time when trade and economic cooperation between the two countries began to show positive dynamics. Thus, "at the end of 2016, the mutual trade turnover between Belarus and Georgia increased by 63% and amounted to \$73.2 million.¹⁴¹ Belarusian exports increased 2.5 times at once. Such dynamics of interaction has demonstrated the real

¹³⁹ Congratulations to President of Georgia George Margvelashvili [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-gruzii-georgiju-margvelashvili-16270/

¹⁴⁰ Meeting with the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia Irakli Kobakhidze [Electronic resource]. - 2017.

URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-spredsdatelem-parlamenta-gruzi-irakliem-kobaxidze-17492/.

¹⁴¹ Belarus and Georgia intensify cooperation in the implementation of competition policy [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://белта. bel/economics/view/belarus-i-gruzija-aktivizirujut-sotrudnichestvo-v-oblasti-realizatsii-konkurentnoj-politiki-276796-2017/>.

possibility of bringing the volume of mutual Belarusian-Georgian trade to \$100 million by the end of 2017, and to \$200 million in the medium term. Such an ambitious task can only be achieved if "relations between the legislative bodies of Belarus and Georgia reach a new level"¹⁴², when the parliamentarians of the two countries within their competence will not only support the governments in improving the contractual legal framework and seek to develop a constructive dialogue on legislative activities, but also contribute to enhancing inter-regional contacts and build their capacity in promising areas, as well as help to establish direct links between the two countries. Actually with this purpose - considerable activation of partnership relations - speakers of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus and the Parliament of Georgia signed a joint statement during the visit of I. Kobakhidze in which they outlined the main essence of cooperation of parliamentarians - "to promote deepening of bilateral cooperation in trade and economic, investment, scientific and technical, cultural spheres, in the sphere of youth policy, education, tourism, information technologies, logistics, communication and informatization"¹⁴³.

It should be noted that the activation of Belarusian-Georgian interparliamentary contacts began in the last few years, when friendship groups were established in the parliaments of both countries. Today they have a new task: "For substantive interaction, the heads of the friendship groups on both sides could draw up road maps and plan their work taking into account the aspects stipulated in them."¹⁴⁴ These road maps are supposed to be based on one or more large-scale projects, around which there could be not only a parliamentary dimension of Belarusian-Georgian cooperation, but also production and cooperation aimed at creation of business centers for companies with joint competence and interest. As a matter of fact, today we are already talking

¹⁴² Relations between the legislative bodies of Belarus and Georgia should reach a new level - Kobakhidze [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/otnosheniya-zakonodatelnyh-organov-belarusi-i-gruzii-dolzhen-vyjti-na-novyy-uroven-kobakhidze-276669-2017/>

¹⁴³ Speakers of the Belarusian and Georgian parliaments signed a joint statement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/spikery-belorusskogo-i-gruzinskogo-parlamentov-podpisali-sovmestnoe-zajavlenie-o-sotrudnichestve-276782-2017/>

¹⁴⁴ Belarusian deputies set up for substantive work with the Parliament of Georgia - Andreichenko [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/belorusskie-deputaty-nastroeny-na-predmetnuj-u-rabotu-s-parlamentom-gruzi-andrej-chenko-276707-2017/>

about reloading of the work of the parliamentary friendship groups, which "should not only fulfill the actions planned by the heads of the parliaments, but also carry out rather active independent work"¹⁴⁵. And the activity of parliamentary friendship groups on creation of conditions for the fruitful regional, economic interaction and development of contacts between business communities looks very promising in this respect. Especially since Belarus and Georgia already have useful experience of interregional cooperation.

In January 2018, Minsk hosted the fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian Commission for Economic Cooperation, during which the parties declared their intention to bring bilateral trade turnover to \$200 million by 2020. One of the effective ways to solve this problem is the development of Belarusian-Georgian **interregional cooperation**, the potential of which is "enormous and it should be fully used."¹⁴⁶ A concrete step to further implement the partnership opportunities of the regions of the two countries was the Program for 2018-2019 signed during the fourth meeting of the intergovernmental commission on the implementation of the agreement between the Minsk regional executive committee and the administration of the state commissioner - the governor of Kakheti on trade, economic and socio-cultural cooperation. This document once again emphasizes the fact that the Minsk region and Kakheti today have a lot in common. Suffice it to say that three mining enterprises in Georgia - JSC "RMG Cooper", JSC "Rustavi MK" and "Sakcementi" LLC - now "operate 41 dump trucks "BELAZ" of 45-55 tons payload capacity"¹⁴⁷ produced in the Minsk region. It goes without saying that the cited example of partnership development between the regions of the two countries is far from being the only one. In general, "agreements/memorandums have been signed between Minsk and Tbilisi, <...> Brest

¹⁴⁵ Belarus considers Georgia one of its strategic partners - Myasnikovich [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-schitaet-gruziju-odnim-iz-strategicheskikh-partnerov-mjasnikovich-276652-2017/>.

¹⁴⁶ A regional forum on sustainable development is planned to be held in Minsk in early 2018 [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/regionalnyj-forum-po-ustojchivomu-razvitiu-u-planiruetsj-a-provesti-v-minske-v-nachale-2018-goda-264868-2017/>

¹⁴⁷ BELAZ was visited by a delegation from Georgia as part of the 80th anniversary celebration of the Minsk region. Kakheti region [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL: <http://www.belaz.by/press/news/2018/oaobelazvramkahprazdnovani/>

and Batumi, Polatsk and Tskaltubo, Gomel and Kutaisi, Mogilev Region and the Autonomous Republic of Adjara in the field of regional and twinning cooperation.¹⁴⁸

Undoubtedly, the flagship of this partnership is the interaction between the two capitals, which began back in 1994, and in September 2015, Minsk and Tbilisi signed an agreement on twinning relations to "promote the establishment and expansion of bilateral relations in the economic, scientific, technical, cultural, investment and innovation activities, cooperation in healthcare, education, culture and sports, exchange of information on the development of cities, taking into account the organization of local self-government¹⁴⁹. Exports of Belarusian goods and services to the capital of Georgia doubled in just one year. "Medicines, agricultural and municipal equipment, and food produced in Belarus turned out to be in demand by our twins.¹⁵⁰ As a result, today the trade and economic interaction between the capital's enterprises is stable and constantly expanding, and "Belarusian meat and dairy products are very popular in Tbilisi, Georgian wines and mineral waters, fruits and vegetables are very popular in Belarus.¹⁵¹ This fact also says a lot. The first store of Belarusian products appeared in Tbilisi back in September 2016, the second - in November of the same year. Today in the capital of Georgia there are already six grocery stores that sell Belarusian products. The assortment of goods represented in them is quite wide. "Dairy products - butter, milk, sour cream, cheese, cottage cheese, yoghurt - are especially popular among the locals. Moreover, in the last two years the sales volume has increased significantly. Georgian dealers can develop a network of up to 25 stores.¹⁵²

In 2015 Brest and Batumi accepted the twinning agreement with the aim to

¹⁴⁸ Cooperation of Georgia with the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://export.by/georgia>

¹⁴⁹ Minsk and Tbilisi became twin cities [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://mamuli.by/minsk-i-tbilisi-stali-gorodami-pobratimami/>

¹⁵⁰ Zhdanovich, V. Twins. Minsk and Tbilisi / V. Zhdanovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://minsknews.by/pobratimyi-minsk-i-tbilisi/>

¹⁵¹ On the meeting of Belarusian Ambassador to Georgia M. Myatlikov with the Chairman of the Sakrebulo of Tbilisi G.

