In line with new contacts

In December 2022 at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Bishkek the Main directions of international activity of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) for 2023 were approved, where in the context of the idea of the Big Eurasian Partnership the EAEU priorities will contribute to the implementation of the export potential of the Union. At the same time, international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as creation of conditions for joint access of member states' enterprises to third countries' markets. It should be recalled that by the middle of November 2022 the Eurasian Economic Commission had already signed 46 memorandums with international organizations. 27 memorandums with governments, ministries and departments of third countries, 14 memorandums with regional integration and interstate associations, and 7 trade agreements with third countries. In 2023, the EAEU will interact with such organizations as the CIS, the SCO. ASEAN, the African Union, as well as with the BRICS countries and the far arc. What steps in these areas are being taken, including in the Republic of Belarus, is discussed in the proposed study.



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In line with new contacts

Prospects for economic interaction in the context of global challenges

Boris Zalesskij

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Eurasian Economic Union: Partners' cooperation potential remains high

In December 2022, a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Bishkek approved the Main directions of the Eurasian Economic Union's (EAEU) international activities for 2023, where, in the context of the idea of the Greater Eurasian Partnership, the EAEU priorities will contribute to the implementation of the export potential of the Union's countries. "In doing so, the international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as the creation of conditions for joint access of enterprises of member states to third countries' markets".

As of mid-November 2022, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) had already concluded "46 memoranda with international organisations, 27 memoranda with governments, ministries and agencies of third countries, 14 memoranda with regional integration and interstate associations, and 7 trade agreements with third countries" In 2023, the EAEU will interact with the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union, the BRICS countries, as well as the World Customs Organization, the World Trade Organization, and the African Union. Priority will also be given to cooperation with a number of states, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iran and Indonesia.

¹ Zalessky, B.L. EAEU-ASEAN: to Develop Dialogue and Intensify Trade / B.L. Zalessky // Materials for XVII International Scientific Practical Conference, Scientific Potential for Light - 2022, 17 - 25 September 2022: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 7.

² Approved the Main Directions of the EAEU's International Activities for 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/utverzhdeny-osnovnye-napravleniya-mezhdunarodnoy-deyatelnosti-eaes-na-2023-god/

For example, in June 2022 the EEC signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the UAE Government. The EAEU considers this country to be one of the most promising partners for trade and economic cooperation in the Middle East. "According to the results of 2021, the dynamics of trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and the UAE are positive. The trade turnover increased by 60.9 per cent and reached \$6.3 billion, while the overall EAEU foreign trade turnover grew by 35.1 per cent"³. The parties agreed in the memorandum to increase the volume of mutual trade, as well as to implement measures aimed at eliminating barriers. The EEC and the UAE intend to cooperate in the areas of customs and technical regulations, application of sanitary, veterinary and phytosanitary quarantine measures, financial markets, transport, industry and agroindustrial complex, competition policy and antitrust regulation, and intellectual property.

In April 2022, the parties established a joint EEU-UAE study group to explore the prospects for a free trade agreement. In December 2022, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council decided to start negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EAEU and the UAE. Negotiations are planned to be conducted in an accelerated mode. The fact is that the formation of a free trade zone with the UAE will create conditions for the growth of supplies in more than 1,300 commodity items both in the industrial sector and in the agro-industrial complex. "The relevance of multifaceted interaction is confirmed by the high interest and presence of a large number of companies from the Union, including innovative ones, in the United Arab Emirates, as well as the role of this state as an

³ The EAEU and the UAE Government signed a Memorandum of Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-pravitelstvo-oae-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimodeystvii/

international trade and transport and logistics hub. In addition, the agreement with the UAE is seen in terms of strengthening the position of EAEU exporters in the countries throughout the Persian Gulf in the context of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and the North-South corridor" . ⁴

In January 2023, the EEC, discussing with the Emirati side issues of trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and the UAE, including prospects for increasing export-import supplies and diversifying trade, invited the UAE leadership and entrepreneurs to actively participate in the Eurasian Economic Forum, scheduled for May 2023. Note that, "According to the EEC, from 2015 to 2021, the volume of trade between EAEU countries and the UAE increased fourfold, EAEU exports to the UAE increased 4.7 times, while EAEU imports from the UAE increased by 47%. At the same time, trade turnover between January and October 2022 increased by another 55% compared to the same period in 2021." 5.

A new comprehensive trade agreement between the EAEU and **Iran** is also scheduled to be concluded in 2023, which will "give impetus to increase mutual supplies" 6. In this context, the prospects for long-term mutually beneficial cooperation in transport, cooperation in industry, agriculture and food security, among other

⁴ The EEU will start negotiations with the UAE on a free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-nachnet-peregovory-soae-o-zaklyuchenii-soglasheniya-o-svobodnoy-torgovle/

⁵ Pivovar, E. Negotiations on a free trade zone between the EAEU and the UAE are to be conducted at an accelerated pace [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/peregovory-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-mezhdu-eaes-i-oae-planiruetsja-vesti-v-uskorennom-rezhime-546918-2023

⁶ Andrey Ślepnev: "Today we have a serious incentive to develop regional agreements and regional connectivity". [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-segodnya-my-imeem-sereznyy-stimul-dlya-razvitiya-regionalnykh-soglasheniy-i-regionaln/

areas, are impressive. The future agreement will provide a strong contractual basis for these joint plans.

In terms of figures, "in 2021, trade turnover between the EAEU and Iran increased by 74%, and in the first 10 months of 2022 by another 25% compared to the same period of the previous year". In January 2023, the parties agreed on all issues to conclude negotiations and sign the agreement, with the exception of mutual market access for certain categories of agricultural products, for which discussions are still ongoing, but the issue will soon be closed.

Also. In September 2022, the EEC Council decided to start negotiations with **Indonesia** to conclude a free trade agreement in 2023. This country is the largest economy in ASEAN and the fourth most populous in the world, so trade relations with this Asian state have considerable potential. "The EAEU's trade turnover with Indonesia in 2021 increased by 41.5% to \$3.7 billion compared with 2020. At the same time, exports added 34.1% and imports increased by 44.5%". At the end of the three quarters of 2022, trade turnover between the parties grew by almost half, with exports by the EAEU countries increasing by more than two and a half times. And there is confidence that the liberalisation of trade conditions could allow trade turnover to increase by at least another \$1.5 billion.

In December 2022, the EAEU and Indonesia recorded an agreement to hold the first negotiating round in the first quarter of

⁷ Andrey Slepnev discussed in Tehran the completion of negotiations on a free trade area agreement with Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-obsudil-v-tegerane-voprosy-zaversheniya-peregovorov-po-soglasheniyu-o-zone-svobodnoy-/

⁸ Andrey Slepnev: "A business dialogue with Indonesia is proposed within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Forum in 2023". [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-v-ramkakh-evraziyskogo-ekonomicheskogo-foruma-v-2023-godu-predlagaetsya-provesti-bizn/

2023, stressing that the parties "have prospects both for agricultural goods, which traditionally make up the bulk of Union imports from Indonesia, and for the industrial group, actively traded in both directions" 9. So again, the potential for cooperation in 2023 remains high.

