

The window of opportunity and new ideas

Currently, there are five embassies of the Republic of Belarus operating in Africa, which generally cover key regions of the continent. In West Africa there is Nigeria, which is the economic leader in the region. In East Africa there is Kenya, where there are certain prospects for the Belarusian side to increase trade turnover and the entire range of cooperation. In North Africa, there is Egypt, where the Minsk automotive plant project for the establishment of assembly facilities is under consideration. South Africa is South Africa, where a project to assemble cars from Minsk Tractor Plant, which will be put on the market under the local brand, is already underway in 2021. And another thing: between South Africa and Eastern Africa is Zimbabwe, where the Belarusian embassy appeared in 2022. All these African regions have one important feature: there is a large concentration of minerals and natural resources, including rare-earth metals, which are of interest to large countries and not only. So, for Belarus, its presence on the African continent is of a systemic nature. What is relevant in this regard? We are talking about it in the materials of the proposed study.



Boris Zalessky

Professional experience in journalism - fifty years. For twenty years he worked as an associate professor at the Department of International Journalism of the Faculty of Journalism at the Belarusian State University. Areas of research: modern international relations; international journalism and media cooperation.



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The window of opportunity and new ideas

The implementation of the features of economic multifaceted cooperation

Boris Zalesskij

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Cover image: www.ingimage.com

This book is a translation from the original published under ISBN 978-620-6-14801-2.

Publisher:

Scienza Scripts

is a trademark of

Dodo Books Indian Ocean Ltd. and OmniScriptum S.R.L publishing group

120 High Road, East Finchley, London, N2 9ED, United Kingdom

Str. Armeneasca 28/1, office 1, Chisinau MD-2012, Republic of Moldova, Europe

Printed at: see last page

ISBN: 978-620-5-93474-6

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"Eurasian AgroExpress: First results are encouraging

In February 2023, at a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council, held in the Kazakh city of Almaty, the heads of government of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) supported a proposal of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) to include in the joint integration project "Eurasian AgroExpress" the traffic carried out along the international transport corridor "North-South" in the direction of Turkmenistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of India. The point is that "without stably functioning logistics, adapted to the new geopolitical realities, the prospects for the development of our [EAEU countries] economies will not be bright. <...> For the North-South corridor to work, it requires the full-scale involvement of all participating countries."¹

It should be noted that due to the reorientation of a number of transport routes, the demand for the North-South corridor is increasing significantly. Pilot shipments to Iran and India made within the framework of the project have confirmed the attractiveness of the direction. The EAEU countries here have great potential for expanding their transit and export potential. Especially since the exceeding of the planned indicators of the Eurasian AgroExpress in its first year of operation is very encouraging. "A total of 525.5 thousand tons were transported under the project in 2022, including 282.9 thousand tons of refrigerated cargo. The nomenclature of goods included chicken and beef meat, milk powder, oil and fats, fruits and vegetables, and leguminous products"². Even despite the current

¹ Golovchenko: full-scale involvement of EAEU countries in the work of the North-South corridor [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-nuzhno-polnomasshtabnoe-vovlechenie-stran-eaes-v-rabotu-koridora-sever-jug-548158-2023/>

² Pivovarov, E. The project "Eurasian agroexpress" will include transportation to Turkmenistan, Iran, UAE and India / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-proekt-evrazijskij-agroekspress-vkljuchat-perevozki-v-turkmenistan-iran-oae-i-indiju-548163-2023/>

restrictions from China on the supply of products in connection with the pandemic, multimodal transport to this country was very active.

Of course, at the meeting of the intergovernmental council there were also a number of aspects that hinder the effective work of the project. In particular, the problem concerns obtaining permits for the import of frozen products into China by overland rail routes through the Dostyk - Alashankou and Altynkol - Khorgos border crossings. Its solution could give a significant advantage in terms of the cost and time of cargo delivery compared with multimodal transport through the ports of the Far East. In this regard, the EEC has been instructed to work with the authorized bodies of the concerned EEU member states to reach agreements with China on eliminating restrictive measures and optimizing customs and other administrative procedures.

But in general, during the implementation of the joint project "Eurasian AgroExpress" its participants are already reaching common parameters, a unified approach to this issue. This refers to the point of collection and localization of loading. After all, the EAEU partners from third countries have their own special requirements. That is why the project participants must be perfect, supply perfect and at the same time meet all the requirements of the receiving party, and at the same time it is necessary to ensure the seamless passage of such a container train at all stages. "It has to be ready for shipment at a specific time in a specific place. Therefore, we need to synchronize the processes. This will ensure predictability of train formation, fulfillment of plans"³. And at the top of the list is to serve the interests of manufacturers and enterprises, which are engaged in transport and logistics schemes.

Recall that in February 2022, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council at a meeting in the capital of Kazakhstan supported the implementation of a joint

³ Legal relations in the currency sphere, common industrial policy and "Eurasian agroexpress": what are discussed in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pravootnoshenija-v-valjutnoj-sfere-edinaja-prompolitika-i-evrazijskij-agroekspress-chto-obsuzhdajut-v-547995-2023/>

project of the EEU countries to implement accelerated rail and multimodal transport "Eurasian AgroExpress", aimed at increasing the volume of mutual supplies and exports of agricultural products and food, as well as its diversification. In this case it was, first of all, about deliveries of oil and fats, dairy, meat, fruit and vegetables and ready-made food products. "This joint project envisages the launch of two full trains per week along the route Belarus - Russia - Kyrgyzstan - Kazakhstan - China, including trains with refrigerated containers for frozen products. The monthly volume of transportations in the direction of China can be about 10 thousand tons"⁴.

In September 2022, the directorate of the Eurasian AgroExpress project, ANO Eurasian AgroLogistics, and the Russian Trading Company (RTC) in China, Hua No E Xiang, signed an agreement on cooperation, which sets out the general legal framework for practical assistance in developing foreign trade in food products of the EAEC on the so-called "last mile", in the contour of the Chinese sales market, including a wide range of services that can be provided to suppliers from the "Five" countries. The parties "agreed to jointly work out demanded trade services in conjunction with the transport and logistics complex of services, including the organization of fast and affordable transport of goods in containers, providing for multimodal solutions, assistance in finding, selecting and negotiating with the Chinese buyer, a gradual transition to digital format and the provision of a range of services from "supplier to counter"."⁵. The projected annual volume of shipments under the project "Eurasian AgroExpress" by the beginning of 2023 was expected to be about 500 thousand tons. The observed growth in sales volume in 2022 allowed the project's logistics operators to already send route trains almost daily on a schedule with long-term competitive tariff rates.

⁴ Zalesky, B.L. "Eurasian agroexpress" as a tool to diversify export supplies / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVIII Mezinardni vedecko-prakticka conference "Dny vedy - 2022". Volume 3: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 21.