Tkmaladze [Electronic resource]. 2018. --URL: <http://georgia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c2a863c0c016dd7f.html>

¹⁵² Belarusian food products are in great demand in Georgia [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-produkly-pitaniia-polzuiutsia-bolshim-sprosom-v-gruzii-276694-2017/>.

establish permanent friendly relations for mutual acquaintance with life, history and culture of the twinned cities, as well as to develop cooperation in all directions, including exchange of experience in municipal economy. "It is planned that at the first stage the twin cities will focus on the tourism industry, which should pull the economy."¹⁵³ After two years the parties came to the conclusion that it's time to take relations to a higher level, so that "not only Brest and Batumi had ties, but closer contacts were established between the Brest region and the Autonomous Republic of Adzharia."¹⁵⁴ And in the future they planned to open Belarusian trade center in Batumi, where Brest Region enterprises' products would be presented. Here it is appropriate to remind that "Adjara is the most developed region not only in Georgia, but also in the coastline. The Republic contributes more than \$1 billion to the country's GDP."¹⁵⁵ Back in 2015, the Belarusian side offered this Georgian region at the highest level cooperation in engineering, construction, and tourism. As we can see, these plans are gradually beginning to materialize.

Gomel, which signed an agreement on friendship and cooperation with Kutaisi in 2016, still gives priority to trade and economic ties in interregional cooperation. After all, in 2015 alone, "Gomel's trade turnover with Georgia reached \$1.1 million. Exports of goods amounted to \$0.8 million, imports - \$0.3 million."¹⁵⁶ The open joint-stock companies Gomel Chemical Plant, Gomeldrev, Gomel Electrotechnical Plant, GZIP, Gomelglass, as well as Gomeloboy, Alkopak, Vimala, Antech, and Belplastkhim became exporters of their products to the Georgian market.

As for interaction between the cities of Polotsk and Tskaltubo, they established partnerships in June 2015, and in February 2017 they signed an agreement on cooperation to more actively develop partnerships in industry, entrepreneurship, small

¹⁵³ Nedashkovskaya, M. Brest and Batumi became sworn brothers / M. Nedashkovskaya // [Electronic resource].

- 2015. - URL: <http://mamuli.by/brest-i-batumi-stali-pobratimami/>

¹⁵⁴ A Belarusian shopping center is planned to open in Batumi [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/beloruskij-torgovyj-tsentr-planiruetsja-otkryt-v-batumi-259344-2017/>

¹⁵⁵ Official visit to Georgia [Electronic resource]. 2015. -- URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-v-gruzij-u-11241/

¹⁵⁶ Baidan, E. An agreement on friendship and cooperation was signed between Gomel and Kutaisi / E. Baidan // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://news.gomel.by/news/mezhdru-gomelem-i-kutaisi-podpisano-soglasenie-o-druzhbje-i-sotrudnichestve>

and medium business, trade, agriculture, science, education, health, environment, tourism. The motivation for this document was the fact that a number of Polotsk enterprises had already had experience of business relations with Georgian partners by that time. In particular, "dairy farmers supplied milk to Georgia, flour makers shipped rye flour, architects and builders built houses according to their designs."¹⁵⁷

Moreover, in September 2016, as part of the third meeting of the intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian commission on economic cooperation, which was held in Tbilisi, a memorandum of cooperation was signed by the Mogilev region and the Autonomous Republic of Adjara. A number of other documents on cooperation were accepted for execution by the Gorki District and Khashuri Municipality, Bobruisk with the cities of Kobuleti and Batumi, as well as the Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Ajara Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In September 2017, Mogilev and Batumi already announced the establishment of friendly relations. In the signed memorandum they agreed "to develop mutually beneficial cooperation in all spheres. The first step will be the development of a program of joint activities for the next year, as well as the preparation of specific projects for further implementation."¹⁵⁸ At the same time a memorandum on cooperation between Mogilev Regional Development Agency and the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Ajara was signed, as well as a contract on product supply between "Bakaleya Mogilev" OJSC and "Ajara Wine House" Company. And the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy in Gorki, Mogilev region has agreed on cooperation with the Batumi State University named after Shota Rustaveli. Obviously, the involvement of parliamentarians in these projects can only speed up their implementation.

The fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian **Commission for Economic Cooperation**, discussed above, also demonstrated the growing influence of this formation on the development of the entire complex of relations

¹⁵⁷ Shuyskaya, O. The heart is open for friendship / O. Shuyskaya // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://belsmi.by/archive/article/73054>

¹⁵⁸ Kuliagin, S. Mogilev and Batumi signed a memorandum on the establishment of friendly relations / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilev-i-batumi-podpisali-memorandum-ob-ustanovlenii-druzhestvennyh-svj-azej_-265669-2017/.

between the two former Soviet republics, which have recently acquired a stable character. And this despite the fact that "quite recently, literally 5-7 years ago, we did not know at all how to build logistics in trade with Georgia.¹⁵⁹ We remind that even at the third session of the intergovernmental commission the attention of the parties was concentrated on the fact that "the governments of Belarus and Georgia should remove the barriers that hinder the business.¹⁶⁰ And at the fourth meeting it was stated that "serious approaches have been developed in all directions - from trade to the creation of joint ventures and jobs in such areas as mechanical engineering and production of elevator equipment.¹⁶¹ The intention of the parties to develop mutually beneficial cooperation, first of all, in such directions as trade and industrial cooperation was highlighted.

In terms of **trade**, the nomenclature of Belarusian exports to the Georgian market in 2016 consisted of 318 items, the main of which were "railway cars, trucks, dairy products, synthetic filaments, medicines, furniture, sausage products, sugar, malt, and wood products.¹⁶² Mineral water, wine, spirits, nuts, ferroalloys, spices, vegetables, fruit, and tea prevailed in supplies from Georgia to Belarus.

The Belarusian side has chosen one of the main and effective tools to promote its exports to Georgian consumers by participating in major exhibitions and fairs in Georgia. In particular, in early September 2016, more than 140 Belarusian companies became participants of the first National Exhibition of Belarus organized in Tbilisi. They were based on "exporters of products, goods and services in mechanical engineering, industrial equipment, agriculture, consumer goods production, food, construction materials, petrochemical industry, healthcare, sports, tourism, transport,

¹⁵⁹ Presentation of credentials by ambassadors of foreign countries [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vruchenie-veritelynx-gramot-poslami-zarubezhnyx-gosudarstv-17869/.

¹⁶⁰ Ogneva, Y. Rusiy: the governments of Belarus and Georgia should remove the barriers that hinder Business to work / Yu. Ogneva // [Electronic resource]. 2016. -- URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/rusiyi-pravitelstva-belarusi-i-gruzii-dolzhy-sniat-barjery-kotorye-meshaj-ut-biznesu-rabotat-208221-2016/>

¹⁶¹ Mikhail Rusiy took part in a meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian Commission on Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://www.government.by/ru/content/7_814

¹⁶² Belarus and Georgia discuss the implementation of agreements to develop trade and cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-gruzija-obsuzhdajut-realizatsiju-dogovorenostej-po-razvitiyu-torgovli-i-kooperatsii-273506-2017/>.

logistics, science, educational services, information technology, and telecommunications.¹⁶³ The fruits of participation in this business forum came quite quickly. Already in March 2017, the Belarusian and Georgian sides signed an agreement for the supply of 90 tractors "Belarus" and started working on the issue "to organize a joint assembly of small class tractors."¹⁶⁴ At the same time we talked about additional deliveries of heavy equipment of the Belarusian Automobile Plant, and "Stadler company sent the first batch of trains to Georgia and intends to continue to participate in the project to develop the railway connection between Tbilisi and Batumi."¹⁶⁵ According to the results of 2016, Bellesbumprom Concern increased the shipment of its products to Georgia by more than a third. At the same time, "shipments of chipboard and newsprint increased 6-fold, and plywood 2.3-fold. The shipment of wallpaper increased by 30% and matches - by 35%."¹⁶⁶ Pinskdiv Holding even won the tender for the supply of furniture to Georgian hotels. As a result, Georgia became one of the most promising markets for the concern's enterprises.

