

Reliability dominance

The results of the five months of 2024 show that four of the five main positions of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus have been fully overfulfilled: gross domestic product, investment, real household incomes, and consumer price index. And only the export growth indicator was fulfilled by only 2.1 percent. The plan is 4 percent. But already in the second half of the year Belarus is expecting an active foreign policy and foreign economic agenda. The contacts of the Belarusian side with a number of countries - Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Hungary, Zimbabwe, Saudi Arabia - that took place in the first half of the current year allowed to accelerate trade and economic interaction with third countries. And now effective work is being carried out in these areas to increase export supplies. Especially in the countries of Africa and the Middle East. After all, new logistic, production and financial chains have already started working. And within Belarus, new points of growth are unfolding in almost all regions of the country, thanks to the "One District - One Project" initiative, as well as in free economic zones. This paper discusses how this transformation of the positive aspects of the Belarusian economy is realized in practice.



Boris Zalesskij

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



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Transformation of the Belarusian economy's positives in both domestic and foreign markets

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Belarus: "One District - One Project" initiative as a prospective program of each region

The "One District - One Project" initiative has been in place since 2022, when the head of the Belarusian state instructed the Ministry of Economy of Belarus together with regional executive committees to form a list of projects to be implemented in each Belarusian region. Among the tasks set for the implementation of this initiative are the creation of jobs, retention of personnel in a particular region, as well as the preservation of competencies of this region. Also, "the tasks include the creation of new export-oriented products and the development of related industries. Any production contributes to the development of related industries - transportation, logistics, trade, energy, services"¹. In addition, import substitution is an important condition in today's situation.

It should be reminded that the "One District - One Project" program is designed for the current five-year period. And already in 2026 its results will be summarized. Since the beginning of 2023, the number of projects under this initiative was 129. Then this list was increased to 156, and at the end of the year it expanded to 190 projects, the cost of which is about eight billion Belarusian rubles. And this is not the limit, as "about two dozen more projects should appear on the list. The work is going on constantly"². And as of January 1, 2024, 28 investment projects have already been implemented, and for the first quarter of this year - six more. By the end of the year it is planned to complete 55. "More than 2 thousand jobs have already been created under the realized projects. Overall, more than 9

¹ Socio-economic development of regions and import substitution: tasks of the initiative "One district - one project" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sotsialno-ekonomicheskoe-razvitie-regionov-i-importozameschenie-zadachi-initsiativy-odin-rajon-odin-634027-2024>

² Ministry of Economy: the program "One district - one project" will include about two dozen more initiatives [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minekonomiki-v-programmu-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-budet-vkljucheno-esche-okolo-dvuh-desjatkov-initsiativ-634147-2024/>

thousand jobs are to be created under the "One District - One Project" initiative"³ .

Among the Belarusian regions we can single out the leaders in terms of the number of implemented initiatives. Gomel and Minsk regions have five projects each, and Vitebsk region - four. To be more precise, "in Minsk region it is Barysau, Dzerzhynski, Kopylski, Smolevichi districts. Three or more projects are created there. In general, 2 or more projects are created in each district of the country"⁴ . Among the already realized initiatives, most of them are production-oriented projects. If we look by sectors, they include woodworking, metallurgical production, production of machinery and equipment, processing of agro-industrial products, production of medical products, and pharmaceuticals. Among the most successful projects are the enterprise on creation of technical carbon of Omsk Carbon Mogilev IOOO, furniture production with elements of digital factory of Olsa OJSC. "In the Gomel region a large production facility for the creation of cheese and dairy products was realized, in the Vitebsk region - broiler poultry farm, in the Minsk region - Slutsk cheese factory. A large woodworking complex in Grodno region was also realized this year"⁵ .

If we talk about specific projects in the same **Minsk region**, 46 projects included in the initiative "One district - one project" were being implemented there in 2023. "Their realization provides for the creation of more than 2 thousand jobs"⁶ . Interestingly, investors in the capital region

³ Under the initiative "One district - one project" 34 projects have already been realized [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/po-initsiative-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-realizovano-uzhe-34-proekta-633766-2024/>

⁴ Leaders among oblasts: where the potential of the initiative "One district - one project" has been realized [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/lidery-sredi-oblastej-gde-realizovan-potentsial-initsiativy-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-633813-2024/>

⁵ The Ministry of Economy named the most successful initiatives "One district - one project" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minekonomiki-nazvalo-samye-ushpeshnye-initsiativy-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-633981-2024/>