⁵ The trade instrument of the "Eurasian AgroExpress" project will be the Russian trade company in China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/torgovym-instrumentom-proekta-evraziyskiy-agroekspres-stanet-rossiyskaya-torgovaya-kompaniya-v-kita/>

"The Eurasian electric bus begins its journey

The Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) proposed that the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) conclude an agreement on import substitution and develop a corresponding Eurasian development program. In this regard, the EEC has already formulated the Union's "map of industrialization," which already includes 158 projects in 25 industries worth more than \$270 billion. Also this map includes 669 technological directions in 30 sectors. Let's remind that "in 2021-2022 25 projects on import substitution to the total sum of more than \$21 billion have already been realized in the union - it is automotive, machine-tool, electrical, chemical, metallurgical, medical, pulp and paper industries, as well as the production of lifting and transporting, lifting equipment, construction and road, special and municipal equipment"⁶. In 2023, another interesting project in terms of import substitution should find its "face" in the EAEU. The Eurasian electric bus, a pilot project of industrial cooperation initiated by the Belarusian side, has been launched on the site of the industrial block of the EEC. The project "is aimed at maximizing the import independence of the union and involving as many industrial enterprises of the union member states as possible in the cooperation process"⁷.

The decision to launch the pilot project "Eurasian electric bus" was made in mid-July 2022 at the EEC Council meeting. "At the first stage, lists of critical components, units and materials for the production of electric buses and companies of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) that have the necessary in-house production and technological capacity will be formed"⁸. This will not

⁶ Pivovarov, E. EEC proposes to conclude a separate agreement on import substitution in the EAEC / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eeek-predlagaet-zakljuchit-v-caes-otdelnyj-dogovor-po-voprosam-importozameschenija-548223-2023/>

⁷ Golovchenko: it is necessary to work on achieving technological sovereignty within the EAEC [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-neobhodimo-rabotat-nad-dostizheniem-tehnologicheskogo-suvereniteta-v-ramkah-caes-548144-2023/>

⁸ Pivovarov, E. Implementation of the pilot project "Eurasian electric bus" began in the EAEC / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/realizatsiya-pilotnogo-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-nachalas-v-caes-521716-2022/>

only create a basis for a full-scale launch of the project, but also assess the possibility of reorientation and adaptation of the production of components and components intended for other types of passenger vehicles - buses, trolleybuses - for their further use in electric buses.

In early September 2022 it was decided to form a special working group, which included representatives of state bodies of the union countries, manufacturers of vehicles with electric motors and automotive components, as well as scientific circles of the member states. In October 2022 approaches to the implementation of the joint project "Eurasian electric bus" were discussed by representatives of the EEU countries at an offsite meeting of the expert group in the automotive industry under the EEC Advisory Committee on Industry, which was held on the site of the Belarusian holding "Belkommunmash". Members of the expert group confirmed the interest in the development of electric transport in the EEU countries, noting "the need to concentrate efforts on organization of production of critical components, units and materials for electric buses, such as traction electric motors and their control systems, energy storage systems, bridges. It is suggested that the EAEU should consider setting up production of cells for high-voltage batteries used in electric transport"⁹. In addition, it was agreed that the Belarusian side would send a list of investment projects in this field, which are being developed in the Republic of Belarus, for consideration by experts of the EEU states in order to analyze specific proposals for the implementation of joint projects for the production of components for electric buses.

The proposal was actively supported at the meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in Yerevan in October 2022. After all, the implementation of the Belarusian initiative and the solution of financing issues, both funding and incentives, should launch "an irreversible process of further

⁹ Pivovar, E. Experts of the EAEU countries discussed at Belkommunmash the implementation of the project "Eurasian electric bus" / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksperty-stran-eaes-obsudili-na-belkommunmashe-realizatsiju-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-528846-2022/>

development of the industrial sphere, the real sector of the economy in our states on the principles of technological sovereignty. Eurasian integration should primarily ensure the interests of industrial enterprises, domestic business of the real sector of the economy"¹⁰. The implementation of this project with relatively cheap credit resources will make it possible to create strong cooperative chains between EAEU member states, develop relevant competencies. It is clear that "electric transport is high-performance jobs, so everyone will benefit from it"¹¹.

In February 2023, at a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in Almaty, a discussion was held at which it was noted that "at present, possible details of the implementation of this project are being worked out on the platform of the EEC. We need not only to determine the partners for cooperation (such proposals have already been received from Belarus), but also to prepare all the necessary documents so that in the future these projects could qualify for some benefits in terms of financing"¹². At the next meeting of the EEC Council with the participation of vice prime ministers of the EEU countries, which took place in February 2023, the recommendation "On measures to develop cooperation between the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union in the formation and implementation of projects in the field of electric vehicles" was approved.

This document contains the main basic approaches to the cooperation of the member states for the development of electric transport production in the Union and measures to enter specific joint projects for the production of components. The recommendation also fixes the formed lists of critical components and organizations that have the necessary production potential. "First of all, it is necessary to develop competencies in electric buses, because

¹⁰ Golovchenko: there should be more projects to create innovative products under the Eurasian brand [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-proektov-po-sozdaniyu-innovatsionnogo-produkta-pod-evrazijskim-brendom-dolzno-byt-bolshe-530593-2022/>

¹¹ About \$20 million a year will be allocated to support cooperative projects in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/okolo-20-mln-v-god-budut-napravljat-na-podderzhku-kooperatsionnyh-proektov-v-eaes-530531-2022/>

¹² Pivovar, E. EEC discusses the details of the project "Eurasian electric bus" initiated by Belarus / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eeek-obsuzhdaet-detali-initsirovannogo-belarusju-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-548208-2023/>

such products are already produced in most countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and demand for them is stimulated mainly through government procurement <...> Further work in this direction will be continued, but the main focus is planned to be on the formation of potential cooperation projects with the elaboration of the possibility of subsidizing interest rates on loans at the expense of the Commission"¹³ . In addition, in the course of work on this issue there were proposals of Belarus to consider the experience of member states in the construction of charging complexes, including chargers for charging electric buses, electric trucks and electric cars. In addition, this issue will be studied at the site of the Commission on cooperation and import substitution in the priority and high-tech industries within the Union. And if necessary, the possibility of creating a joint cooperation project will be considered by the interested member states. So the Belarusian project "Eurasian electric bus" has already really started its way.

¹³ The EEC Council approved measures to develop cooperative cooperation between EEU countries in the electric vehicle industry [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sovet-eek-odobril-mery-po-razvitiyu-kooperatsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-stran-eaes-v-elektromobilestroev/>

Eurasian Economic Union - Africa: To unlock competitive advantages

The Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) considers cooperation with the countries of Africa and regional and subregional associations of this continent as an important and priority direction of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) international activities, which should be intensified, primarily with the participation of the business community. Strengthening economic ties and creating conditions for developing competitive advantages are key objectives in this area. The EEC is engaged in a dialogue with the African Union under the Memorandum of Understanding between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the African Union on Economic Cooperation of October 24, 2019. Note that "in 2021, the Union's foreign trade turnover with Africa increased by 21.9% (to \$18.9 billion), exports by 24.0% (to \$15.4 billion) and imports by 13.7% (to \$3.5 billion)."¹⁴.