The participation of Belarusian exporters in the Made in Belarus exposition organized as part of the international agricultural and food industry exhibition Agro Food Drink Expo, which was held in Tbilisi in November 2017, and where, in addition to Belarus, a wide range of agricultural products were presented: machinery, crop and livestock products, food processing and storage equipment, packaging products from Ukraine, Russia, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, became very effective. Especially high demand among Georgian buyers was caused by the products of the Belarusian Red Food company - zephyr and marmalade. Pinsk Meat Processing Plant, which

¹⁶³ Mikhail Rusyi took part in the opening of the National Exhibition of Belarus in Georgia [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/6663>

¹⁶⁴ Matveev, V. Belarus plans to increase trade turnover with Georgia almost three times in two years - Rusy / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-za-dva-goda-planiruet-uvlichit-torgovij-oborot-s-gruziej-pochti-v-tri-raza-rusyj-235499-2017/>

¹⁶⁵ The network of stores with Belarusian products will expand in Georgia - the ambassador [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-gruzii-rasshirsja-set-magazinov-s-beloruskoj-produktsiej-posol-225439-2016/>

¹⁶⁶ Enterprises of Bellesbumprom increased exports to Georgia by 35.4% in 2016 [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatija-bellesbumproma-v-2016-godu-uvlichili-eksport-gruzij-u-na-354-235514-2017/>

entered the Georgian market back in June 2017 and sells almost its entire export lineup - cooked, smoked, raw-smoked and dried products - also took part in this exposition. "A total of 150 types of products are supplied to Georgia.¹⁶⁷ In addition, a large amount of malt for beer production in this country is supplied by Belsolod. Well, and such a fact: "Today every fifth package of milk produced in Georgia is made from skimmed milk powder from Belarus.¹⁶⁸

Overall, in 2017, the enterprises of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus increased their exports to Georgia by 2.9 times. It happened due to the opening of the Belarusian network of specialized stores in Georgia, which sell exclusively Belarusian products: meat and dairy products, groceries, confectionery products, alcoholic beverages, and bakery products. As of mid-February 2018, there were already nine such stores in Georgia. "This direction is developing not only in the capital, but also in the regions of the country.¹⁶⁹ And the Belarusian side plans to expand the range of supplied agricultural products, increase the number of specialized stores for its sale and enter local retail chains.

Speaking about the prospects of the development of Belarusian-Georgian **cooperation ties**, it should be reminded that during the official visit of the Belarusian president to Georgia in April 2015, it was agreed at the highest level that "industrial cooperation will be fundamental in the bilateral relations.¹⁷⁰ At the same time, the parties agreed to implement pilot projects to establish assembly production of Belarusian elevators and tractors of various modifications in Georgia. Already in August 2017 in Tbilisi with the participation of the Belarusian JSC "Mogilevliftmash" was created consortium "Georgian elevator", under which it was planned to "organize

¹⁶⁷ Belarusian food products are in great demand in Georgia [Electronic resource]. -

2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-produkty-pitaniia-polzuiutsia-bolshim-sprosom-v-gruzii-276694-2017/>

¹⁶⁸ Belarus and Georgia are working on alternative routes for the supply of products [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-gruzii-a-prorabatyvaj-ut-alternativnye-marshruty-dlia-postavok-produktsii-287901-2018/>.

¹⁶⁹ Enterprises of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in 2017 increased exports to Georgia by 2.9 times [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriiatiia-minselhozproda-v-2017-godu-narastili-eksport-produktsii-v-gruzii-u-v-29-raza-290507-2018/>

¹⁷⁰ Official visit to Georgia [Electronic resource]. 2015. -- URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news ru/view/ofitsialnyj -vizit-v-gruzij u-11241/>

the assembly of Belarusian elevators on the basis of the Georgian Technical University."¹⁷¹ And by the end of the same year 22 elevators had already been assembled. The objectives for the future here are much more ambitious: in 2018 to collect more than 200 units of this technique, as the "break-even point of the elevator industry - about 250 units per year,"¹⁷² and then "to organize the production of up to 2 thousand elevators in Georgia."¹⁷³

As for the assembly of Belarusian tractor machinery on Georgian soil, the assembly facility based on the Georgian company World Technik was established "in accordance with the memorandum signed in 2015 between the Georgian company and JSC Minsk Tractor Works,"¹⁷⁴ and its first results were the Belarus-320.4 and Belarus-622 tractors assembled by JSC Bobruisk Tractor Parts and Units Plant, which were presented at the already mentioned above first Belarusian National Exhibition in Tbilisi in autumn 2016. The topic of development of cooperation in the agro-industrial complex is continued by the plans voiced at the third meeting of the intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation to build a dairy farm for 500 heads by Belarusian specialists on Georgian land in order to "transfer their dairy cattle breeding technologies to Georgia"¹⁷⁵, "as well as the intentions of the parties to implement joint projects to create breeding and tribal centers for cattle breeding. All these facts indicate that Belarus really considers Georgia to be an important and promising partner in the Transcaucasus and intends only to intensify bilateral contacts in industry, agriculture, petrochemistry, pharmaceuticals, and the humanitarian sphere.

¹⁷¹ Transcript of the speech of Belarusian Foreign Minister V. Makei to the media on the results of negotiations with the Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (September 4, 2017, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d71a81478f220672.html.

¹⁷² Meeting with the First Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://www.government.by/ru/content/7_812

¹⁷³ Mikhail Rusyi took part in a meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian Commission on Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://www.government.by/ru/content/7_814

¹⁷⁴ Kuliagin, S. The first tractors of Belarusian-Georgian assembly are presented in Tbilisi / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervye-traktory-belorusko-gruzinskoj-sborki-predstavleny-v-tbilisi-208304-2016/>.

¹⁷⁵ Ogneva, Y. Belarus will build a 500-head dairy farm in Georgia / Y. Ogneva // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-postroit-v-gruzii-molochnui-u-fermu-na-500-golov-208213-2016/>.

8. Belarus-Africa: point of reference - mutual interest

The Republic of Belarus traditionally adheres to common approaches to the development of relations with all foreign partners, concentrating its foreign policy efforts on the most important and promising vectors, which include the countries of the so-called "far arc" - in the African, Latin American and African regions, with many of which the Belarusian side seeks to expand and strengthen cooperation, taking it to the level of a strategic partnership.

Belarusian foreign policy aims to develop relations with the countries of the "far arc" in two main directions:

First, the intensification of political and economic interaction with traditional partners, which official Minsk considers Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Vietnam, Egypt, India, Iran, China, Cuba, the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Japan, and the Republic of South Africa;

Second, to establish a dialogue, actively enter and consolidate the markets of countries with significant potential for mutually beneficial cooperation, among which the Belarusian side sees Angola, Australia, Bolivia, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mozambique, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

This focus of the Republic of Belarus on the active development of cooperation with the countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia can be explained by the fact that "diversification of trade and deepening of economic cooperation with the countries of these regions is an important prerequisite for the growth of the export-oriented Belarusian economy.¹⁷⁶ And it should be said that over the past few years, the Republic of Belarus has taken many concrete steps to develop each of these regions.

Thus, Asian countries are of interest to Belarus as a capacious, promising and rapidly expanding market for Belarusian goods and services, as well as a promising donor to the Belarusian economy. Although the Asian market "still remains underdeveloped in terms of promoting many types of Belarusian products there,

¹⁷⁶ Countries and regions [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/bilateral/>

including those manufactured by mechanical engineering and the electronics and petrochemical industries,"¹⁷⁷ Minsk is nevertheless seeking to fully implement its ambitious plans to increase supplies of Belarusian trucks, tractors, machine tools, bearings, chemical fibers, electronic and medical devices to that region, as well as strengthen scientific and industrial cooperation with the leading Belarusian manufacturers.