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⁹ The EEU and Indonesia launch negotiations on a free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-indoneziya-dali-start-peregovoram-po-soglasheniyu-o-svobodnoy-torgovle/

Belarus: to promote domestic technology

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus has approved the plan of national exhibitions in foreign countries for 2023. Belarusian expositions "will be organized to promote domestic technologies, scientific developments, goods and services in the foreign market" 10. In particular, Belarusian exhibitions will be presented in the countries of the "far arc". In this regard, the Asian continent is especially important, where there are still many opportunities for the Belarusian side to successfully use them to "continue systematic and consistent work, developing mutual interest and initiating new formats of contacts" 11. This is why Belarusian expositions will be organized in a number of Asian countries - Pakistan, Vietnam, and China - in 2023.

Recall that at the past International Trade and Industry Fair held in the Pakistani city of Karachi in November 2021, the Belarusian collective stand of the State Committee on Science and Technology presented about 60 scientific, technical and innovative developments. Exhibits in the field of surface treatment and modification, chemical technologies and materials, physical materials science and new materials were demonstrated by the institutions of the Ministry of Education as well as in the correspondence format by the organizations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. "Among the most interesting developments are the technology of obtaining optically selective

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¹⁰ The government approved the plan of Belarus' national exhibitions abroad for 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pravitelstvo-utverdilo-plan-natsionalnyh-vystavok-belarusi-za-rubezhom-na-2023-god-543280-2023/

¹¹ Zalessky, B. Horizons of the far arc. Potential of interaction of the Republic of Belarus with the countries of Asia and Africa / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 25.

composite absorbing coatings for solar collectors, smart windows on the bistable effect, multifunctional complex for preparation and automatic pouring of filled and unfilled multicomponent hybrid composite mixtures, technology of energy saving flat and flexible aluminium heaters with resistive element from carbon fibre" . ¹²

As for the Vietnam Expo, it is one of Southeast Asia's largest universal trade and economic platforms. The event is held alternately in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City under the auspices of the Vietnamese Ministry of Industry and Trade. "The topics of the exhibition are IT and telecommunications, science and education, engineering and industrial equipment, agriculture, pharmaceutical and medical products, construction materials, chemical products, light industry, consumer goods"¹³. Over 350 companies from 16 countries including China, the USA, Japan, India, Sri-Lanka, Indonesia, Cuba took part in this forum. Belarus presented more than 100 scientific, technical and innovative developments in the field of high-tech equipment at this forum.

Speaking about the China International Import Expo, which is held annually in Shanghai, it has already become the fifth in November 2022. Twenty-seven organizations from the food industry, logistics, science, and education took part in the Belarusian exposition. Belarus' pavilion at the import exhibition included "two main sections: food and agricultural products" and "high-tech

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¹² About 60 Belarusian scientific and technical developments will be presented at an international exhibition in Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: https://www.belta.by/tech/view/okolo-60-belorusskih-nauchno-tehnicheskih-razrabotok-predstavjat-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-v-pakistane-469010-2021/

¹³ More than 100 projects will be presented by Belarus at the Vietnam Expo [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-100-proektov-predstavit-belarus-na-vystavke-vietnam-expo-495765-2022/

equipment and information technology"¹⁴. The total area of Belarus' exposition was about 100 square meters. In 2023, it will become even larger.

In the new year, Belarusian expositions will also be presented on the African continent - in Algeria and Egypt. In particular, Algeria will host the FIA international exhibition. The Belarusian exposition at this exhibition forum was first organized back in 2017. Back then, Belarus was represented by products from the Ministry of Industry, including MAZ, Gomselmash and Minsk Electrotechnical Plant, as well as developments from the State Committee for Science and Technology, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Ministry of Education. "The Belarusian exposition at FIA 2017 attracted keen interest from representatives of Algerian state authorities, major private companies and enterprises, as well as the diplomatic corps. As a result of negotiations held during the exhibition, memoranda of cooperation were signed between MTZ JSC and Belarus Motor Algeria, as well as between the NAS of Belarus and potential partners."15 . In total, around one thousand companies from 40 countries took part in the FIA 2017 exhibition in Algeria. In 2023, it appears that there will be even more participants in the forum.

As for Food Africa Cairo, an international food and beverage fair annually held in Cairo, the Belarusian exposition will be organised there for the fifth time this year. In December 2022 the exhibition Belarus. The Taste of Nature was presented at the

14 China International Import Expo opens in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/world/view/v-shanhae-otkrylas-kitajskaja-mezhdunarodnaja-vystavka-importa-533320-2022/

¹⁵ Belarus and Algeria have all the prerequisites for expanding cooperation - Rachkov [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-alzhir-imejut-vse-predposylki-dlja-rasshirenija-sotrudnichestva-rachkov-247000-2017/

Egyptian International Exhibition Centre. As part of the exhibition, 14 Belarusian companies presented a wide range of dairy, meat, starch products, as well as baked goods. Grodnoyasomolprom Holding companies (JSC "Bellakt", JSC "Milk World", Lida Milk Canning Plant and its subsidiary Smorgon Dairy Products) showed their products to foreign visitors, Rogoznitsky starch factory, Volkovysk and Slonim meat processing plants), as well as the Skidel Agrocomplex, the Smorgon Bakery. Primilk LLC. Lidakhleboprodukt, Slutsk Cheese Factory and Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1"16. This year the list of exporters from Belarus will not get any shorter.

So, in 2023, Belarusian manufacturers hope for new interesting and effective contacts at a number of international fairs not only in Asia, but also in Africa.

16 Belarusian exposition presented at food exhibition in Egypt [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskaja-ekspozitsija-predstavlena-na-prodovolstvennoj-vystavke-v-egipte-538642-2022/

Belarus-Syria: the main thing - new points of growth

In November 2022, a Belarusian government delegation visited Syria to hold meetings and talks that will help expand and strengthen Belarusian-Syrian multifaceted cooperation. While discussing solutions that will allow the bilateral cooperation to reach a new, more productive level, the sides believe they have done "the most important thing - they have found new points for growth"17. After all, trade and economic cooperation between the two countries is developing today amid a difficult environment of economic sanctions against Syria, the destruction of transport and social infrastructure, an acute shortage of funds from the Syrian government and a decline in the purchasing power of the country's population. Nevertheless, "in 2021, the trade turnover between Belarus and Syria amounted to \$8.2 million (41.3% growth by 2020), exports - \$7.6 million (47.9% growth), imports - \$0.6 million (6.1% growth). The balance is positive - \$7.0 million. Belarus mainly exports to Syria specific goods, milk powder, milk whey, medicines, tractors and truck tractors, and imports olive oil, fruits and vegetables, nuts, coffee"18. But both countries are confident that there is still great potential for increasing the supply of machinery and expanding industrial co-operation. Let us remind that "the highest level of Belarus-Syria interaction was registered in 2008,

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¹⁷ Golovchenko: Belarus and Syria have found points of growth in bilateral relations [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-i-sirija-nashli-novye-

tochki-rosta-v-dvustoronnih-otnoshenijah-536719-2022/

¹⁸ Belarus and Syria intend to increase mutual trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-sirija-namereny-narastit-vzaimnyj-tovarooborot-536491-2022/.

when the volume of bilateral trade reached \$85.5 million"¹⁹. So it is time to talk about more serious joint projects with Syria.