⁶ In Minsk region in 2023 46 projects were implemented under the program "One district - one project" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-minskoy-oblasti-v-2023-godu-realizovyvalos-46-proektov-po-programme-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-635036-2024>

invest most of all in the manufacturing industry, as well as in housing construction. They account for more than half of the projects. Projects in agriculture, forestry and fisheries can also be noted. "Both state-owned enterprises and private businesses invest in regional projects. Foreign investors are also attracted. There is an increase in foreign direct investment"⁷. Among the projects completed last year in the capital region we should note the following projects: in Krupsky district - organization of production of terraced board; in Kopyl district - creation of innovative production of milk powder with capillary-porous structure, where 32 jobs were created. And already in 2024, three more projects were implemented in the Minsk region, including in Kopyl district, where a new line for the production of sawn timber was opened, and "its annual capacity is 18 thousand cubic meters of finished timber (1.5 thousand cubic meters per month). <...> Thanks to the project, 22 new jobs with decent wages will be created in the region"⁸. In general, in Minsk region this year will be completed 16 investment projects in the production of vehicles, food, pharmaceutical products and preparations, electrical equipment, plastic products. And also in 2024 under the initiative "One district - one project" "it is planned to continue the realization of 47 investment projects. The volume of investments is Br1.7 billion. It is planned to create more than 2 thousand jobs as a result of the projects' implementation"⁹.

In **Vitebsk region**, as mentioned above, four projects of the "One District - One Project" program were completed in 2023. In particular, it is

⁷ Investors in Minsk region invest most of all in the processing industry [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/investory-v-minskoj-oblasti-bolshe-vsego-vkladyvajutsja-v-obrabatvajuschuju-promyshlennost-633940-2024/>

⁸ In Kopyl leskhoz opened a new production of sawn timber [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-kopylskom-leshoze-otkryli-novoe-proizvodstvo-po-vypusku-obreznyh-pilomaterialov-633821-2024/>

⁹ In Minsk region this year it is planned to complete 16 investment projects of the program "One district - one project" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-minskoj-oblasti-v-etom-godu-planiruetsja-zavershit-16-investproektov-programmy-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-635314-2024>

the construction of a slaughterhouse of the Vitebsk poultry farm. And it has already started a new project - the construction of a feed mill. The production and processing of dairy products in the form of a line of soft cheeses has been organized in Gorodok. Also last year "a complex for advanced processing of worn-out tires and rubber products was opened in Novopolotsk at the UE "Biomekhozavod of household secondary resources", where about 60 jobs were created. In Beshenkovichi a project for 20 jobs - production of food flavorings was implemented"¹⁰ . In addition, in 2023 in this area continued the implementation of 24 projects of this program. And by the end of this year it is planned to complete the implementation of 12 projects in 10 regions. "These include production of clothing products in Dokshitsy, production of perfume products in Dokshitsy district, in Sharkovski district - production of juices"¹¹ . The modernization of the Obolsk ceramic plant in Shumilinsk district will also be completed, and a line of new whole-milk products will be organized on the basis of the Postavy dairy plant.

All these facts suggest that the "One District - One Project" program, which is being implemented in Belarus, will be further developed. The Ministry of Economy is already holding a round of consideration of plans for 2025 and at the same time emphasizes that "the key thing for us is projects in the field of technological security, localization. We will literally pencil out what can be made from our raw materials, materials, more in-depth to set tasks for the construction of new enterprises"¹² . Moreover, any project of this program performs an import-substituting function.

¹⁰ The Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee told what was implemented under the program "One district - one project" in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-vitebskom-oblispolkome-rasskazali-cto-realizovano-po-programme-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-v-2023-godu-633972-2024/>

¹¹ In Vitebsk region 12 projects of the program "One district - one project" will be completed by the end of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-vitebskoj-oblasti-do-kontsa-goda-zavershat-12-proektov-initsiativy-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-631195-2024/>

¹² Chebotar: the program "One district - one project" will be supplemented by new initiatives [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chebotar-programmu-odin-rajon-odin-proekt-dopolnjat-novye-initsiativy-635398-2024>

Belarus-Hungary: a promising algorithm of interaction has been defined

In May 2024, Minsk hosted the 12th meeting of the Belarusian-Hungarian Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) on Economic Cooperation, where the participants jointly defined the algorithm of interaction for the near and medium term. The parties identified energy, agriculture, industry, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, construction, sports, tourism, education and science among the most important areas of bilateral cooperation that will continue to develop within the framework of the Belarusian-Hungarian partnership. "There are plans to fill these areas with even more practical content"¹³.