In the context of the EAEU's interaction with regional and sub-regional associations of the continent, the first working meeting of EEC and **the Economic Community of Central African States** (ECCAS) officials took place in June 2022. This is an integration association of Central African countries, established in 1983, which includes Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe and the Republic of Congo. "The stated objectives of the organization are the development of integration processes between member countries, promoting their comprehensive deepening, relying on their own economic forces, moving towards the creation of a common market. In addition to the "classical" set of integration tasks,

¹⁴ Sergey Glazyev: "I invite the African continent to cooperate with the EAEU in creating a new financial and economic architecture. [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sergey-glazev-priglasayu-afrikanskiy-kontinent-k-sotrudnichestvu-s-eacs-v-sozdanii-novoy-finansovo->

ECCAS also deals with the functions of strengthening peace and stability, combating terrorism and piracy, support of electoral processes in the community."¹⁵ . This year, the parties hope to take new steps toward a more substantive dialogue aimed at practical interaction.

In terms of specific countries on the African continent, in 2023 the EEC plans to intensify cooperation with a number of African states, including **Egypt**, **the Republic of South Africa (RSA)** and **Ethiopia**.

As for **Egypt**, this country has already actively entered into negotiations with the EAEU to establish a free trade zone. "This African state will be the first to have a joint industrial infrastructure with the EAEU, the creation of which will be a window for the countries of the integration association to promote <...> industrial products in Africa and the Middle East."¹⁶ . The signing of this agreement in the near future will open up opportunities for large-scale diversification of trade and expansion of cooperation both in traditional areas, and in building new logistical and financial ties, joint solution of technological transformation issues, which are determined by the climate agenda and the tasks of technological sovereignty. For reference: EAEU trade with Egypt "in the first half of 2021 increased by 32.5% compared to the same period last [2020]. In particular, EAEU member states' exports to Egypt during this period increased by almost 40% (from \$1.4 billion to \$1.95 billion), while imports from Egypt to the EAEU increased by 11% (from \$437 million to \$489 million)."¹⁷ . In 2022, trade turnover grew by almost another 40 percent. So, in the near future, the parties will really be able to "make significant progress on the key issue - on the parameters of mutual reduction of import duties, as well as on the preparation of

¹⁵ The economic community of Central African states shows interest in interaction with the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/ekonomicheskoe-soobshchestvo-gosudarstv-tsentralnoy-afriki-proyavlyayet-interes-k-vzaimodeystviyu-s-e/>

¹⁶ Zalessky, B. With an Emphasis on Cooperation. Chronicle of International Cooperation in the Post-Soviet Space / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. - C. 24.

¹⁷ Andrey Slepnev: "EAEU and Egypt expect to hold a full-fledged round of free trade negotiations in the near future. [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-eaes-i-egipet-rasschityvayut-na-provedenie-polnocennogo-raunda-peregovorov-o-svobodnoy-torgovle-v-blizhayshey-perspektive/>

the final text of the draft agreement"¹⁸ . And there are plans to increase the scale of economic cooperation between the EAEU and Egypt, which in the near future could facilitate the emergence of new joint and effective projects.

South Africa stands out among the countries of the African Union for the high level of development of key areas of agriculture, such as cattle breeding, fish farming, fruit and wine production. South Africa pays special attention to soil conservation and efficient farming, applying advanced agro-technical achievements. This has allowed the country to fully meet its domestic food needs. In January 2023, the EEC proposed to create a Eurasian industrial zone on the territory of South Africa, which could become an entry point to the still undeveloped markets of the African continent by producers of the EAEU. The parties agreed that "to implement the agreements reached, the first step will be consultations between representatives of the EEC and interested authorized officials of South Africa, which will allow the parties to reach a new level of exchange of successful practices of agricultural production, solve problems of creating modern, competitive industrial and agro-industrial complexes, increase the volume of mutual trade"¹⁹ . In addition, the development of agricultural production (fruits) and seafood, material and technical resources, in particular agricultural equipment, as well as winemaking may be areas of cooperation of mutual interest. Stimulation of investment in the agro-industrial complex will help to increase the efficiency of agricultural production and develop infrastructure. The more so since the dynamics of mutual trade between the EAEU and South Africa in agricultural raw materials and foodstuffs show growth opportunities. And the potential for this interaction between the parties is enormous.

¹⁸ Andrey Slepnev: "Trade and economic relations between the EAEU and Egypt continue to develop at an accelerated pace. [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-torgovo-ekonomicheskije-otnosheniya-eaes-i-egipta-prodolzhayut-razvivatsya-uskorennymi/>

¹⁹ EEC and South Africa will discuss the creation of a Eurasian industrial zone in South Africa and intensify cooperation in agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-yuar-storony-obsudyat-sozhdanie-v-yuar-evraziyskoy-promyshlennoy-zony-i-aktiviziruyut-vzaimodey/>

Another African country that intends to continue active engagement with the EAEU in 2023 is **Ethiopia**. A memorandum of understanding between the parties on economic cooperation was concluded in October 2019. This country is a traditional EEC partner in Africa. "The trade turnover between EEU member states and Ethiopia in January - October 2021 increased 4.7 times compared to the same period in 2020. This is of particular importance in connection with the plans to double trade turnover with the countries of the continent"²⁰. Note that such goods from Ethiopia as flowers, textiles, coffee, beans are traditionally in demand and competitive in the EAEU market. Apparently, in 2023 the parties intend to involve the business community in the dialogue in order to raise their awareness about the possibilities of using the EEU single system of tariff preferences for developing and least developed countries, as well as about certain aspects of supranational regulation within the EEU. After all, Ethiopia is particularly attractive to investors due to the Chinese New Silk Road passing through its territory, as well as the growth rate of the Ethiopian economy. Thus, the parties have a serious reserve for increasing trade, economic and investment cooperation.

²⁰ EEU and Ethiopia discussed plans for developing cooperation in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022.
- URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-efiopiya-obsudili-plany-razvitiya-sotrudnichestva-na-2022-god/>

Eurasian Economic Union - China:

Understanding of approaches allows to plan perspectives

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is the main trade partner of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The agreement on trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and the PRC was signed in May 2018 and entered into force in October 2019. In December 2021, the 2nd meeting of the Joint Commission on the implementation of this agreement noted that "the volume of mutual trade in 2021 will exceed the pre-pandemic level and reach a record \$165 billion, demonstrating the high intensity and mutual complementarity of trade relations"²¹. Then, discussing the progress of preparing a roadmap for the implementation of the agreement between the EAEU and the PRC, the parties highlighted the development of digital transport corridors as the main section of this document, since the digitalization of railway transportation can have a cumulative effect. The issues of green trade and green investment were not left out, where the Chinese side proposed to strengthen cooperation between the PRC and the EAEU on the global climate agenda, as well as the prospects for cooperation in three areas, which relate to intellectual customs, intellectual customs borders and intellectual interconnectivity. At the same time, the Chinese side expressed its willingness to share its experience in implementing the concept of "three intellectual spheres", which is based on the modern technological mode with the use of new methods, systems and equipment, for the purpose of customs control and management.

In 2022, trade turnover between the parties as a whole grew by almost 30 percent and exceeded \$200 billion. At the same time, exports from the EAEU countries to China increased by about 40 percent. Among the industrial commodity groups, natural gas, hard coal and processed timber showed strong

²¹ Zalessky, B. Priority - concrete projects. Chronicle of Integration Interaction in the Post-Soviet Space tve / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing. - C. 31.

growth in supplies to the Celestial Empire. Agricultural exports included rapeseed oil, frozen fish, crustaceans and poultry meat. "As for imports, the most frequent imports from China this [2022] year were gas liquefaction equipment, trucks, cars, crawler excavators, tires and tires, air conditioners, **and** from agricultural products, sunflower seeds, tomatoes, plant extracts, peaches, onions, vegetable and fruit juices. "²² .