Minsk and Damascus see the most urgent task in the current situation as developing trade and economic ties as quickly and extensively as possible. "From the Belarusian side, it is primarily technical assistance in the restoration of the Syrian economy and infrastructure after a decade of devastating war.²⁰ . And Belarus has a lot to offer Syrian friends. In this regard, it was interesting to see how Belarusian companies participated in the seventh international exhibition Rebuild SYRIA, which was held in the Syrian capital last fall.

Belarusian export-oriented enterprises from various sectors took part in the Belarusian exposition. They presented products required for the reconstruction of the Syrian economy, including novelties of production. After all, the country badly needs to restore its industry, agriculture, services, transport infrastructure, water and electricity supply systems, petrochemical industry, telecommunications. "In this regard, Syria needs engineering solutions, agricultural and construction equipment, software, medical equipment, medicines, food (milk powder, whey, potatoes) and much more"21. In particular, there is demand in this Middle Eastern country for Belarusian products - glazed cheese and milkshakes, as well as butter. In general, "the Rebuild SYRIA

¹⁹ Zalessky, B. Orientation - to result. Realizing the possibilities of international economic relations / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 42.

²⁰ Ambassador: Syrian partners are interested in Belarusian technologies, knowledge and skills [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-sirijskie-partnery-zainteresovany-v-belorusskih-tehnologijah-znanijah-i-umenijah-536593-2022/

²¹ Belarus to exhibit at Syria exhibition [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavit-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-v-sirii-516103-2022

exhibition includes such thematic sections as energy, construction, mechanical engineering, petrochemicals, agriculture, food industry, environmental protection, information technology, insurance and banking, education, health care"²².

The Belarusian exposition was presented by such well-known exporters as Minsk Dairy Plant No.1, Rechitsa Metizny Plant, AMKODOR, Ivatsevichdrev, and Minsk Automobile Plant. In particular, Minsk dairy enterprise offered "Syrian consumers a wide range of products: milk, butter, cream, skimmed milk powder, whey, glazed curds, curd desserts, soft and hard cheeses. A special attention is paid to the novelty of the production - glazed curd cheeses without added sugar, the only such product in Belarus" Rechitsa Metizny Plant displayed metallurgical fastening products: nails, staples, bolts, screws, nuts, self-tapping screws, screws, rivets, axles and many others.

Machinery from the Minsk Automobile Plant was on display in the outdoor exhibition area: tippers, tractors, and concrete mixers. These machines are designed to perform a wide range of works and are suitable for the Siberian conditions of operation. For the record, Belarus has already provided humanitarian aid to Syria in June 2022. "A batch of MAZ trucks and construction machinery was handed over to the Syrian side. The Belarusian-made vehicles were used to

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²² Belarus to take part in international exhibition in Syria [Electronic resource]. - 2022.

- URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-v-sirii-519355-2022/

²³ Machine building, metallurgy, food: what Belarus presented at the exhibition in Syria [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mashinostroenie-metallurgija-produkty-pitanija-chto-predstavila-belarus-na-vystavke-y-sirii-526268-2022/

restore the industrial and civil infrastructure in the hardest-hit areas of Syria." 24 .

Another growth point is innovative cooperation between Belarus and Syria. In August 2022, a meeting of the Belarusian-Syrian commission for cooperation in science and technology was held, where the participants "considered the issues of cooperation in nano- and biotechnologies, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, technology transfer in agriculture, food, medicine pharmaceuticals"²⁵ . An agreement was reached to hold a competition for joint scientific and technical projects for 2023-2024 in promising areas of cooperation. This shows that the two countries are already establishing fruitful cooperation and transforming it into effective joint scientific and commercial projects. FOR AUTHORUSE

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²⁴ Syria discusses supplies of Belarusian-made equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/politics/view/sirija-obsuzhdaet-postavki-tehniki-belorusskogo-proizvodstva-534010-2022/

²⁵ SCST: The share of innovative companies in Belarus is about 30% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gknt-dolja-innovatsionnyh-kompanij-v-belarusi-sostavljaet-okolo-30-518618-2022/

Belarus-Pakistan: partnerships to a new level

Pakistan is one of the most important partners of Belarus in Asia, which fits in with Belarus's strategy of export diversification and development of long-distance arc cooperation. Pakistan is a friendly country with good industrial potential and a market. Its population is over 200 million people. Pakistan has a well-developed agriculture, which allows you to organize cooperation in the supply of engineering and processing products. As for Belarusian-Pakistani trade and economic relations, "in recent years the trade volume between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has been fluctuating in the range of \$50 to \$65 million.²⁶. But in 2021 the trade turnover between them increased by over 77 per cent at once and exceeded \$92 million with a surplus of \$63.6 million for the Belarusian side. The Belarusian exports are based on "tractors and spare parts, potash fertilizers, specific goods, synthetic threads, cellulose, dairy products, medicines, and diesel engines"²⁷.

In the next few years, Minsk and Islamabad intend to make the necessary efforts to bring their partnership to a qualitatively new level. As for Belarus, it intends to promote its goods and services in the Pakistani market in two ways. The first way is to increase trade in traditional goods - automobiles, mining and construction equipment, products of the instrument-making industry, wood processing, meat and dairy, chemical, pharmaceutical and pulp and paper industries. The second route is the supply of new commodity

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²⁶ Trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade and economic bilateral relations/

²⁷ Ambassador of Pakistan: agriculture and industry are our key points of interest in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-pakistana-selskoe-hozjajstvo-i-promyshlennost-nashi-kljuchevye-tochki-interesa-v-belarusi-494952-2022/

items - metal products, flax fiber and yarn, as well as "including consumer goods such as soft cheeses, perfumes and cosmetics, household appliances, baby products and watches" 28.

In January 2023, Minsk hosted the sixth meeting of the joint Belarusian-Pakistani commission for trade and economic cooperation, at which the parties proposed to step up bilateral engagement both in terms of increasing trade turnover and investment cooperation, as "the two countries have good prospects for transition from simple trade to industrial cooperation and establishment of joint productions in the areas of mutual interest"²⁹. Specifically, the two countries have agreed to expand cooperation in a number of areas - mechanical engineering, agriculture, science, education and healthcare. For example, Belarus is interested in increasing supplies of industrial products to this South Asian country - Belarusian passenger vehicles, municipal vehicles, agricultural and quarry machinery, textile industry products. "Partnership in agriculture is among the priorities. And this is not only willingness to expand the supplies of Belarusian foodstuffs, but also livestock products: mixed fodders, protein supplements, veterinary preparations. The establishment of a permanent exhibition centre of Belarus in Pakistan will contribute to a more active promotion of Belarusian agribusiness products..."30 . Another mutually beneficial

²⁸ National Centre for Marketing on the peculiarities of promotion of Belarusian goods on the market of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/comments/view/natsionalnyj-tsentr-marketinga-ob-osobennostjah-prodvizhenija-belorusskih-tovarov-na-rynok-pakistana-8188/

²⁹ Belarus is interested in supplying agribusiness products and agricultural machinery to Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-v-pakistan-produktsii-apk-i-selhoztehniki-544338-2023

³⁰ Belarus and Pakistan agree to expand cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-dogovorilis-o-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-544373-2023

area is pharmaceuticals, because Belarus is interested in exporting medicines to Pakistan and is ready to consider setting up joint pharmaceutical production facilities.