As for Latin America, the development of interaction with the states of this continent is facilitated by the strengthening of dialogue with priority partners and expansion of the geography of bilateral contacts and economic ties in promising sectors for Belarus. The following fact is a good example: "The trade turnover of Belarus with Latin American countries increased by more than 4 times during the period from 2000 to 2015, while Belarusian exports grew at a faster pace and increased more than 6 times."¹⁷⁸

In 2016, the events held by the Belarusian side with the countries of Africa "helped both intensify political relations and promote trade and economic cooperation in the supply of Belarusian quarry machinery, trucks, road-building and agricultural equipment, and petrochemical products."¹⁷⁹ This led to a more than doubling of Belarusian exports to Africa in 2017, and "managed to form strategic approaches to gain a foothold in Southern Africa."¹⁸⁰ And today at the highest level in the Republic of Belarus has already formed the view that "Africa is the future of the entire planet. Today and tomorrow the whole world will develop at the expense of Africa."¹⁸¹ In

¹⁷⁷ Zalessky, B. Belarus - Asia: Vector of Partnership. Chronicle of mutually beneficial cooperation / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. - C. 5.

¹⁷⁸ Review of the results of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

cases in 2016 [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL:
<http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/ea444d5cceb4798d.html>

¹⁷⁹ Review of the results of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

cases in 2016 [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL:
<http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/ea444d5cceb4798d.html>

¹⁸⁰ Review of the results of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

cases in 2017 [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL:
<http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/a8a5169b6e487b3b.html>

¹⁸¹ Speech to Members of Parliament of the Republic of Sudan [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL:
http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vystuplenie-pered-deputatami-parlamenta-respubliki-sudan-15402/.

2018, the work to intensify relations with the countries of the African continent was further developed. The rapidly developing partnerships of Belarus with **Sudan** and **Zimbabwe** look very promising today.

Back in August 2017, Belarus and **Sudan** adopted a roadmap for cooperation, which outlined the parameters of cooperation in the oil and gas, water, electricity, industry, trade, higher education, research, banking, and financial sectors. The signed document should ensure the implementation of the agreements reached between Minsk and Khartoum in recent years on the entire range of bilateral cooperation, including joint projects, which include "the establishment of production facilities of Belarusian equipment in Sudan, organization of supplies of road construction, municipal and forestry equipment, grain drying complexes, and geological exploration works in that country."¹⁸²

The very fact that the roadmap was adopted demonstrates that the Belarusian side views Sudan as one of the key partners on the African continent and is "interested in a significant increase in bilateral cooperation in all sectors."¹⁸³ Statistics show that exports of tractors, trucks, various types of machines, transformers, control and measuring equipment, and tires clearly prevail in the volume of bilateral trade between Belarus and Sudan. Suffice it to say that between 2010 and 2015, trade turnover between the two countries increased from \$15.4 million to \$41.3 million, reaching a record \$70.8 million in 2013.

Even though in 2016 this figure dropped to \$38 million, Minsk and Khartoum have demonstrated their determination to return to the highest level of mutual trade turnover in the near future by the very adoption of the Roadmap. The more so because in recent years the parties have made a number of concrete steps to this end - "introduced annual political consultations, resumed the activity of the intergovernmental commission for cooperation after a ten-year stagnation, and

¹⁸² Belarus and Sudan signed a roadmap for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-sudan-podpisali-dorozhnnuiu-kartu-razvitiia-sotrudnichestva-263976-2017/>

¹⁸³ Alexander Lukashenko congratulated President of Sudan Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-sudana-omara-xasana-axmeda-al-bashira-15252/

established direct interaction between the ministries of industry, agriculture, oil and energy, and education.¹⁸⁴

An obvious prologue to the adoption of the cooperation roadmap was the visit of the Belarusian head of state to Sudan in January 2017, during which Belarus expressed its interest in taking part in industrial and infrastructure development projects in Sudan and establishing joint ventures to produce agricultural and truck equipment based on the existing factories in Sudan. More specifically, "a tractor assembly project could be a pioneer in this area."¹⁸⁵

The fact is that Minsk Tractor Works has been cooperating with Sudanese partners since 1994. The local company MIG Agriculture is the exclusive distributor at the Sudanese market of the products of the Belarusian manufacturers of tractors, trucks, and tires. In particular, it is engaged in the sale of a number of tractor models and is "one of the top three distributors in Sudan."¹⁸⁶ Moreover, it has a site that can be used for the assembly of tractors, only 15 kilometers from Khartoum. In turn, MTZ in 2016 supplied 123 tractors to this African country, in the first half of 2017 - another 51 machines, planning to ship there at least 80 more units by the end of the year. As we can see, there is an upward trend in exports. But the Belarusian side has set a goal to significantly increase the presence of its complex technical products in Sudan, relying on a number of important arguments. Firstly, "the plant designers have adapted the 200-hp tractor to the climatic conditions of Sudan, and the new BELARUS-2023.3 model is already being tested at the plant. The new tractor can work in 50-degree - heat"¹⁸⁷. Secondly, the assembly facility in Sudan can be used as a platform for Belarusian tractors to enter neighboring countries and the African continent as a whole.

¹⁸⁴ Belarus and Sudan plan to sign a treaty on friendly relations and cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-sudan-planiruiut-podpisat-dogovor-o-druzhestvennyh-otnoshenijah-i-sotrudnichestve-228043-2017/>.

¹⁸⁵ Negotiations with Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-sudana-omarom-xasanom-axmedom-al-bashirom-15397/

¹⁸⁶ Matveev, V. Assembly production of MTZ tractors may appear in Sudan / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe-proizvodstvo- traktorov-mtz-mozhet-pojavitsja-v-sudane-228348-2017/>.

¹⁸⁷ Sergeeva, V. Assembly production of Belarusian tractors can be created in Sudan / V. Sergeeva // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe- proizvodstvo-belorusskih-traktorov-mozhet-byt-sozdano-v-sudane-263919-2017/>.

Other promising areas of Belarus-Sudan industrial cooperation that were considered by business circles of the two countries at the business forum in Khartoum in January 2017 included joint projects "in mechanical engineering, mining, agro-industry, and pharmaceuticals.¹⁸⁸ As for mechanical engineering, already in February 2017, the first batch of vehicles from Minsk Automobile Plant arrived in Sudan from Belarus - "10 trucks for Petrola, a company operating in the oil sector."¹⁸⁹ In the spring of the year, Sudan tested the KZS-575 combine harvester developed by Gomselmash specifically for this country, where sorghum is one of the main crops cultivated. The Sudanese version is about the supply of this equipment to farmers and the prospects are very good, since "sorghum crops cover several million hectares here.¹⁹⁰ At the same time the Belarusian side aims not just to supply its equipment to this African country, but to organize an assembly on Sudanese soil "under certain conditions, which should be created by the Government of Sudan. Then it would be possible to organize assembly production of agricultural equipment here and reach the localization level of about 40%.¹⁹¹

The Belarusian-Sudanese dialogue continued in December, when President of Sudan Omar al-Bashir paid an official visit to Belarus, which "gave a significant impetus to further deepening of the interstate dialogue and implementation of the existing potential of Belarusian-Sudanese cooperation.¹⁹² The serious potential and attractive prospects for cooperation between Belarus and Sudan were evidenced by the following facts: during the visit of the head of the Sudanese state to Minsk, 17 documents - agreements, contracts - were signed for a total amount of about USD 250

¹⁸⁸ Belarus offered Sudan joint business projects [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL:

<http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlozila-sudanu-sovmestnye-biznes-proekty-228663-2017/>

¹⁸⁹ Matveev, V. The first MAZ vehicles arrived in Sudan / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. -

URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-sudan-pribyla-pervaja-avtotehnika-maz-234543-2017/>

¹⁹⁰ Sidorchik, V. Gomselmash tests grain harvester in Sudan / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-provodit-ispytaniya-zernouborochnogo-kombajna-v-sudane-244896-2017/>.