In February 2023, the third meeting of the Joint Commission for the Implementation of the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EAEU and the PRC was held, where topical issues of cooperation in trade, competition and sectoral cooperation were discussed, and new impetus was given to pairing the Chinese initiative "One Belt, One Road" with the EAEU development plans. As part of the event, a roadmap was signed aimed at intensifying and saturating trade and economic cooperation between the countries in practical terms. In more detail, this "map" "includes three sections: digitalization of transport corridors, dialogues on foreign trade policy, as well as a joint scientific study on the effects of different scenarios for deepening EAEU-China cooperation."²³ .

With regard to the first section, the measures in this plan involve a gradual transition to electronic exchange of documents for rail freight shipments using electronic digital signatures, which will greatly simplify trade procedures and speed up the transportation of goods between the parties. It is also envisaged to develop cooperation in the customs sphere and in veterinary and phytosanitary control. As for the sea and automobile transport it is planned to exchange experience in the sphere of electronic logistic information. In particular, the

²² EAEC trade turnover with China grew by almost 30% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://trans.ru/news/tovarooborot-eaes-s-kitaem-viros-pochti-na-30-protsetov>

²³ Andrey Slepnev: "EAEC and China will simplify cargo transportation by rail through the introduction of electronic document management. [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-eaes-i-kitay-uprostyat-perevozku-gruzov-po-zheleznym-dorogam-za-schet-vnedreniya-elek/>

parties "agreed to continue promoting the Eurasian AgroExpress project aimed at accelerated transportation of food products from the EAEU to China by rail."²⁴.

The second section of the roadmap focuses on the formation of a sustainable dialogue on trade policy, which has a significant impact on international trade. In addition, prospective areas "for discussion during 2023-2024 have been agreed upon: the climate agenda, foreign trade development strategies of the EAEU and PRC, international practice in the application of domestic market protection measures, and e-commerce" .²⁵

The third section involves a comprehensive analysis of the effects of different scenarios for deepening trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU member states and China. In particular, at the third meeting of the commission a proposal was made to establish and develop cooperation between the stock exchanges of the EAEU states and the Shanghai Stock Exchange. In addition, the Chinese side expressed its "intention to actively promote cooperation on the capital market with the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, indicating a willingness to provide financial structures and investors from the EAEC a wider range of opportunities."²⁶ . The parties also stressed the importance of developing cooperation and exchange of experience on improving legislation in the regulation and supervision of financial markets, on methodology to increase mutual settlements in national currencies, on the analysis of ways of interaction of payment systems and the implementation of joint projects. Understanding the approaches in these areas will allow to coordinate further joint agenda of the EAEU and the PRC in the near future.

²⁴ Andrey Slepnev: "EAEC trade turnover with China in 2022 exceeded 200 billion dollars. [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eacunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-tovarooborot-eaes-s-kitaem-po-itogam-2022-goda-prevysil-200-mlrd-dollarov/>

²⁵ On the Third Meeting of the Joint Commission on the Implementation of the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EAEC and the PRC [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ec528af998b30528.html

²⁶ The EAEU and China have expressed mutual interest in developing cooperation between exchanges [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eacunion.org/news/eaes-i-kitay-vyrazili-vzaimnyy-interes-k-razvitiyu-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-birzhami/>

Belarus-Africa:

Continued cooperation will be effective

Belarus intends to increase supplies to far-abroad countries. At a meeting at the Council of Ministers back in July 2022, a task to redirect export flows in the amount of not less than \$16 billion was set. "The volume of Belarus' exports to the distant arc countries following the results of five months is still quite modest. <...> A comprehensive strategy for cooperation with the countries of the far arc, plans for interaction between embassies and industries have been adopted..."²⁷. In this context, such actively developing continent as Africa is of great interest to Belarus nowadays.

Note that "by early 2022, the Republic of Belarus had established diplomatic relations with 51 countries of the African continent."²⁸. Statistics states that in 2021 Belarus' trade turnover with African countries amounted to half a billion dollars, of which 480 million dollars were Belarusian exports. "Our country supplies primarily engineering products, agricultural, quarry and truck equipment. There is also demand for the products of the Belarusian Metallurgical Works"²⁹. It is quite understandable. For the Belarusian industry, the African market is one of the most promising markets for its products. Suffice it to say that "in January-November 2022 the export of the Ministry's enterprises to the African continent increased more than 1.5 times. <...> Agricultural machinery produced in Belarus is very popular and has proved to be the best among African consumers, who note the high quality of Belarusian tractors and

²⁷ Roman Golovchenko: Belarus intends to increase supplies to far-abroad countries [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10368>

²⁸ Zaleski, B. Perimeter of the Far Arc. The Potential of Sustainable Partnership in Solving Multi-vector Interaction. / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 177.

²⁹ Nikolajczyk: Belarus systematically and purposefully expands its presence in Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nikolajchik-belarus-planomerno-i-tselenapravlenno-rasshirjaet-svoe-prisutstvie-v-afrike-547784-2023/>

other agricultural equipment"³⁰ . For reference: from 60 to 80 percent of the population of African states are engaged in agriculture, so for them an important role plays its modernization, mechanization, ensuring food security and technology in this area. Another promising direction of relations with African partners is educational services. "Now about 1.6 thousand students from African countries are studying in Belarus. <...> They are primarily interested in studying medical, technical and agricultural specialties"³¹ .

As for the diplomatic presence of the Belarusian side, there are currently five embassies of the Republic of Belarus in Africa, which generally cover key regions of the continent. In West Africa there is Nigeria, which is an economic leader in the region. In East Africa there is Kenya, where the Belarusian side has certain prospects for increasing trade turnover and the entire spectrum of cooperation. In North Africa, there is Egypt, where the Minsk automotive plant project for the establishment of assembly facilities is under consideration. South Africa is South Africa, where a project to assemble machines from Minsk Tractor Plant, which will be put on the market under the local brand, is already underway in 2021. Finally, between South Africa and Eastern Africa is Zimbabwe, where the Belarusian embassy will appear in 2022. All these African regions have one important feature: there is "a sufficiently large concentration of minerals, natural resources, including rare earth metals, which are of interest to large states and not only. Countries such as Russia, China and the United States are quite actively involved in the implementation of various projects on the

³⁰ Belarusian industrial enterprises signed a package of documents on cooperation in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prompredpriyatija-belarusi-podpisali-v-zimbabve-paket-dokumentov-po-sotrudnichestvu-547368-2023/>

³¹ Together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we are evaluating the potential of cooperation with Africa. What are they interested in from us? [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vmeste-s-mid-otsenivaem-potentsial-sotrudnichestva-s-afrikoj-chto-im-interesno-u-nas-547795-2023/>

territory of Africa.³² . So for Belarus, its presence on the African continent is of a systemic nature.