At the 6th meeting of the joint commission, the sides also specifically discussed opportunities for cooperation in science and high technology. These are nano- and biotechnologies, laser optoelectronics, information and communication technologies, aerospace and geo-information systems. In this regard, in March 2023 in the Pakistani city of Karachi a national exposition of Belarus will be organized at the International Trade and Industry Fair. Recall that at a similar exhibition in November 2021 in Karachi at the collective stand of the State Committee on Science and Technology "was presented about 60 scientific, technical and innovative developments. Institutions of the Ministry of Education as well as organizations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus showed their exhibits in the field of surface treatment and chemical technologies and materials, physical modification, materials science and new materials"31. So, apparently, the dialogue between the parties will continue in the near future.

Finally, regional cooperation is gradually becoming another promising area of Belarusian-Pakistani partnership. The fact is that a number of agreements and memoranda between cities, provinces and regions of the two countries have already been signed. For example, the Grodno Region has great potential for cooperation with Pakistan. "The province of Sindh and the city of Karachi, which is the industrial centre of Pakistan, are very important strategic partners. A cooperation agreement was signed between the city of Karachi and

³¹ Zalessky, B.L. To promote domestic technologies / B.L. Zalessky // Materialy XX Miedzynarodowej naukowi-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2023", Volume 1. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - C. 24.

the Grodno region in 2015"³². And the parties are now ready to renew the agreement and resume relations in all sectors: economy, business, culture and education. For instance, baby food produced by Bellakt is already well established in Pakistan, and these supplies can be increased. And since the Grodno Medical University has provided education for 122 Pakistani students. So the sides will actively continue their work to develop contacts. After all, this is only the beginning.

Another interesting idea that concerns Belarusian-Pakistani regional interaction is that Pakistan has nine special economic zones scheduled for construction in the near future, four of which are in a high degree of readiness. All of them are located in the Pakistan-China economic corridor and may be used to implement joint Pakistani-Belarusian projects. In particular, the parties are already discussing the establishment of an assembly facility of Minsk Tractor Plant in Pakistan, as well as joint ventures to process dairy products. Therefore, one can predict that the partnership ties between Belarusian and Pakistani regions may soon result in new promising projects.

³² Ambassador: Grodno Region has huge potential for cooperation with Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/posol-grodnenskaja-oblast-imeet-ogromnyj-potentsial-dlja-sotrudnichestva-s-pakistanom-515738-2022

Belarus-Cuba: engineering, medicine, education

In September 2022, a Belarusian-Cuban business forum was held, where participants considered promising areas for trade and economic cooperation between the two countries and topical issues of doing business. More than 90 representatives of 65 companies in areas of interest to Belarus and 18 representatives of Cuban business held talks on the development of "mutually beneficial cooperation and implementation of joint projects in the field of molecular immunology, scientific and technological developments, education, metallurgy, agricultural engineering, trade, coffee, rum production and other areas"³³. It should be noted that this is the first meeting of business representatives of the two countries in a long time. In addition, for Belarus, Cuba is an export-import partner, an independent country, and is considered a gateway to the large market of Latin America - Venezuela, Bolivia and other major countries of that region. "The trade turnover between Belarus and Cuba in 2021 amounted to \$22.9 million, more than \$20 million of which was accounted for by Belarusian exports"34 . Participants of the business forum are confident that the potential of the two countries has not yet been exhausted. Moreover, the establishment of business contacts between representatives of the Belarusian and Cuban business communities will spur further development of trade and economic relations.

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³³ Belarus and Cuba to discuss prospects of trade and economic cooperation at a business forum on 27 September [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kuba-obsudjat-perspektivy-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-na-biznes-forume-27-525866-2022

³⁴ Businesses of Belarus and Cuba intend to develop cooperation in medicine, engineering and logistics [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/biznes-belarusi-i-kuby-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-meditsine-mashinostroenii-i-logistike-525975-2022/

The Cuban side is ready to cooperate with partners from Belarus, in particular, in mechanical engineering. For reference: there are over 20,000 Belarusian-made tractors currently operating in the fields of Cuba. Cooperation may take place "not only in purchase of new models, but in purchase of spare parts to restore machinery already available in Cuba. We are interested in supplying spare parts for repair and restoration of tractors, MAZ trucks, AMKODOR, and buses. We can assemble and create projects to supply this equipment to the Latin American market. Belarus and Cuba also have great potential in digital economy and tourism," 35.

However, the most interesting area for Cuban partners is medicine. In this context, "supplies of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment may become a promising area for Belarusian exports" ³⁶. In particular, in November 2022, the first Belarusian medicines were registered in this Latin American country. "This step was made possible thanks to long-term joint work between the Belarusian (Center for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare, the Managing Company of Belpharmprom Holding) and Cuban (Center for State Control of Medicines, Equipment and Medical Devices (CECMED) parties. The drugs in question are drugs produced by UE Minskinterkaps" ³⁷. In addition, the Centre for Expertise and Testing in Health and CECMED have signed an agreement on interlaboratory comparisons that will enhance the level of trust between

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³⁵ Medicine, engineering, tourism. Cuban ambassador talks about areas for cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/meditsina-mashinostroenie-turizm-posol-kuby-rasskazal-o-napravlenijah-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusjju-525993-2022/

³⁶ Zalessky, B. Investment, clusters, exports. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 14.

³⁷ Belarusian medicines registered in Cuba [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusskie-lekarstva-zaregistrirovany-na-kube-536206-2022/

Belarusian and Cuban testing laboratories, the skills of laboratory professionals, contribute to the harmonisation of quality control requirements for medicines and, consequently, improve the effectiveness and safety of medicines for patients of the two countries.

The Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education (BelMAPO) and the Medical University of Havana also signed a cooperation agreement in November 2022. At the Cuban Immunological Research Centre, Belarusian specialists agreed to cooperate in prenatal diagnostics, neonatal screening, oncology and diabetology, as well as to use Cuban reagents as an adequate replacement for those currently used in various types of screening tests. "At the Cuban Centre for Molecular Immunology, representatives of BelMAPO agreed to open joint research projects in the treatment of neurological diseases and in ophthalmology and combustiology using stem cell technologies" 38.