¹⁹¹ Matveev, V. Belarusian-Sudanese agreements for \$50 million signed in Khartoum / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusko-sudanskiedogovorenosti-na-50-mln-podpisany-v-hartume-228714-2017/>.

¹⁹² Congratulations to Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-sudana-omaru-xasanu-axmedu-al-bashiru-20193/

million. Among the documents that develop the contractual and legal framework of Belarusian-Sudanese relations, we should mention the intergovernmental agreement on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of tax evasion with regard to income taxes, as well as the memorandum on cooperation in the industrial sector. Apparently, this is only a starting point for the development of the entire complex of bilateral relations, because, according to O. Al-Bashir, "Sudan is interested in expanding economic cooperation with Belarus."¹⁹³ To raise these relations to a new level in the near future, the Sudanese side opened a diplomatic mission in Minsk in December 2018.

Belarus believes that in its relations with Sudan, which is a bridge between the Arab civilization and Africa, the country should focus on the export of high-tech products with the subsequent establishment of joint assembly facilities there, because the increase and diversification of Belarusian export should "contribute to the economic development of Sudan and the Sudanese side's solutions to the challenges of industrialization, agricultural development, and training of local highly qualified personnel."¹⁹⁴ Whereas in 2017, for the first time, Belarus supplied dump trucks, prototypes of high-tech grain harvesters and power-packed tractors, road-building machinery, agricultural equipment, and resumed supplies of trucks to the Sudanese market, "Belarusian exports to Sudan almost doubled over the same period last year in the first 10 months of 2018."¹⁹⁵

This African country attracts the attention of Belarus not only because of its rich natural resources and good geographical location, not only because of the possibilities of supplies of Belarusian equipment and personnel training to Sudan, but also because of the promising areas of cooperation, the list of which is quite broad: "This is interaction in the agricultural sector, in the development of minerals, infrastructure

¹⁹³ Grishkevich, A. Sudan is interested in expanding economic cooperation with Belarus / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/sudan-zainteresovan-v-rasshirenii-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusji-u-328885-2018/>

¹⁹⁴ Negotiations with Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-sudana-omarom-xasanom-axmedom-al-bashirom-20033/

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

development, and logistics.¹⁹⁶

In terms of industrial cooperation, today Belarus and Sudan are already developing and implementing twelve joint projects that "relate to gold mining, creation of a multi-profile machine-building enterprise to assemble tractors, MAZ trucks and Gomselmash machinery."¹⁹⁷ The list also includes participation of Belarusian organizations in energy projects, activities to improve oil recovery in the Sudanese fields, work to establish joint ventures for the production of meat and dairy products, fodder, cultivation of vegetables and seedlings.

Speaking about the development of Belarusian-Sudanese cooperation in agriculture, we should first of all mention the framework contract for the supply of 17 granaries from Belarus to that African country for a total amount of 60 million euros. Back in September 2018, the Belarusian JSC Lidselmash and LLC Selenergoprom signed the relevant documents with the Sudanese agricultural bank Agricultural Bank of Sudan. As a result, "Lidselmash" signed a contract for the supply of eight granaries with a capacity of 50 thousand tons and four with a capacity of 25 thousand tons for a total cost of 32, 4 million euros. "Selenergoprom" signed the documents for the supply of five granaries of 100 thousand tons worth 27.25 million euros.¹⁹⁸

Exploration in Sudan is also promising for Belarus. A respective Belarusian company has already been registered there. In December 2018, it became known that "Sudan intends in the near future to allocate to Belarus a second site for gold mining, located near the Nile."¹⁹⁹ And then the Belarusian specialists in this African country will carry out exploration work at the same time on two sites. Besides, in the near future

¹⁹⁶ During the visit of the President of Sudan to Belarus, contracts worth \$250 million were signed [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vo-vremia-vizita-prezidenta-sudana-v-belarus-podpisano-kontraktov-na-250-mln-328785-2018/>.

¹⁹⁷ Grishkevich, A. Belarus and Sudan emphasize cooperation in economy and industrial cooperation - Rachkov / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-i-sudan-delaiut-aktsent-na-sotrudnichestve-v-ekonomike-i-promkooperatsii-rachkov-328692-2018/>

¹⁹⁸ Belarus to supply granaries to Sudan for 60 million euros [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-postavit-v-sudan-zerno hranilishcha-na-60-mln-evro-318290-2018/>.

¹⁹⁹ Grishkevich, A. Sudan intends to allocate Belarus the second site for gold mining / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sudan-nameren-vydelit-belarusi-vtoroj-uchastok-dlj-a-dobychi-zolota-328681-2018/>.

both countries will take measures at the level of parliaments and business circles "to bring the relations between the regions of Belarus and the states of Sudan to a higher level"²⁰⁰, which corresponds to the level of strategic partnership.

As for **Zimbabwe**, President Mnangagwa paid a visit to Belarus in January 2019, during which the two countries agreed to build a strategy and implement a specific plan to develop cooperation in the future. Belarus considers this African country, located in the south of the "black" continent, an important partner in the southern African region, seeking for this reason to gradually reach a strategic level of interaction with it, and sees significant potential in the development of bilateral relations despite the fact that "Zimbabwe is experiencing hard times: for almost two decades, the country has been subject to various economic sanctions and was actually isolated."²⁰¹

Official Minsk sees significant potential for cooperation with Harare, primarily in the areas of trade and economy. The fact is that in this African country today "legislation is actively changing to attract investment, the green light is given to create joint ventures"²⁰², concrete steps are taken for the growth and industrialization of various sectors of the economy and the main priorities of domestic policy are the modernization and mechanization of agriculture and mining, as well as the construction of socio-economic infrastructure. Let us not forget that "Zimbabwe is rich in natural resources - coal, diamonds, deposits of other minerals. Therefore, there is a need for machinery produced in Belarus."²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Interregional cooperation between Belarus and Sudan should be taken to a higher level Andreichenko [Electronic resource]. 2018. --URL : <https://www.belta.by/special/politics/view/mezhregionalnoe-sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-sudana-sleduet-vyvesti-na-bole-vysokij-uroven-andrejchenko-328837-2018/>

²⁰¹ Negotiations with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-prezidenta-respubliki-zimbabwe-emmersona-mnangagvy-20303/

²⁰² Belarus and Zimbabwe may enter large-scale economic cooperation - Sheiman [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-zimbabwe-mogut-vyjti-na-masshtabnoe-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnicvo-shei-man-333102-2019/>

²⁰³ Matveev, V. New contracts for the supply of Belarusian equipment to Zimbabwe are being worked out / V.

Matveev // [Electronic resource]. 2019. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prorabatyvaiutsia-novye-kontrakty-na-postavku-belorusskoi-tehniki-v-zimbabwe-333019-2019/>

It should be reminded that contacts between Belarus and Zimbabwe intensified in 2015 after Eduard Mnangagwa visited Belarus, only then in the status of the vice president of this South African state. In Minsk three and a half years ago he said that "the Zimbabwean side is interested in expanding trade and economic cooperation, as well as cooperation in such areas as infrastructure, agriculture and mining."²⁰⁴ Speaking about the need to implement large-scale infrastructure projects in their country, high-ranking Zimbabwean officials clearly emphasized an important detail for the Belarusian side: "Zimbabweans would like to give preference to machines from Belarus over their Western counterparts for a number of objective reasons."²⁰⁵ Since then the Belarusian-Zimbabwean partnership began to gradually develop and strengthen. It should be noted that until recently, potash fertilizers and spare parts for automotive equipment were the main Belarusian exports to Zimbabwe, whereas Belarus imported minerals, as well as citrus fruits and vegetables in insignificant quantities.