For example, several years ago, Zimbabwe embarked on a course to modernize its agriculture. And since 2020, the Belarusian side began supplying machinery as part of the agricultural mechanization program of this South African country. An enterprise has already been set up here that not only sells but also services the equipment. Spare parts supply, training of local farmers to drive and maintain these machines have been organized. In 2022, "we [the Belarusian side] actually completed the second phase of this program. There is already an agreement that we will participate in the third phase as well. Again, for tens of millions of dollars. <...> The second line of machinery supplies is related to the fact that in addition to the agricultural sector, Zimbabwe is also actively developing the mining industry. The first BELAZ trucks were delivered more than five years ago and are still successfully working in the quarries"³³ .

As for other African countries, supplies of Bobruiskagromash tractors and attachments, Lidagroprommash sprayers, and Gomselmash harvesters to Nigeria were considered for 2022. The Belarusian side "is interested in the market of South Sudan, Zambia, Malawi, and Egypt. There is a demand for Belarusian municipal and forestry machinery, as well as special-purpose machinery"³⁴ . An interesting promising area for cooperation with African countries is the construction of grain drying complexes, as well as the creation of assembly facilities for agricultural, automotive and road machinery.

³² Foreign Ministry: Belarus missions cover key regions of Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mid-predstavitelstva-belarusi-ohvatyvajut-kljuchevyeregiony-afriki-547191-2023/>

³³ Ambassador of Belarus on cooperation with Southern Africa: we must come here seriously and for a long time [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-belarusi-o-sotrudnichestve-s-jugom-afriki-sjuda-nado-prihodit-serjezno-i-nadolgo-547179-2023/>

³⁴ Parkhomchik, P. Belarusian industry under sanctions / P. Parkhomchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/beloruskaja-promyshlennost-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-ministr-o-borbe-s-novymi-vyzovami-planah-po-proizvodstvu-i-8121/>

African markets are also being systematically developed by Bellesbumprom Concern's enterprises, which are actively expanding the geography of supplies. In 2022, the Concern's organizations first shipped products to Tunisia. Development of African markets began in 2015 with Egypt. "Concern companies also supply products to Algeria, Kenya, and Morocco. Among the key commodity items are paper and cardboard. Exports in 2022 compared to 2021 in monetary terms increased by 20%" .³⁵

And the continuation of this policy will be very effective.

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³⁵ Enterprises of Bellesbumprom Concern systematically develop African markets [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/predpriijatija-kontserna-bellesbumprom-planomerno-osvaivajut-rynki-afriki-547390-2023/>

Belarus - Zimbabwe:

Cooperation can be multifaceted and have good results

At the end of January 2023, Belarus and Zimbabwe signed in Harare a memorandum of understanding between the parties on mutual recognition of educational documents. And they see quite great prospects for cooperation in various areas of inter-university cooperation. "This applies to the training of specialists with higher education in such areas as the agricultural sector, mechanical engineering and medical technology. Something that is in demand in any country. Given that today Zimbabwe is a very dynamically developing country, they need personnel in the first place."³⁶ . During the visit of the Belarusian delegation to this African state the parties discussed training specialists as for scientific sphere and high technologies, as well as for medium level specialties, as it is important for Zimbabwe in view of the supplies of high-tech equipment from Belarus to this country and the development of industrial cooperation. We should remind that "at the initiative of Emmerson Mnangagwa the program "Vision 2030" is being implemented, which includes specific measures to mechanize, industrialize Zimbabwe, improve the level of education, quality of medical services and living standards of the population in general"³⁷ . So, Belarusian education services in this country will come in handy.

For example, the Belarusian State University (BSU) presented a wide range of scientific and innovative cooperation with Zimbabwean partners at the business forum "Expanding Horizons: Dynamic Solutions for Economic Development" in the capital of Zimbabwe. BSU cooperates with this African country within the framework of a memorandum of understanding signed in

³⁶ Ivanets sees great prospects for cooperation between Belarus and Zimbabwe in education [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ivanets-vidit-bolshie-perspektivy-dlja-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-zimbabwe-v-sfere-obrazovanija-547599-2023/>

³⁷ Mikolajczyk: We managed to significantly increase the intensity and efficiency of contacts with Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nikolajchik-nam-udalos-znachitelno-narastit-intensivnost-i-effektivnost-kontaktov-s-zimbabwe-547791-2023/>

2019 with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, Science and Technological Development. Today, this collaboration is intensifying. In Harare, BSU signed six memorandums of understanding with Zimbabwean universities at once: 1) University of Zimbabwe; 2) Open University of Zimbabwe; 3) Lupane State University; 4) National University of Technology and Science; 5) Harare Institute of Technology; and 6) Chinhoyi University of Technology. In these documents, the parties plan to "develop academic exchanges of students and specialists, take part in research and educational projects, exchange materials, plans, publications and other relevant information." .³⁸

As for cooperation proposals, BSU initiated more than 20, which relate to the fields of medicine, pharmaceuticals, water management, water purification, geology, mineral exploration, biotechnology, ecology, and soil science. In particular, we are talking about the production of pharmaceuticals, ultrasonic gas meters, services to solve the applied problems of the mining industry, the treatment of polluted water. "In the field of agriculture, joint projects to study the impact of soil salinity on plants and crops and the impact of climate change on the environment could be promising. Interaction in the field of education is seen in the training of citizens of Zimbabwe in the Institute of Further Education, training in English at the master's degree, postgraduate courses, adult education programs"³⁹ . It is also proposed to develop and implement joint educational programs, participate in scientific conferences, organize guest lectures and internships for teachers and students from Zimbabwe.

The Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU) has also signed memorandums with leading Zimbabwean universities. The fact is that the economy of this country needs specialists, which BNTU trains, so the interest in

³⁸ The First Arrangements of BSU and Zimbabwean Universities [Electronic Resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://bsu.by/news/pervye-dogovorennosti-bgu-i-vuzov-zimbabve-d/>

³⁹ Cooperation is intensifying. BSU has signed six memorandums with Zimbabwean universities [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sotrudnichestvo-aktiviziruetsja-bgu-podpisal-shest-memorandumov-s-vuzami-zimbabve-547721-2023/>

the Belarusian university is particularly high. The parties are interested in conducting joint research, technology transfer and transfer of experience in the organization of the BNTU technopark, as well as in creating technoparks at universities in Zimbabwe. In addition, "the implementation of joint educational programs is planned in such promising areas as architecture, civil engineering, mechanical engineering and robotics, and in the future cooperation in other sectors is also possible.⁴⁰ .

Memorandums of Cooperation with leading educational institutions of the Republic of Zimbabwe - National University of Technology and Science, Harare Institute of Technology, Chinhoyi University of Technology, University of Zimbabwe, Lupane State University, Open University of Zimbabwe - were signed in January 2023 and the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU). ⁴¹Interaction with these partners involves the development of such forms of cooperation as "exchange of experience in the field of education and promoting the exchange of students, undergraduates and graduate students; development of faculty exchange; development of joint research projects in areas of mutual interest; training citizens of the Republic of Zimbabwe in joint educational programs; training in master and doctoral programs; internship

All these facts indicate that Belarus is attractive to Zimbabwe for its intellectual potential. So cooperation between educational institutions of the two countries can be multifaceted and have good results.