³⁹In the same November 2022, the intergovernmental agreement on mutual recognition of education documents was added to the legal framework of Belarusian-Cuban relations. The following trends are viewed as promising for cooperation: "joint research in the development of medicines and pharmaceutical substances; designing and manufacturing of medical items and devices for diagnosis and treatment of diseases in cardiac surgery, traumatology and orthopaedics, oncology, dentistry; development of joint ventures in the field of science and technology. The parties will cooperate

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³⁸ BelMAPO and the Medical University of Havana signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/society/view/belmapo-i-meduniversitet-gavany-podpisali-dogovor-o-sotrudnichestve-536529-2022/

³⁹ Belarus and Cuba signed an agreement on the recognition of education documents [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kuba-podpisali-soglashenie-o-priznanii-dokumentov-ob-obrazovanii-535587-2022/

both within the framework of scientific and technological parks, which are being actively developed in Belarus and Cuba, and consider the possibility of creating joint ventures, including joint ventures on the territory of Cuba. Besides, other proposals are under discussion: participation of higher education establishments of the two countries in competitions of Belarusian and Cuban scientific and technical projects in priority directions of cooperation; implementation of joint educational programmes to train bachelors and masters in a number of fields - pharmaceutics, information technologies, engineering and technology. Ten direct agreements between universities of our countries are now in effect. So, a good foundation for further development of the Belarusian-Cuban bilateral relations has already been laid. OR AUTHORUSE

Free Economic Zones in Belarus: aim to find the best solutions

In January 2023, at a conference in Vitebsk "Design and construction in the territories of free economic zones in modern economic conditions allowing to reduce the investment cycle from the moment of business idea to the start of production activities", it was noted that in the conditions of Belarus the most important task is to "find optimal solutions that will help the investor to start its activities as a FEZ resident with maximum efficiency"40. In the context of this topic, we note that in 2022 the number of residents in the Free Economic Zones (FEZs) of Belarus, the Great Stone Industrial Park and the Bremino-Orsha Special Economic Zone increased by 10 percent to 53 new business entities. "The total volume of announced investments is \$260 million and there are plans to create 2.7 thousand jobs 141. Investors intend to implement business initiatives in wood and metal processing, chemical logistics, pharmaceuticals, medicine, mechanical engineering, and agriculture. In particular, interesting investment and innovation experience can be seen in FEZs Minsk and Vitebsk.

The Minsk FEZ is one of the most attractive investment sites in the Republic of Belarus. It is located on 21 land plots, which are located in promising areas of the Minsk Region - within the borders of Minsk, Molodechno, Fanipol, Zhodino and Borisov. In 2023 the FEZ will celebrate its 25th anniversary. Over a quarter of a century

⁴⁰ Buben: our task is to help investors get off to a good start as FEZ residents [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/buben-nasha-zadacha-pomoch-investoram-effektivno-nachat-rabotu-v-kachestve-rezidentov-sez-544306-2023/

⁴¹ The number of FEZ residents in 2022 increased by 10% [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chislo-rezidentov-sez-v-2022-godu-uvelichilos-na-10-543104-2023/

more than 100 enterprises with foreign capital from 19 countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, the United States of America, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Poland, China, Estonia have come here. During this time, more than two and a half billion dollars in fixed assets have been attracted, more than 29 thousand new jobs have been created. The geography of exports covers 85 countries of the world. "During the entire period of operation of the Minsk FEZ, enterprises have exported over \$15 billion worth of products" The main industrial sectors where FEZ companies operate are machine building, metalworking, car manufacturing, woodworking, production of construction materials, electronics, printing and packaging.

As for the results of 2022, the residents' industrial production grew by more than 10 per cent. The share of import-substituting products was more than 50 percent, and "the share of export supplies of FEZ enterprises was 75 percent" Another interesting fact is that FEZ residents more than doubled their shipments to China in 2022. Last year the zone was added by six new residents with a total volume of reported investment of over four million dollars, of which the foreign investment accounted for about 30 percent. More than 490 additional jobs were created. Namely, in December 2022, the sixth resident of the free economic zone is OOO Belbansvi, which will launch the production of technical fabric on the basis of recycled materials and textile waste. "It is planned that the company

⁴² Buben, A. On the contribution of FEZ "Minsk" to the country's economy, import substitution, work under sanctions / A. Buben // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/interview/view/buben-o-vklade-sez-minsk-v-ekonomiku-strany-importozameschenii-rabote-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-8539/

⁴³ Minsk FEZ residents attracted 1.7 times more foreign direct investment in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-sez-minsk-v-2022-godu-privlekli-v-17-raza-bolshe-prjamyh-inostrannyh-investitsij-544008-2023/

will start operating already in the second quarter of 2023 in Fanipole, where about 50 jobs will be created. The stated amount of investment in the project during 2023-2027 will be more than 1 million euro. The share of export supplies will be over 90%"⁴⁴. The products of Belbanswi Ltd. are in demand in the oil and gas industry, furniture industry, automotive services, medical sector, as well as in other industries.

Also. In 2023, the main tasks to be implemented in the Minsk FEZ include: 1) attracting new investors; 2) intensifying foreign economic activity; 3) using new innovative technologies; 4) stimulating business activity; 5) efficient use of resources; 6) expanding import-substituting production capacities.

As for **FEZ** "Vitebsk", as of mid-January 2023, 57 organizations have already been registered here as residents, implementing projects with the participation of investors from 14 countries. FEZ consists of 17 sectors located in Vitebsk, Orsha, Polotsk, Postavy, Miorsky and Dokshitsky districts as well as in the regional centre. The first resident of 2023, LLC Lesdrevkonsalt, was already registered here in January. At the Polotsk site, the company plans to organize import-substituting production of chainsaws, brushcutters, brush cutters for the needs of forestry enterprises. The project will be implemented with the support of Chinese partners. "Prototypes are expected to be released as early as in the first half of the year. In the future, investors intend to organize production of components in Polotsk, gradually increasing the degree of localization of gasoline tool production. The investment volume will

⁴⁴ A resident of FEZ Minsk will produce technical fabric based on recycled materials [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezident-sez-minsk-budet-proizvodit-tehnicheskuju-tkan-na-osnove-vtorsyrjja-538832-2022/

exceed Br1.5 million.⁴⁵ . Half of the output is expected to be exported to the markets of the Eurasian Economic Union.

As a reminder, seven new companies were registered in the FEZ in 2022. The sixth resident in September was BELTANK CJSC. The company will implement an investment project in Polotsk District to produce steel containers, which involves increasing the production of import-substituting products and creating new jobs. "The products can be used in the energy sector, petrochemical and construction complex, organizations of food, pharmaceutical, cosmetics industry, utilities. It is planned to create about 20 working places. The main markets for BELTANK's products are the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union". 46

The seventh resident in November 2022 was Metal Rolling Company LLC with a project to develop a tinplate plant in the district town of Miori, which "involves a significant increase in the production of export-oriented products, involving more production workers in the economy of the Miori district" ⁴⁷.

So this FEZ has good investment and export prospects.

⁴⁵ A new resident of FEZ Vitebsk will set up production of gasoline tools in Polotsk [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-vitebsk-sozdast-proizvodstvo-benzoinstrumenta-v-polotske-542995-2023/

⁴⁶ Zalessky, B. Success is in development. Free economic zones as points of growth / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 57.