Back in 2014, the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Belarus supplied dump trucks and loaders to Zimbabwe, which became operational in the Hwange coal mine. In 2017, deals were made to supply lower-capacity dump trucks to southern Africa. In 2018, Amkodor signed a contract to supply forty units of machinery and spare parts to Zimbabwe for nearly four and a half million dollars, with financial support from the Development Bank of Belarus and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. But it is in 2019 that Belarusian supplies to the Zimbabwean market are expected to take on a new dimension. We are talking about shipments of equipment under previously signed contracts - tractors, seeders, and products of Minsk Automobile Plant - truck tractors and semi-trailers - to that country. In particular, the Zimbabwean company "Adjara Trucking" said it was ready to buy about two hundred trucks of Minsk Automobile Plant, noting that "the need of Zimbabwe may reach a thousand units. MAZ trucks are

²⁰⁴ Meeting with Emmerson Mnangagwa, Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-vitse-prezidentom-respubliki-zimbabwe-emmersonom-mnangagvoj-11803/

²⁰⁵ Zimbabwe considers the possibility of acquiring a large batch of Belarusian machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zimbabwe-rassmatrivaet-vozmognost-priobretenija-krupnoj-partii-belorusskoj-tehniki-5-848-2015/>

planned to be used in the mining industry, to transport fuel, grain and fertilizers.²⁰⁶ Belarusian Automobile Plant together with Sohra is working on the delivery of six dump trucks and two loaders. In total, more than 70 BelAZ trucks are already successfully operating in different quarries there. It should also be noted that export financing for supplies of Belarusian machines to Zimbabwe is planned to be implemented with the participation of the pan-African bank The Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank, to which the Belarusian Development Bank "opened a credit line of \$70 million for the relevant needs in 2018."²⁰⁷

Interesting opportunities are also opening up for the Belarusian side in terms of the implementation of joint exploration and mining projects with Zimbabwean partners. In particular, "Belarus expects to start commercial mining in Zimbabwe in March 2019."²⁰⁸ A total of five Belarusian-Zimbabwean joint ventures have already been established in that country. Belarusian geologists have been working in southern Africa for a year and a half and have already found "quite large mineral deposits"²⁰⁹.

If we talk in general about the prospects for cooperation between the two countries, the areas in which Minsk and Harare are going to cooperate most actively include agriculture, construction, energy, as well as science and education. In terms of agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water Resources, Climate and Rural Settlement of Zimbabwe signed a Memorandum of Understanding in January 2019. This document can and should become a prologue to the implementation of a number of projects. In particular, "we are talking about the creation of joint ventures in Zimbabwe for the production and processing of meat and milk."²¹⁰ One of them could be an enterprise for production and

²⁰⁶ Sergeeva, V. A company from Zimbabwe is ready to buy about 200 MAZ trucks / V. Sergeeva // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/kompanija-iz-zimbabve-gotova-zakupit-okolo-200-gruzovikov-maz-333067-2019/>.

²⁰⁷ Development Bank to lend supplies of Belarusian machinery to Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/bank-razvitiia-prokredituet-postavki-belorusskoi-tehniki-v-zimbabve-333485-2019/>

²⁰⁸ Belarus intends to start commercial mining in Zimbabwe in March [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-marte-namerena-pristupit-k-promyshlennoi-dobyche-poleznyh-iskopaemyh-v-zimbabve-333402-2019/>

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Matveev, V. Cooperation with Belarus will provide opportunities for the development of the economy and export potential of Zimbabwe / V. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

processing of meat and milk with the participation of agricultural combine "Machulishchi", which has already sent its proposal to the Zimbabwean side. "The cost of the project, if the contract is signed, will exceed \$26 million."²¹¹

In the energy sector, "the participation of Belarusian companies in the construction of hydro-technical facilities and the construction of turnkey solar panel power plants could be promising"²¹². A concrete step towards strengthening bilateral Belarusian-Zimbabwean scientific cooperation was the Memorandum of Understanding on Science, Technology and Innovation signed in Minsk in January 2019 between the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of Zimbabwe. This document provides for the establishment of a bilateral commission, which will deal with the formation of potential joint scientific projects. Despite the fact that the Zimbabwean market is new for Belarus, nevertheless we are already talking about the most promising areas of scientific cooperation. They speak, in particular, about joint projects "in the spheres of agriculture, medicine, machine and instrument engineering and energy"²¹³.

Speaking about the intentions of the parties to develop cooperation in education, we should immediately mention the Memorandum of Cooperation signed in January 2019 between the Ministry of Education of Belarus and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of Zimbabwe, which concerns cooperation in secondary special, higher education, science and technology. Note that "similar memoranda on their areas of cooperation have been concluded with the Belarusian

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusiju-dast-vozmozhnosti-dlja-razvitiia-ekonomiki-i-eksportnogo-potentsiala-333049-2019/>.

²¹¹ Matveev, V. New contracts for the supply of Belarusian equipment to Zimbabwe are being worked out / V.

Matveev // [Electronic resource]. 2019. -- URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prorabatyvajutsja-novye-kontrakty-na-postavku-belorusskoj-tehniki-v-zimbabve-333019-2019/>

²¹² Negotiations with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-prezidenta-respubliki-zimbabve-emmersonamnangagvy-20303/

²¹³ Belarus and Zimbabwe plan to create a commission on cooperation in science and technology [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/society/view/belarus-i-zimbabve-planirujut-sozdat-komissiju-po-sotrudnichestvu-v-nauke-i-tehnologijah-333035-2019/>

State University and the Republican Institute for Vocational Education of Belarus.²¹⁴ The appearance of these documents is dictated by the fact that "the developing trade and economic relations between Belarus and Zimbabwe must be accompanied by appropriate training."²¹⁵ Statistics says that today only six Zimbabwean students study at Belarusian universities. It is clear that in the near future there could and should be many more. The agreement on mutual recognition of educational documents by Belarus and Zimbabwe, which is being prepared by the parties, should contribute to such dynamics.

As we can see, the range of partnership ties between Belarus and Zimbabwe has expanded considerably over the past few years, which puts the urgent issue of establishing the Belarus-Zimbabwe intergovernmental commission for trade and economic cooperation, which could "better stimulate the implementation of the outlined plans,"²¹⁶ on the practical agenda of bilateral relations. We have to assume that 2019 will be the starting point in the activities of this much-needed formation today.

²¹⁴ Belarus and Zimbabwe signed a package of documents on cooperation in various spheres [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-zimbabve-podpisali-paket-dokumentov-o-sotrudnichestve-v-raznyh-sferah-333033-2019/>.

²¹⁵ Belarus and Zimbabwe are preparing an agreement on mutual recognition of educational documents [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/society/view/belarus-i-zimbabve-gotovjat-soglashenie-o-vzaimnom-priznanii-dokumentov-ob-obrazovanii-333074-2019/>.

²¹⁶ Negotiations with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-prezidenta-respubliki-zimbabve-emmersona-mnangagvy-20303/>.

9. Belarus - Algeria: a roadmap will outline partnership priorities

Algeria is one of the countries of the African continent, in the relationship with which the Belarusian side sees "significant potential for the development of bilateral relations."²¹⁷ In February 2018, the head of the African country's foreign ministry visited Belarus for the first time in the history of Belarusian-Algerian relations, established back in October 1995, during which the parties agreed to establish economic relations between the countries and make them more intense, and signed the first intergovernmental documents in the history of bilateral relations, among which we should highlight the agreement on the creation of the Joint Commission for trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation. The first meeting of this new formation should take place back in 2018 to agree on a roadmap for Belarusian-Algerian cooperation.