⁴⁰ Technology Transfer and Joint Research. How BNTU plans to cooperate with universities in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/transfer-tehnologij-i-sovmestnye-issledovanija-kak-bntu-planiruet-sotrudnicat-s-vuzami-zimbabve-547979-2023/>

⁴¹ Igor Voitov, Rector of BSTU, signed Memorandums of Cooperation with Zimbabwean Universities [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belstu.by/news/university/university/rektor-bgtu-igor-vojtov-podpisal-memorandumyi-o-sotrudnichestve-s-universitetami-zimbabve>

Free Economic Zone "Brest": With a positive balance and new ideas

At the end of 2022, the annual volume of exports by residents of the Free Economic Zone (FEZ) "Brest" exceeded one billion dollars for the first time. At the same time a surplus of 460 million dollars was secured, which is 44 percent of the volume of products shipped outside of Belarus. This means that FEZ residents exceeded the export target by almost three percent. More specifically, "3.7 times increased the export of products LLC Accumulator Alliance, almost 5.5 times - Barhim, more than 1.7 times - IE Vastega, 1.4 times - IE Inko-Food, 2.5 times - Condor. JV "Santa Bremor" and "STM" Ltd. exported their products by 18% more than last year. Export supplies of the Brest Stocking Mill increased by 16%"⁴². On the whole, the share of FEZ residents in the total volume of export of Brest Oblast enterprises was 28 percent. Apparently, the positive dynamics will continue in 2023. Santa Bremor is planning to increase its physical volume of production by over seven percent, Gefest-Technika by eight percent, Involux by nearly 20 percent, and Polypol Mebel Bel by nearly 10 percent. In addition, 42 residents of the FEZ in 2022 continued to invest in production.

The year 2023 also got off to a good start in the FEZ. In January, the first resident of this year was registered here - JSC SanSpectr, which will be engaged in implementation of the investment project on creation of the transport and logistics complex "West-East". This project will be organized on a stretch of railroad tracks near Brest-Severnoy station and will focus on providing a wide range of logistics services - warehousing and storage of cargoes, forwarding, customs and other services. The term of implementation - five years. The company with the Belarusian capital intends to invest more than seven and a

⁴² The annual export volume of FEZ "Brest" residents exceeded \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/godovoj-objem-eksporta-rezidentov-sez-brest-prevysil-1-mlrd-547421-2023/>

half million Belarusian rubles and create about 20 new jobs. "The project has already been launched. The repair of the access roads has begun. It is planned to build the supplying tracks, to equip additional container sites, to buy expensive special equipment. At the same time the company is working on its own services certificate. It will help to attract new operators and expand the railway container transportation market.⁴³ . It is expected that new and reconstructed infrastructure facilities for storage of containers and their transshipment to vehicles, will provide additional opportunities to solve problems associated with the lack of capacity of Polish railroads and the need to switch to another gauge. Thus, the transport and logistics complex will contribute to the "elimination" of bottlenecks in the processing of container trains within the Brest railway junction, running in the East-West-East direction.

In the same January 2023, Brestmash, a FEZ resident, introduced a new line of social purpose vehicles, including a school bus, a social service vehicle, and an ambulance. The new line of vehicles is of interest to the social services of the city. In December 2022, "the territorial social service center of the Moscow district of Brest bought a new car manufactured by Brestmash OJSC for use as a "social cab". The car is equipped with a device for smooth lifting and lowering of the wheelchair, which facilitates transportation of people with disabilities"⁴⁴ . In the future about 500 units of special automotive equipment of 26 models will be assembled at the production facilities of Brest FEZ resident. These are commercial vans, cars for patrol and dog services, for transportation of people with disabilities and ambulances. The production capacity of the plant allows to assemble up to two thousand cars per year.

⁴³ The first resident of this year was registered in FEZ "Brest". [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervogo-v-etom-godu-rezidenta-zaregistrovali-v-sez-brest-547274-2023/>

⁴⁴ Brest resident of FEZ "Brestmash" OJSC "Brestmash" presents a new line of social cars [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/rezident-sez-%C2%ABbrest%C2%BB-oao-%C2%ABbrestmash%C2%BB-prezentuet-novuyu-linejku-soczialnyix-avtomobilej>

Another example. In 2011, OJSC "Baranovichi Production Cotton Association" became a FEZ resident. The enterprise will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2023. In January this year, at a meeting attended by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, the association's development strategy for the next five years was considered. It is one of the largest textile manufacturers in Europe and CIS, which includes spinning, weaving, finishing and garment factories and employs about 1200 people. In recent years this FEZ resident has already completed several stages of modernization, which allowed increasing the level of automation of the production process, developing new types of products and achieving high-quality prints of any complexity. In the face of stiff competition in this industry, where Asian manufacturers traditionally have strong positions, "in Baranovichi the entire cycle of fabric manufacturing will be preserved. The company plans to expand the production of polycotton. By adding acrylic, the fabric will acquire special antibacterial, non-flammable properties."⁴⁵ . So the strategy of the association will be implemented further - in line with a powerful innovative modernization, to take the company to a new level of development.

Recall: today FEZ "Brest" already "includes 16 sites, which are located in Brest and Brest district, Kobrin and Kobrin district, Ivatsevichy and Ivatsevichy district, as well as Pinsk, Gantsevichy and Drohiczyn"⁴⁶ . At the beginning of February 2023 there were already 76 enterprises from 16 countries acting as residents. This shows that FEZ "Brest" continues to actively address the issues of increasing the export and innovation component in order to contribute to the dynamic development of the entire Brest region.

⁴⁵ The BPCS development strategy was discussed with the participation of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/strategiya-razvitiya-bpxo-obsuzhdalas-pri-uchastii-premer-ministra-respubliki-belarus>

⁴⁶ Zalesky, B. Staking on effectiveness. Peculiarities of economic relations of Belarus with Asian partners / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 48.

Free Economic Zone "Grodnoinvest": New residents, logistics, infrastructure

Free Economic Zones (FEZ) of Belarus accounted for almost a quarter of Belarusian exports in 2022. And this despite the fact that there were 427 residents registered in the six FEZs on January 1, 2023. Speaking about the types of activities of the FEZ residents, last year "manufacturing industry was the most common - 86.4%. The transport industry is involved 2.9% of the residents, trade - 2.4%, real estate - 2.4%, agriculture, forestry and fishing - 2.4%, construction - 1%, water supply, collection, processing and disposal of waste - 0.7%, professional, scientific and technical activities - 0.7%"⁴⁷. In the **FEZ "Grodnoinvest"** in 2022 actively developed such areas of activity of residents as woodworking, production of chemical products, mechanical engineering, metalworking.