⁴⁷ Metalrolling Company LLC - new resident of FEZ Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: http://fez-vitebsk.by/press-room/rezidenty/ooo-_metalloprokatnaya-kompaniya_-_-novyy-rezident-sez-_vitebsk/

Brest Free Economic Zone: challenge to ramp up new projects

Belarus' first free economic zone (FEZ), Brest, was established in 1996. Over a quarter of a century, total investment has amounted to about \$1.8 billion. Currently the FEZ includes 16 sites located in Brest and Brest district, Kobrin and Kobrin district, Ivatsevichi and Ivatsevichi district, and Pinsk, Gantsevichi and Drohiczyn. "In 2021 FEZ businesses exported \$950 million worth of goods to 80 countries worldwide. Production of industrial goods increased by 26.4% to Br3.2 billion compared to 2020. Fixed capital investments totaled Br135 million, foreign direct investments on a net basis - \$43.4 million"⁴⁸. Positive trends in the FEZ will continue in 2022. In January-September, exports increased by almost nine percent with a surplus of over \$300 million. "Foreign investment of \$133.6 million (growth rate of 105.7 per cent) was attracted in the first nine months of 2022. Foreign direct investment on a net basis amounted to \$59 million (growth rate of 135.9 per cent)"49. In 2022 six organizations were already registered as residents of FEZ "Brest" with the total volume of investments - 92 million dollars. In particular, "the first resident registered in 2022 was the Teplichny Kombinat Soyuz LLC, an enterprise with Belarusian-Polish capital..."50 . Others followed.

⁴⁸ A manufacturer of sanitary equipment has become a resident of FEZ Brest [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvoditel-sanitarno-gigienicheskogo-oborudovanija-stal-rezidentom-sez-brest-527300-2022/

⁴⁹ Brest FEZ residents continue to refocus export supplies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://fezbrest.com/rezidentyi-sez-%C2%ABbrest%C2%BB-prodolzhayut-pereorientacziyu-eksportnyix-postavok

⁵⁰ Zalessky, B. Challenges of multi-vectorism. The ideology of international cooperation under global turbulence / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 228.

In September 2022, two new residents registered in the FEZ. The first is PolesyeCentre LLC, which will engage in micropropagation of seedlings of coniferous and ornamental plants. In order to implement this investment project the company is going to lease a land plot near the airport of about six hectares where a greenhouse complex for seedlings production with closed root system will be built. Each year, the plan is to produce more than two and a half million seedlings of conifers that will be used for reforestation. The complex will be commissioned in 2023 and will reach its full capacity in 2024. The investment project envisages investments of over one million euros. Twelve employees are expected to be employed in the newly created jobs.

Secondly, the ranks of FEZ residents have also been joined by Zubr Energy LLC, a Pinsk plant producing starter batteries. The new status is expected to enable the company with more than two decades of history to increase exports and improve production efficiency. The investment project "envisages modernization with expansion of the existing production facilities and production of new types of batteries" in a short time and is aimed at solving the problems of import substitution. The facility is scheduled for completion in 2023. The investment in the project will amount to around twelve million euros. More than 100 people will be employed in the additional jobs created.

In October 2022, another new resident was registered in the FEZ - AgroPischeProm Limited Liability Company, which was established in 2009. The company produces a wide range of specialised processing, transportation and tank equipment for food,

⁵¹ Two new residents registered in Brest FEZ [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dvuh-novyh-rezidentov-zaregistrirovali-v-sez-brest-525763-2022/

chemical and agro-industrial enterprises. The product range consists of over 300 items, including machines for washing containers, equipment for hygiene of enterprises, slaughtering and primary processing of livestock, processing of by-products, lifts, conveyors and other equipment. More than 150 qualified specialists are now working at the enterprise. The expansion of the production base involves the creation of new jobs. The investment project will increase the production capacity of the enterprise and expand the range of products through new premises. For this purpose, the production building on the territory of the free economic zone will be reconstructed. The investor intends to invest about two and a half million Belarusian rubles in the project. The production at the new site is to start in 2024. By the end of the year FEZ "Brest" is planning to review business plans of several other potential business entities.

Another FEZ resident is planning to significantly expand its product line. Brestmash, a Brest FEZ resident since 2015, is a manufacturer of modern technological equipment for food processing enterprises and components for gas and electric household cookers. "The entry of Brestmash OJSC into BelavtoMAZ Holding has opened new opportunities for the development of the enterprise" 52. The production of components for the production of motor vehicles, large-knot assembly of trucks and passenger cars has become an important area of activity for the Brest FEZ resident. In September 2022 Brestmash presented prototypes of ambulances and social taxi, made on the basis of MAZ chassis. "The launch of the

⁵² Brest FEZ resident takes part in a project to produce ambulances [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://fezbrest.com/rezident-sez-%C2%ABbrest%C2%BB-prinimaet-uchastie-v-realizaczii-proekta-po-proizvodstvu-mashin-skoroj-pomoshhi

new range of minibuses, especially under the conditions of intensified work under the import substitution programme, allows us to enter new market segments, as well as strengthen the position of the domestic brand abroad"⁵³. An order for new vehicles has already been placed with the Belarus Ministry of Health. The first vehicles will be in service of Belarusian medics by the end of 2022.

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⁵³ Brest FEZ resident plans to expand the range of vehicles produced [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezident-sez-brest-planiruet-rasshirit-linejku-vypuskaemyh-avtomobilej-526001-2022/

Brest Oblast: Technoparks - a innovation perspective

One important mechanism for implementing the innovation development strategy in Belarus is a system of industrial parks on unused and inefficiently used production facilities of state-owned enterprises. "The main areas of activity for Belarusian technopark residents today are instrumentation and machine building, electronics, IT and software development, medicine, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment manufacturing..."⁵⁴ . An interesting experience in this respect is observed in the Brest region.

The Brest Science and Technology Park already had 55 residents registered at the end of 2022. They are engaged in the fields of IT, design, mechanical engineering, waste recycling, education, medicine and others. In mid-December, the park welcomed four new ones. One of them specializes on manufacture of sports boats from composites, the second - on designing and manufacture of orthopedic products. The third resident will produce pneumatic units, and the fourth will develop a neurocorrection programme in speech therapy. At the beginning of 2023, the park increased its space by seven thousand square metres. "The technopark got the former workshop of the Brest Electromechanical Plant to serve its needs. Its reconstruction began in November 2020. Due to the project implementation the usable area of the building will be doubled up to 22.5 thousand square meters. This is because the ceiling height in the former production facilities is 7.2 metres. Each of the four storeys will be divided and the distance from the

⁵⁴ Zalessky, B. With an eye to the future. Peculiarities of multi-vector partnership in modern conditions / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 117.

floor to the ceiling will be reduced to 3.6 metres. The first phase of the renovation is nearing completion"55. Five floors will be finished by the beginning of 2023: two technical floors, one and a half production floors and one and a half office floors. The equipment is now arriving, being installed, connected and started up. Space is prepared to accommodate residents. In total. being reconstruction envisages three phases. For the second stage a small volume of works is defined: the parking will be equipped. During the third stage the builders will erect five more floors in the building. These will be commissioned gradually over a period of three years. The new space in the technology park will house production and service facilities, offices, a shared use centre, a co-working space, conference rooms, and common areas.

In the development plan for the Brest Science and Technology Park, it is planned to start building a branch of the park in Baranovichi in 2023. In particular, "an area of 13.7 hectares is reserved next to the automatic lines plant. An industrial park is planned to be built on this land and the production facilities will be available for use by the residents. The project envisages the construction of three industrial hotel type workshops. The area of one workshop is 6,900 sq. m."⁵⁶. There will also be a logistics centre, a small administrative block with laboratories and offices. Work is scheduled to start in mid-2023. The first building of the technology park is scheduled for commissioning in 2025.