Belarus's interest in Algeria can be explained by a number of serious circumstances. First of all, "it is the largest country on the African continent and shares borders with several countries, which opens up great opportunities for Belarus in the trade and economic sphere."²¹⁸ Algeria is the second largest Arab country after Egypt in terms of population - more than 40 million people. The country is rich in minerals, including natural gas and oil (9th and 16th in the world, respectively), which account for a large part of its gross domestic product and most of its exports. In addition, Algeria's most developed industries include electrical products, including smartphones, televisions and washing machines, as well as the production of medicines and foodstuffs. As a result, "Algeria's significant resource potential, fast-growing population, and robust and dynamic economy make it one of the new leaders of the

²¹⁷ Congratulations to the President of Algeria Abdelaziz Bouteflika on the Revolution Day [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidenta-alzhira-abdelj-aziza-buteflika-s-natsionalym-prazdnikom-10092/

²¹⁸ Meeting with Algerian Foreign Minister Abdelkader Messahel [Electronic resource]. - 2018. URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/search_ru/getExtendedResults/?query=&search_type=type_all_words&group=0&from_day=20&from_month=2&from_year=2018&to_day=20&to_month=2&to_year=2018&search_type_sort=desc&search_ok.x=34&search_ok.y=8&search_mode=&search_node=news&search_node_id=374&search_title_name=events

Arab-Muslim world.²¹⁹

This current development trend of this African state is eloquently complemented by the fact that politically, "Algeria remains one of the few countries in the Arab world that has not been affected by destabilization and has retained the ability to conduct an independent foreign policy."²²⁰ The new Algerian government, formed after the May 2017 parliamentary elections, has prioritized the country's economic development in order to focus "more efforts on economic diversification in the near future, as we cannot be completely dependent on rising oil prices on international markets."²²¹ In this regard, the pragmatism of the visit of Algerian Minister A. Messahel to Belarus and the establishment of the Joint Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation, which "will serve as a basis for further development of economic cooperation between our countries,"²²² is obvious.

Statistics of the Belarusian-Algerian trade and economic cooperation show that the maximum trade turnover between the parties was recorded in 2012, exceeding \$22 million. Belarusian exports to this African country reached a record high of over \$18 million a year earlier. It was based on trucks, tractors, rolled metal products, nitrogen fertilizers, petroleum products and tires. It is believed that "MTZ JSC has achieved the greatest success at the Algerian market among Belarusian enterprises - assembly production of Belarus tractors, which are then sold at the local market,"²²³ has been operating in Algeria for several years. To be absolutely accurate, the assembly production of the Belarusian tractors was organized in 2011 on the basis of the Algerian company Belarus Motors Algérie in the Algerian governorate of Setif. But in the following years, the trade turnover between the countries became negative, which

²¹⁹ Zherlitsyna N.A. Strategic Partnership between Russia and Algeria in the Crisis: Potential and Challenges / N.A. Zherlitsyna // University Herald. - 2015. - №8. - C. 24.

²²⁰ Balmasov, S. Algeria: Russia's "Anti-Crisis" Partner in the Arab World / S. Balmasov // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: https://islam-today.ru/islam_v_mire/bliznij-vostok/alzir-antikrizisnyj-partner-rossii-v-arabskom-mire/.

²²¹ Algeria's new prime minister has prioritized the country's economic development [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://russian.news.en/2017-05/26/c_136318214.htm

²²² Transcript of the approach to the press by Belarusian Foreign Minister V. Makei following his meeting with Algerian Foreign Minister A. Messahel (February 20, 2018, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa7a52a6923d31941bf.html

²²³ National exposition of Belarus in Algeria [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belinterexpo.by/about/news/nacionalnaya-ekspozitsiya-belarusi-v-alzhire.html/>

forced the parties to approach the restoration of the former positions in the interaction in a much more systematic way. And the establishment of the Joint Belarusian-Algerian Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation is only the first step in this direction.

The next step in this direction is to build up inter-parliamentary ties, so that "parliamentarians of the two countries will actively form the legal framework for Belarusian-Algerian cooperation."²²⁴ And this step will be taken soon, because "we are already working on signing: the convention on avoidance of double taxation, agreements on trade, economic, military, technical and investment cooperation, as well as agreements on cooperation in agriculture and veterinary medicine,"²²⁵ which should help intensify bilateral relations, as well as increase supplies from Belarus. Domestic products such as tractors and other agricultural equipment, trucks, buses, dump trucks, nitrogen fertilizers, tires, meat and dairy products, dried milk, and timber are seen among the growth points of Belarusian exports to that African country.

We would like to emphasize that the Belarusian side is particularly interested in the agricultural sector, because "Algeria is the world's second largest importer of dairy products,"²²⁶ which buys tens of billions of dollars worth of such products annually. The consumption of dairy products of various kinds is traditional here and constitutes a significant part of the daily diet of the population. Households spend up to a quarter of their budget on purchasing dairy products. It is a fact that a significant part of dairy products in Algeria is produced from powdered milk imported in large quantities from abroad. At the same time, it is working to develop its own dairy industry. That is why "in the current circumstances, it would be advisable for Belarusian enterprises to focus not only on the promotion of finished dairy products, but also on the establishment of joint ventures whose products can be sold both in the domestic Algerian market and in

²²⁴ Savko, S. Myasnikovich offers Algeria to intensify interparliamentary cooperation / S. Savko // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/miasnikovich-predlagaet-alzhiru-aktivizirovat-mezhparlamentskoe-sotrudnichestvo-290692-2018/>

²²⁵ Belarus - Algeria [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://egypt.mfa.gov.by/ru/blr_algeria/

²²⁶ Belarus Algeria prospects [Electronic resource]. 2017. -- URL: <https://belarus24.by/news/economics/belarus-alzhir-perspektivy/>

the markets of neighboring countries.²²⁷

Another promising area of interaction is education, because since Soviet times, "more than 400 Algerian specialists with higher and secondary special education, as well as 14 candidates of science have been trained in Belarusian educational institutions.²²⁸ And today there are all the prerequisites to continue this cooperation, in the framework of which the Belarusian side is ready to provide training and organize internships in the areas of interest to the Algerian side, including engineering and technical, as well as in such areas as agriculture, medicine and military science.

One of the most important areas for the actualization of Belarusian-Algerian cooperation in 2018 should also be the intensification of the exhibition and fair activities of the two countries. Specifically, as part of the aforementioned visit to Belarus by Algerian Foreign Minister A. Messahel, Belarusian exporting companies were "invited to exhibitions held in Algeria.²²⁹ At the same time, the Algerian side expressed its firm intention to take part in the upcoming Belagro international exhibition in Minsk in the summer of 2018.

The actualization of the exhibition and fair vector in the development of the Belarusian-Algerian partnership appears to be due to the successful holding of the first national exposition of the Republic of Belarus at the 50th international exhibition FIA-2017, which took place in Algiers in May 2017 and gathered "about 1,000 companies from 40 countries.²³⁰ The fact is that this exhibition is really the largest and most authoritative exhibition event in Algeria. In addition to Belarus, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, South Africa, Turkey, Japan, and the United States of America were represented at it with their national expositions alone. All in all there were 28 countries. Russia was chosen as the guest of honor at the

²²⁷ Algeria [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://export.by/algeria>

²²⁸ Belarus - Algeria [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: http://egypt.mfa.gov.by/ru/blr_algeria/

²²⁹ Grishkevich, A. The first meeting of the Belarusian-Algerian commission will be held this year in Algeria /

A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/pervoe-zasedanie-belorussko-alzhirskoj-komissii-projdet-vet-etom-godu-v-alzhire-290659-2018/>.