Last year, five companies were registered as residents of the FEZ. The total volume of declared investments for the implementation of projects amounted to about 30 million dollars. Implementation of the declared investment projects will allow creating about 180 new jobs with decent wages. Firstly, the company "Krones-Grodno" organized a multi-profile production of furniture and wood products in Grodno at the site near Grandichy. The project will build a new complex including production, storage and administrative premises and purchase modern technological equipment. Secondly, "another new resident - VIMZOVPLAST LLC - will create a modern plant in the regional center for the production of a wide range of products from synthetic polymers and quartz agglomerate. The products are import-substituting and will be sold within the special legal regime of the FEZ through the development of

⁴⁷ Free Economic Zones accounted for 22.3% of goods exports last year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/svobodnye-ekonomicheskije-zony-v-proshlom-godu-obespechili-223-eksporta-tovarov-550537-2023/>

cooperative ties with the residents of the Belarusian FEZ..."⁴⁸ . Thirdly, Barinpak company implements the project on production of ecological packaging from wood-fiber boards of high density in Grodno region at the site in the area of Novaya Gozha. The products are intended for export to the countries of near and far abroad, but some will be sold in Belarus as part of the country's gradual transition from polyethylene packaging of goods to environmentally friendly packaging. The first batch of the products has already been produced and was highly praised at the republican contest of innovative projects.

Another important area of activity of the residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" in 2022 is logistics. Suffice it to say that last year alone, six residents worked in the field of logistics in the FEZ, which was the largest number among similar structures. In 2022, the establishment of industrial and logistics enterprises, in particular, declared "Terminal West" and "Unionway", which implement investment projects in the industrial areas of Grodno and Svisloch. In addition, last year the FEZ administration and the Arab company BRIKOIL TRANS-T.Z.E. signed a memorandum of intent to develop the existing transport and logistics terminal in the Grodno region.

In February 2023, the seventh resident of Grodnoinvest FEZ in the logistics sector became ZapadTransGranitsa LLC, which will build an international trade and logistics complex near Grodno airport. The project, located near the agricultural town of Obukhovo, is to complete the construction of an unmaintained air terminal building with partial demolition. "The company plans to create a complex of administrative and warehouse premises, build access roads, parking lots and taxiways for aircrafts, as well as a cargo apron. This unique complex will be multi-modal and will use the potential of the automobile and air transport. The first phase of construction will be completed by the end of 2025. In total more than \$35 mln. will be invested into the

⁴⁸ 5 new residents registered in FEZ "Grodnoinvest". [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/5-novyx-rezidentov-zaregistrirovano-v-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2022-godu/>

realization of the project, about 100 working places will be created"⁴⁹. This complex will enable to use logistics potential of Grodno region, attract investments to create a multimodal center, which has no analogues in the region, involve in the economic activity the building of the airport terminal, which is not completed, attract tourists and foreign trade companies, thereby stimulating local business activity and trade turnover.

And more. In 2022 the administration of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" built and put into operation seven new infrastructure facilities. New roads and communications were built at the FEZ sites in the cities of Grodno and Smorgon, as well as in Grodno district. In the area of Grodno, in the Auls district, street No. 7 was reconstructed, its landscaping was carried out. The construction of the traffic circle at the intersection of Street No. 1 and Skidel Highway has been completed. "The projects of 12 enterprises-residents of the free economic zone for the production of construction materials, chemical and woodworking products are being successfully implemented here. Next year [2023] Grodno Glass Works, a unique production facility for Belarus, will be launched"⁵⁰. Three parking lots for 30 cars were built and commissioned in Grodno District at the Novaya Gozha site. The reconstruction of Industrialny prospect in Smorgon continued at the expense of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" development fund. The 3rd start-up complex worth over two million Belarusian rubles was put into operation, a traffic circle and pedestrian connections, outdoor lighting, storm sewerage, household water supply system were installed. The implemented complex of works allowed to significantly improve the capacity of cargo traffic of FEZ residents, to improve the quality of transport logistics and to ensure an adequate level of road safety in this area.

⁴⁹ FEZ resident "Grodnoinvest" will build an international trade and logistics complex [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-postroit-mezhdunarodnyj-torgovo-logisticheskij-kompleks-550573-2023/>

⁵⁰ 7 infrastructure projects implemented in 2022 by the administration of FEZ "Grodnoinvest". [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/7-infrastrukturnyx-proektov-realizovano-v-2022-godu-administraciej-sez-grodnoinvest/>

In 2023, it is planned to design and build engineering infrastructure in the areas of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" for a total of about seven and a half million Belarusian rubles. This will increase the investment attractiveness of Grodno region for the implementation of new projects and improve conditions for the existing enterprises-residents of the FEZ.

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Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: partnership addresses - Singapore and Uzbekistan

In the near future, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) will become an even more urgent task to increase supplies of Belarusian goods to Asian countries. Statistics show that "in the first 10 months of 2022, exports of domestic products through the BUCE to a number of Asian countries increased significantly: to Singapore - 6.6 times, <...> to Uzbekistan - 30 times"⁵¹. Apparently, in the near future interaction with these two Asian states will only be strengthened.

As for **Singapore**, nine companies from this Southeast Asian country are now accredited to the BUTB. Previously, Singaporean firms participated in the exchange trading exclusively as buyers. Mostly, companies from Singapore buy Belarusian skimmed milk powder. Recently, there has also been an increased demand for wood products. In particular, "in 2022 exchange exports of lumber to Singapore amounted to \$9.3 million, which is an order of magnitude higher than in 2021"⁵². By the way, a number of Singaporean firms regularly participate in special trading sessions to sell Belarusian lumber products for export with delivery to the destination country.

In 2023, special attention will be paid to the development of the Singapore direction. At the end of January the goods of Singapore manufacturers are presented for the first time at the trading floor of the BUTB. The matter in question is the sale of high-tech industrial equipment at the BUTB import substitution platform. The bid for the purchase placed by one of the Belarusian industrial flagships has attracted manufacturers of laser equipment from

⁵¹ Zalessky, B.L. Cooperation with an emphasis on effectiveness / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVIII International scientific and practical conference "Conduct of modern science - 2022", November 30 - December 7, 2022: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 11.

⁵² Goods of Singapore producers will be presented for the first time at the auction of the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovary-singapurskih-proizvoditelej-budut-vpervye-predstavleny-na-torgah-butb-547522-2023/>

Singapore, who are interested in working in the domestic market. To this end, two new Singaporean companies have already been accredited at the exchange. And in the near future the first bids for sale will be placed. It is expected that the placement of bids for sale of import-substituting products made in Singapore in the trading system of BTUB will contribute to creating a favorable competitive environment and reduce the costs of the Belarusian companies engaged in procurement to the exchange trading. In the future, there are plans to further develop exchange trade with this state that is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which is so far a net importer of Belarusian goods.