55 . Brest Technopark will increase its area by the beginning of 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/tech/view/brestskij-tehnopark-k-nachalu-2023-goda-uvelichit-svoi-ploschadi-540149-2022

⁵⁶ An industrial park to be built in Baranovichi [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/industrialnyj-park-postrojat-v-baranovichah-540068-2022/

In 2023, a similar project was launched in Pinsk at the Polessye Technopark Ltd. It is about the provision of ready industrial premises for organisations interested in the production of innovative products. The proposed specialisation of the industrial park is engineering, metalworking, logistics services and chemical industry. Three land plots have been selected for construction in the industrial and warehousing zone on Kozubovsky Street, with a total area of 50 hectares. Two of them are included in the Brest Free Economic Zone (FEZ). It is to be noted that the "industrial park will consist of four industrial buildings with the area of about 6,000 sq.m. each and engineering infrastructure. The starting point of the park will be a site of 11.5 hectares, which is located within the boundaries of Free Economic Zone "Brest". Close by are OJSC Kuzlitmash, CJSC Pinskdrev, CJSC Amkodor-Pinsk, OJSC PINEMA, and Pinsk Plant of Small Mechanisation Equipment⁵⁷. The industrial potential of these enterprises can be used to attract residents of the Park and create production co-operation chains with them. This project will be implemented in several stages: the start of construction of the first stage in September 2023; completion and launch of the first production facilities in early 2025.

Another interesting example is Žabinka. The satellite town of Brest aims to increase investment attractiveness and create comfortable conditions for business. Special attention will be paid to manufacturers of innovative products in Žabinka. "First of all, we are talking about science and technology parks and their residents, technology transfer centres. There is a need to modernize existing

⁵⁷ An industrial park will start being built in autumn in Pinsk [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/industrialnyj-park-nachnut-stroit-osenjju-v-pinske-545904-2023/

production facilities and create new high-tech ones"⁵⁸. So far there is one resident of the Brest Technopark registered in Zhabinka. It is a private enterprise that deals with digital technologies and robotics in agriculture. Having become a resident of the Brest Science and Technology Park, the firm has retained its business in the Zhabinka district, was able to acquire a complex of capital buildings to create production of innovative and high-tech products and even concluded a contract to manufacture a fuel pellet production line for a peat briquette plant.

All this shows that Zhabinka as a satellite town has a high potential for attracting investments and is open for fruitful cooperation. The measures taken will ensure progressive development of small and medium business, increase its share in the economy of the region and contribute to creation of new enterprises and jobs. For reference: more than 500 individual entrepreneurs, about 150 micro and small enterprises as well as 13 medium enterprises are registered in Zhabinka district. In the region 8 new business entities have been established in 2022, 5 of them in the satellite town. Small and medium business provides over 35 percent of the total revenues of the consolidated budget of the district of Zhabinka. So there are good prospects for innovation in this region, too.

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⁵⁸ Technopark residents will be given preferences in Brest's satellite city [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidentam-tehnoparkov-predostavjat-preferentsii-v-gorode-sputnike-bresta-544234-2023/

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: for the convenience of Chinese buyers

In 2022, the Chinese segment of electronic exchange trade on the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) became much more active. However, even "in 2021, the Belarusian-Chinese exchange turnover grew three and a half times at once"59. And in October this year, there were already 100 companies from China working on the BUCE, three of which had the status of stock brokers. In the nine months of 2022 their transactions amounted to 27 million dollars. At the same time more than 24 million dollars were provided by lumber, mainly sawn softwood boards. China Township Enterprise Co., Ltd. (CTEC) is the 100th Chinese company accredited to bid on the BUTB, which initially intends to use the exchange to purchase wood products. In fact, from the end of October 2022, the BUTB has resumed the practice of holding special trading sessions to sell lumber to China with delivery in containers to the destination. "In addition to lumber, unrefined rapeseed oil and skimmed milk powder have been supplied to China through the exchange this year. The total value of the transactions amounted to more than \$3 million"60. Given that one of CTEC's areas of activity in China is trade in agro-industrial products, it is possible that in the future the Chinese company will develop this segment of the commodity exchange market as well.

Coming back to the topic of lumber exports to China, we note that according to the results of the special trade session, which took

⁵⁹ Zalessky, B. Systemic partnerships. Specificity of economic interaction of the Belarusian side with the post-Soviet republics / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 45.

⁶⁰ The 100th company from China has been accredited at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovalas-100-ja-kompanija-iz-kitaja-530408-2022/

place in the first decade of November 2022 at the BUTB, more than 20 thousand cubic meters of lumber produced in Belarus were sold to the Chinese market. The session was attended by 11 Chinese residents. "Several delivery bases were provided for the convenience of buyers, namely Taicang, Tianjin, Shanghai and Changsha cities. A key feature of the special trading sessions is that they focus on a specific sales market - in this case China^{"61}.

For reference: as of 1 November 2022, 103 Chinese companies had already been accredited on the BUTB. Among the new participants of the Belarusian electronic marketplace was a company from China, which bought tanned semi-finished products "vet-blue" for the first time on the BUTB. Thus, the geography of sales of this product through this marketplace has expanded to eight countries. "Vet-blue semi-finished products are in steady demand from leather goods manufacturers around the world. Companies from Russia, Kazakhstan, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, Lithuania and Poland regularly buy this product on the exchange. In January-October this year, the total sum of the deals amounted to \$6.5 million." So far no such products have been shipped from Belarus to China. Apparently, after the pilot deal, new supplies of tanned leather are not far off.

Another interesting fact. In November 2022, a large Chinese trading company headquartered in Chongqing, which specialises in supplying cattle, chicken and seafood to the southern provinces of

⁶¹ Companies from China and Singapore bought more than \$4 million worth of lumber products from the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/piloproduktsiju-na-bolee-chem-4-mln-priobreli-na-butb-kompanii-iz-kitaja-i-singapura-533965-2022/

⁶² Now China: the geography of exports of Belarusian leather products through BUTB has expanded [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/teper-i-kitaj-geografija-eksporta-belorusskoj-kozhevennoj-produktsii-cherez-butb-rasshirilas-533733-2022/

China, expressed interest in bidding for agricultural products at the BUTB. The firm "has an extensive network of suppliers around the world, including Belarus, but all relationships have been put on hold during the pandemic. Using the BUTB trading platform, which features leading domestic suppliers of meat and meat products, the Chinese importer intends to establish new business contacts and resume the purchase of frozen beef in Belarus"⁶³. The more so since Belarusian-made products have gained popularity at the Chinese market in recent years and are in high demand among Chinese consumers. Therefore, the company does not expect any problems with sales. In addition to the office and wholesale outlets in Chongqing, the company has representative offices in other provinces of China, which will ensure the widest possible geography of sales of the meat purchased on the exchange.