²³⁰ Belarus and Algeria have all the prerequisites for expanding cooperation - Rachkov [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-alzhir-imejut-vse-predposylki-dlja-rasshirenija-sotrudnichestva-rachkov-247000-2017/>.

exhibition.

Such large industrial enterprises as Gomselmash OJSC, MAZ OJSC, the management company of Belavtomaz holding, Kozlov Minsk Electrotechnical Plant OJSC, and Minsk Tractor Plant OJSC became participants of the Belarusian national exposition at the FIA-2017. In particular, with regard to the technique of the Belarusian automakers, "representatives of the municipal services of Algeria noted the achievements of Minsk plant in the design and assembly of municipal machinery, in particular <...> ditch washer MAZ-4926W2."²³¹

The collective stand of the Belarusian State Committee on Science and Technology presented more than 120 scientific and technological developments developed in subordinate organizations: the Ministry of Education - the Belarusian State University, Science and Technology Park "Polytechnic" of the Belarusian National Technical University, the Belarusian Institute of System Analysis, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus - SSE "Institute of Powder Metallurgy," JSC "NGO Center", RUE "SPC NAS Belarus on Mechanization of Agriculture

The Belarusian State University alone presented more than 20 developments of scientific and technical products at the national exposition. The visitors were especially interested in such of them as: equipment complex for production of products from flexible, integral and rigid polyurethane foams and application of sealing contour from polyurethane and silicone compositions; veterinary preparations based on recombinant regulatory animal proteins; technology of pre-sowing treatment of vegetable, grain and medicinal crops seeds and forest plantation seeds. "Visitors were also actively interested in educational opportunities at BSU. During the exhibition more than 40 talks were held with representatives of enterprises, organizations, scientific institutions, business circles, private individuals of Algeria."²³²

The National exposition of the Republic of Belarus was able to get acquainted with quite a number of visitors, ranging from producers of agricultural products in

²³¹ FIA 2017 exhibition in Algeria [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://avtotehnolog-tula.ru/fia-2017>

²³² International exhibition "FIA 2017" - results of BSU participation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://research.bsu.by/2017/05/17/fia-2017-the-results-of-bsu-participation/>

Algeria to representatives of large companies. "Algerian business circles showed interest in the developments of Belarusian scientists in the field of agricultural engineering, electrical industry, alternative energy, creation of new materials, production of absorbent materials, medicines.²³³ It brought specific results: during the national exposition "10 memorandums of intent and 3 cooperation agreements were signed."²³⁴ In particular, memorandums of cooperation were signed between Minsk Tractor Works OJSC and Belarus Motor Algeria, as well as between the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and potential partners. In addition, the Belarusian State University and the Huari Boumediene University of Science and Technology came to the conclusion on the need to develop an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation, and the structural units of these universities - the Sevchenko Institute of Applied Physical Problems and the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Solutions - signed a protocol of intent to conduct joint research and development in the field of applied physical problems.

Overall, participation in the 50th International Industrial Exhibition FIA-2017 allowed the Belarusian side to demonstrate to its potential partners from Algeria the high level of scientific and innovative potential of the Republic of Belarus, a wide range of scientific and technical areas, which can form the basis of the roadmap for Belarusian-Algerian cooperation that the parties are developing today. Participation of Belarusian companies and organizations in Algerian exhibitions in 2018 can bring a lot of new interesting ideas and projects to cooperation between Belarus and Algeria.

One of them - the 51st International Industrial Exhibition FIA-2018 - will again bring together about a thousand companies from more than 40 countries at the SAFEX Exhibition Center in May 2018. Among them are manufacturers of machinery and equipment for metallurgy, machine building, energy, construction, mining and chemical industries, chemical products for agriculture, construction materials and

²³³ National exposition of the Republic of Belarus at the international exhibition FIA-2017 in Algeria [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: https://www.cci.bv/ru/content/2017_news_99

²³⁴ The 50th International Industrial Exhibition "FIA 2017" (May 8-13, 2017, Algiers) [Electronic resource]. 2017. --URL : <http://www.belisa.org.bv/ru/actions/exhibitions/b694dbc47be304e0.html>

technologies, products and technologies for the pulp and paper, rubber and textile industries, railway vehicles and cars.

Such thematic diversity within a single exhibition is characteristic of modern Algeria, which currently needs "modernization and construction of new facilities for supplying cities and towns with drinking water, construction of new sewage treatment plants. The national government is also planning the development of public infrastructure.²³⁵ Suffice it to say that in the next few years Algeria is going to invest seven billion dollars only in the railroads. In addition, the modernization will affect the existing airports and sea harbors. The government also plans to create joint ventures in the petrochemical industry. With the participation of foreign investors, new power plants using natural gas and alternative energy sources as fuel, as well as gas and oil pipelines will be built in Algeria.

Note that in general, 2018 promises to be a very rich year in terms of the organization of international exhibitions in a wide variety of thematic areas in Algeria. As a rule, they are held in the capital, a port city, where "the engineering, food, textile, chemical and oil refining industries are developed.²³⁶ Thus, the first decade of April is scheduled for the exhibition of food, beverages, equipment and technology for the food industry DJAZAGRO 2018, the exposition of which is usually presented delicacies, confectionery and bakery products, food additives and ingredients, food processing and production technology.

The last decade of April is the time of BATIMATEC Expo 2018, the international exhibition of construction machinery and materials, which this year celebrates its 20th anniversary. During this time, it has become "the largest construction industry event in Algeria, with major agents, distributors and government representatives"²³⁷, as it already covers most of the main sectors of the construction industry. Other major sections of its exposition include plumbing and carpentry

²³⁵ FIA 2018 - 51st International Algerian Industrial Exhibition [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.expoclub.ru/db/exhibition/view/6754/>.

²³⁶ Exhibitions on the region of Algeria [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://worldexpo.pro/region/alir>

²³⁷ BATIMATEC Expo 2018 [Electronic resource]. 2018. -- URL access: <https://worldexpo.pro/exhibition/batimatec-expo-2018>

equipment, climate control systems, walling and flooring materials, and home security equipment. Three more major exhibition events will take place in this African country in the second half of 2018. In the last decade of September is the third international exhibition of products and services for mines and quarries MICA 2018, which will bring together more than 70 exhibitors. Simultaneously with it will take place the North African pharmaceutical industry forum Maghreb Pharma Expo 2018, where pharmaceutical ingredients and pharmaceutical products will be presented in a wide variety.

Finally, the Algeria Electricity & Water Expo 2018, which will be held for the tenth time, is scheduled for early December. This is the largest forum dedicated to the electric power sector in Algeria, whose role in this African country is constantly growing. The fact is that back in 2002, energy reforms were initiated here, which brought dozens of foreign companies to the Algerian soil. But even now, "to maintain and meet the growing demand for electricity, which is increasing annually by 2-4 percent, Algeria needs to add 1,500 MW annually in new generating capacity and related infrastructure, such as transmission lines and substations."²³⁸ Perhaps for this reason, too, the Algerian government recently signed a contract with an Egyptian electrical company to build 550 kilometers of high-voltage power lines.

The problem of constant shortage of drinking water is no less urgent for Algeria. Let us remind you that here about 80 percent of the country is located in desert zones, where the amount of precipitation is practically zero. This is why the upcoming exhibition in December arouses interest among manufacturers and consumers in the field of power engineering and water management. It is quite possible that Belarusian exporters in these areas should take advantage of this interesting opportunity to promote their business interests in the Algerian market.

²³⁸ Algeria Electricity & Water Expo 2018 [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://worldexpo.pro/exhibition/algeria-electricity-water-expo-2018>

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