Talking about development of prospective cooperation with **Uzbekistan** it should be noted that in February 2023 the first joint training seminar organized by the BUCE and the Uzbek National Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange (UZRTSB) took place. As a result seven Uzbek companies were accredited as brokers of the BUCE. In 2022, the sum of exchange deals concluded by Uzbek companies on BUCE grew 29 times. This suggests that exchange trade between Belarus and Uzbekistan is developing at an accelerated pace, moving up to a qualitatively new level. And it should be understood that the joint efforts of the BUOTB "with the brokers of the Uzbek Commodity Exchange will expand the range of Uzbekistan residents using the Belarusian exchange platform, establish trade in new commodity positions and thereby give an additional impetus to bilateral cooperation in the trade and economic spheres.⁵³

During the seminar, it was noted that the accreditation of brokers of a foreign exchange is a completely new form of inter-exchange cooperation, the use of which will provide a powerful synergy effect and bring real practical benefits to Belarusian and Uzbek business entities. Interaction should not be limited to the markets of Belarus and Uzbekistan. The Belarus Republican Commodity Exchange sees the URTSB as a strategic partner, through

⁵³ Seven Uzbek companies are accredited as brokers at the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-v-kachestve-brokerov-akkreditovany-sem-uzbekskih-kompanij-550602-2023/>

cooperation with which one can not only increase commodity turnover between the countries but also get access to other promising markets. In particular, Uzbekistan could become a kind of springboard or an intermediate platform for Belarus to enter Central Asia, where timber, petrochemicals, and agricultural products are in high demand. All of this is produced in Belarus and could be supplied to the region through the exchange platform. The seminar dedicated to the prospects of Belarusian-Uzbek exchange trade was attended by 20 professional participants of the exchange commodity market of Uzbekistan. The Uzbek specialists found out about all aspects of broking activities in the Republic of Belarus, including the order of accreditation at the exchange, possible work schemes and legal framework. The participants of the event exchanged experience in brokering and discussed possible areas of cooperation, including with the involvement of Belarusian logistics operators.

Another interesting partner of BUTB in Uzbekistan in the near future will be the Fergana region. The fact is that companies from this Uzbek region are interested in using the Belarusian import-substituting platform, as "the exchange platform can become a valuable information resource for companies from the Fergana region that would like to supply import-substituting goods to Belarus, and will also simplify the purchase of Belarusian products demanded in Uzbekistan"⁵⁴. After all, the exchange trading platform is interesting, first of all, as a marketing tool, with the help of which one can assess the volume of supply and demand, get up-to-date information about prices and, most importantly, find new business partners. In Uzbekistan, as well as in Belarus, they pay close attention to the issues of localization of production and import substitution, so if the parties manage to establish cooperation in this area, it will certainly contribute to the growth of trade turnover between the two countries.

⁵⁴ The Fergana Province of Uzbekistan is interested in using the BUTB import substitution platform [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ferganskaja-oblast-uzbekistana-zainteresovana-v-ispolzovanii-ploschadki-importozameschenija-butb-549224-2023/>

Great Stone Industrial Park:

Current challenges dictate a window of opportunity

In the last days of 2022 the number of residents in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" reached the mark of 100. For reference, we note that "at the end of 2021, 85 residents were registered here"⁵⁵. In particular, the 99th resident was Yunchenbel LLC, whose founder is the large Chinese company SUMEC International Technology Trading. "The new resident will create an e-commerce platform allowing import and export of mechanical and electrical equipment"⁵⁶. And the Belarusian company "Human Kraft" will produce medical products - individual bone prostheses based on 3D-printing technologies, which will be used in surgery, traumatology, dentistry and in the treatment of cancer. Also, at the end of December 2022, agreements were signed on intentions to enter the industrial park as residents of LLC "Information Technology Foru" and LLC "Information Technology Tontun" (People's Republic of China).

In addition, at the end of 2022, the resident company IPD Group LLC signed a lease agreement for a universal production building of 5.5 thousand square meters in the industrial park. This deal was one of the largest in 2022 on the Belarusian industrial real estate market. "On these premises, a project for the development and serial production of high-tech data processing and storage devices will be implemented. In particular, the company will produce computer equipment, server equipment, monitors, interactive smart panels. In the future, the resident plans to expand the range of import-substituting products"⁵⁷. A

⁵⁵ Zalesky, B. Partnership of flexible forms. Peculiarities of Eurasian cooperative dialogue in the context of global threats / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 5.

⁵⁶ The number of Great Stone residents reached 100 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kolichestvo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-dostiglo-100-542481-2022/>

⁵⁷ Velikiy Kamen finished the year with the largest deal [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-zavershili-god-krupnejšej-sdelkoj-542635-2022/>

total of 19 residents were registered in Great Stone at the end of 2022. Also. Last year, park residents exported their products for more than \$100 million to 20 countries.

In 2023, the Great Stone is expected to attract at least 20 residents. In January alone, several investors from Belarus have already registered. In particular, "very interesting projects in the field of veterinary products. And the second project is in the field of science, <...> in the field of nuclear energy"⁵⁸. At the end of January, Velikiy Kamen registered a new resident - LLC BaikalGroup. "A company with Chinese capital will create a transport and logistics center in the park <...>. The resident of the park plans to provide warehousing and logistics services, including storage, packaging, tracking, labeling..."⁵⁹. The goods will be delivered to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

In February 2023, three more new residents were registered in the industrial park: two with capital from Belarus and one from China. LLC "Heprotrade" will produce environmentally friendly thermal paper, the products of which will be widely used in sales and services. "The production capacity will be up to 300 tons per month. The implementation of the project will provide such products for the domestic market and reduce imports, as well as supply it for export"⁶⁰. The second resident in February - Rivex LLC - will produce innovative dressings and for sterilization, which are intended both for the domestic market and for the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. Bel-Nord Logistics LLC, whose founder is a Chinese company in the field of international logistics, one of the largest in the Inner Mongolia region, intends to

⁵⁸ "Great Stone" plans to attract at least 20 residents this year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-v-etom-godu-planiruet-privlech-ne-menee-20-rezidentov-547180-2023/>

⁵⁹ The new resident of Great Stone will create a transport and logistics center [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-sozdast-transportno-logisticheskij-tsentr-547574-2023/>

⁶⁰ Two more residents with Belarusian capital are registered in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/esche-dva-rezidenta-s-belorusskim-kapitalom-zaregistirovany-v-velikom-kamne-549664-2023/>

"develop the logistics infrastructure by building warehouses and introducing a wide range of services in this area. In addition, road transport of goods along the China-Europe route will be organized"⁶¹. This initiative will also help solve the most important strategic task - to expand the presence of Belarusian products in the Chinese market.

In just a month and a half of 2023, seven new residents have already been registered in Great Stone. And in total already for the duration of the industrial park "the total number is 107 residents with a planned volume of investments of \$1.3 billion"⁶². It is expected that in order to create additional conditions to attract new investors in 2023, work will continue to further improve the special legal regime of the park with a focus on the implementation of new high-tech projects, including in the field of traditional and innovative Chinese medicine. Promising projects are also planned in logistics, e-commerce, fine chemistry, biotechnology, instrumentation, research and development. In February 2023, at the meeting of the working group on the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park, it was noted that the Great Stone sites "can quickly increase the level of localization in the production of medical and technological equipment, transport and other areas, quickly replacing these products dropping out imports. To make the most of the existing potential, it is necessary to continue to actively develop the park, build infrastructure and declare the project on a global scale"⁶³. In short, the current challenges dictate a window of opportunity for the residents of the industrial park - in particular, and create additional competitive advantages for the promising development of the Belarusian economy - in general.

⁶¹ The new resident of Great Stone will develop international logistics [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-razvivat-mezhdunarodnuju-logistiku-551642-2023/>

⁶² This year Great Stone registered 7 new residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-etom-godu-velikij-kamen-zaregistroval-7-novyh-rezidentov-551821-2023/>

⁶³ Chervyakov: current economic challenges are a window of opportunity for Great Stone residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-tekuschie-vyzovy-ekonomiki-okno-vozmozhnostej-dlja-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-550498-2023/>

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