In order to promote Belarusian-Chinese electronic trade, the BUTB continues to expand the list of partners from the Celestial Empire to further strengthen trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China. In particular, in September 2022 the BUTB signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Chinese branch of the BRICS Institute for the Study of Future Networks (BIFNC) to promote greater involvement of Belarusian and Chinese companies, including small and medium businesses, in cross-border exchange trading. "One promising area of interaction could be the accreditation of BIFNC as a broker. This will allow not only to fully utilise BIFNC's wide network of business contacts to attract Chinese sellers and buyers to exchange

63 A major Chinese importer of meat and seafood is interested in cooperating with BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnyj-kitajskij-importer-mjasa-i-

trading, but also to conclude transactions on their behalf, thus ensuring growth of exchange turnover between Belarus and China"⁶⁴. It is expected that at the initial stage, the main focus will be on supplies of Belarusian lumber and fuel pellets to China as the most sought-after commodity items on the Chinese market.

Another new partner for BUTB in November 2022 is the Alliance of Economic and Commercial Advisers of China. The Chinese side is interested in such highly liquid commodity items as lumber, rapeseed oil, and vet-blue leather, because "in the near term, the level of demand will increase, including for Belarusian-made goods that have proven themselves in the Chinese market.⁶⁵. So the Belarusian-Chinese exchange trade appears to be reaching a new qualitative level.

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⁶⁴ The BUTB and the BRICS Institute's China branch will promote electronic exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kitajskij-filial-instituta-briks-budut-sodejstvovat-razvitiju-elektronnoj-birzhevoj-torgovli-525751-2022/

⁶⁵ The BUTB and the Alliance of Economic and Commercial Advisers of China have identified areas for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-aljjans-ekonomicheskih-i-kommercheskih-sovetnikov-kitaja-opredelili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-535514-

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: The geography of exchange trading is expanding

In January 2023, the first company from Mongolia was accredited to participate in trading at the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE). This means that the geography of Belarusian exchange trading expanded in the new year and now covers 71 countries on four continents. Through the BUTB, "a Mongolian company plans to supply Belarus with mining products, including fluorspar and slag used in the metallurgical industry, as well as purchase Belarusian metal products and goods of the agricultural group."66. The interest of Mongolian businesses in the Belarusian exchange platform is not accidental. All Belarusian metallurgical companies are accredited and participate in trading on BUCE, and the amount of transactions in the steel products section exceeded two billion Belarusian rubles in 2022. The largest consumers and producers of the goods the Mongolian company intends to trade in are concentrated on the exchange. The situation is similar in the agribusiness segment: the BUTB has a wide range of products from Belarusian agricultural enterprises, including exporters of milk, cream, and butter, which are especially in demand in Mongolia. It is expected that the next step in the cooperation between the Belarusian exchange platform and the Mongolian company will be to grant it the status of an exchange broker, which will enable it to act as the official representative of the BUTB in Mongolia and attract new importers and exporters to the Belarusian market.

⁶⁶ The first company from Mongolia is accredited to the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovana-pervaja-kompanija-iz-mongolii-545414-2023/

It should be recalled that in terms of expanding the geography of Belarusian exchange trading, the first deal made by an Indian company was registered on the BUTB in December 2022. The Indian pharmaceutical company Tosco Pharmachem, which specializes in the production and sale of a wide range of chemical compounds and reagents for the pharmaceutical industry, bought 23 tonnes of Belarusian acetone cyanohydrin following the trading session. The small volume of the purchase is related to the desire of the Indian company to work out the whole scheme for importing goods from Belarus. "The Indian side is interested in long-term cooperation with the exchange, which implies regular participation in exchange trading and an increase in the volume of purchases. At the same time, due to the lack of practical experience in operating in the Belarusian market via the exchange platform, the company preferred to first conclude a trial transaction for a small amount to minimize the possible risks.⁶⁷ . It should be noted that Tosco Pharmachem is a major player in the Indian market and is ready to buy other chemicals in Belarus in addition to acetone cyanohydrin. Therefore, the BUTB expects an increase in supplies of Belarusian petrochemicals to India. For reference: export trading in chemical and petrochemical products has been held at Belarus open joint stock company BTUB since October 2021. The entire nomenclature of goods produced by the petrochemical industry of Belarus is exported abroad. In 2022, synthetic fibers, gasoline, oils, and solvents were in particular demand among foreign buyers. The main markets are a number of countries of the Commonwealth of

⁶⁷ An Indian company has struck its first deal at the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/indijskaja-kompanija-vpervye-sovershila-sdelku-na-butb-537935-2022/

Independent States, as well as the "far arc" countries - China, Syria, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey.

Another interesting partner of the Belarusian exchange platform is Turkey. As of 1 November 2022, 27 residents of that country, including one stockbroker, were already accredited to the BUTB. "The Turkish market through BUTB is mainly sold wood products and scrap ferrous metals"68. Beginning in December 2022, in order to make the exchange mechanism more attractive to foreign companies, including potential buyers of fuel pellets or pellets and other wood products, BUTB has introduced a simplified accreditation procedure for Turkish residents. Note that "the simplified accreditation procedure is already in place for residents of 21 countries, which makes the exchange mechanism more accessible to foreign companies and contributes to the growth of supplies of Belarusian goods to these markets 69 . More than 18 thousand cubic meters of light and gray pellets were offered at the first export auction, which was aimed at the Turkish market and took place in the first decade of December 2022. More than 20 Turkish companies expressed interest in buying Belarusian biofuel. And, apparently, the clear logistics and significant capacity of the Turkish market make it one of the most promising export destinations for Belarusian fuel products.

Finally, another important fact concerns the cooperation of BUTB with another Asian country, the People's Republic of China. Note that "as of 1 November 2022, 103 Chinese companies have

BUTB will pilot bidding for fuel pellets to the Turkish market [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-provedet-pilotnye-torgi-po-realizatsii-na-rynok-turtsii-toplivnyh-granul-536606-2022/

⁶⁹ BUTB simplifies accreditation for Turkish companies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-uproschaet-akkreditatsiju-dlja-turetskih-kompanij-537787-2022/

already been accredited to the BUOTB"⁷⁰. In December 2022, following a special export trading session on the Belarusian exchange platform, the trades were a record both in terms of the sum of transactions made and the volume of resources sold to the Chinese market. It is more than 60 thousand cubic meters of lumber "worth a total of 85.5 million yuan, or the equivalent of \$12.3 million <...>. As a result, residents of China and Singapore bought 10 lots of lumber with a volume of 62.2 thousand cubic meters, which is half of all the lumber put up for auction"⁷¹. It should be noted that special trading sessions on sales of sawn timber to China have been held at BUTB since December 2020 with the support of the Ministry of Forestry of Belarus to diversify export supplies of products of domestic woodworking enterprises and increase export revenues through the use of the competitive mechanism of exchange trading.

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⁷⁰ Zalessky, B.L. For the convenience of Chinese buyers / B.L. Zalessky // Materials for XVII International Scientific Practical Conference, B'deshcheto vzaprosi v light naukata - 2022, 17 - 25 December 2022: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 28.

^{71 \$12.3} million worth of lumber sold to China through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pilomaterialy-na-123-mln-prodany-v-kitaj-cherez-butb-541419-2022/

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