It should be recalled that the 11th meeting of the IGC, held in April 2023 in Budapest, addressed the issues of interaction in the economic and investment spheres, scientific research, education, as well as the development of the legal framework for bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Hungary. It was noted at the time that "this framework already includes about 20 international treaties"¹⁴. Within the framework of the 12th IGC meeting the parties signed a new package of documents, including the Program of Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary for 2024-2025, as well as a "memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of

¹³ Transcript of the approach to the press of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus S. Aleinik following the meeting of the Belarusian-Hungarian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation (May 29, 2024, Minsk). Aleinik on the results of the meeting of the Belarusian-Hungarian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation (May 29, 2024, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/dceb9287fe611c94.html

¹⁴ Zaleskii, B. New Realities for Partnership. Chronicle of international cooperation under conditions of economic mobilization / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 34.

Energy of Belarus and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary on deepening cooperation in the field of nuclear energy"¹⁵ .

In addition, the two countries signed a roadmap of cooperation between the nuclear power plants of the two countries, which defines the main areas of joint work of Belarusian and Hungarian nuclear workers for 2024-2025, including personnel training, scheduled maintenance work, and radioactive waste management. All the more so because the Hungarian CJSC "MVM Paks NPP" "as a nuclear power plant under construction, is interested in attracting Belarusian builders to work at the site. Relevant opportunities are being worked out now"¹⁶ . Recall that the Paks NPP is the only operating nuclear power plant in Hungary, built under the Soviet design in the 1980s. It is located 100 kilometers from Budapest. The construction of "Paks-II" is planned to start in 2024 to strengthen the energy security of this European country, and it "will become an important step in the development of Hungary's industry, create new jobs, and contribute to solving social issues. It is planned that the construction of additional units will not only solve the problem of the republic's power shortage, but will also enable exports to neighboring regions"¹⁷ .

Another interesting topic that was discussed at the 12th meeting of the IGC was Belarusian-Hungarian interaction in joint scientific and technical projects. In this context, it should be noted that "at the end of 2023, Belarusian exports of high-tech goods to Hungary amounted to more than half of all supplies from Belarus to this country. The largest volume is

¹⁵ Belarus and Hungary signed a memorandum on deepening cooperation in nuclear energy [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-vengrija-uglubljajut-sotrudnichestvo-v-jadernoj-energetike-637572-2024>

¹⁶ The road map of cooperation between NPPs of Belarus and Hungary was signed [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/podpisana-dorozhnaja-karta-sotrudnichestva-aes-belarusi-i-vengrii-637535-2024>

¹⁷ Paks II NPP [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://ioes.ru/ru/portfolio/item/21-aes-paksh>

industrial equipment"¹⁸. For reference: the basis of bilateral cooperation in science, technology and innovation is a memorandum of understanding signed in 2013 between the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus (SCST) and the National Office for Research, Development and Innovation of Hungary, which provides for joint project activities in priority areas of scientific research for both sides, as well as joint scientific and technical events. Three years later, in 2016, a working group with representatives of the SCST and Hungarian partners was established to coordinate cooperation, with the last meeting held in March 2021. In addition, there are a number of cooperation agreements between Belarusian and Hungarian scientific organizations. These are the agreement between the academies of sciences (2003), the agreement between the Belarusian State University and the Institute of Geography of the Research Center for Astronomy and Earth Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (2014), as well as a number of others. To intensify bilateral cooperation at the 12th IGC meeting, the Belarusian side proposed to hold a Belarusian-Hungarian working group on scientific and technical cooperation in 2024 to consider in detail the options for interaction in promising areas of cooperation: energy research, medicine, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, chemical technologies, and new materials. As an effective mechanism for such cooperation, it was proposed to hold a contest of Belarusian-Hungarian scientific and technical projects in promising areas, with the details to be discussed at the working group meeting.

In addition to the 12th IGC meeting, the Belarusian-Hungarian Business Forum was held in Minsk with the support of the Belarusian National Center for Marketing and Price Study and the Hungarian Export Development Agency. More than 20 Hungarian and 80 Belarusian

¹⁸ Belarus is interested in joint scientific and technical projects with Hungary [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-sovmestnyh-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-proektah-s-vengriej-637555-2024/>

companies "in such areas as agriculture and food industry, tourism, construction, public utilities, medicine and pharmaceuticals"¹⁹, as well as in e-commerce, took part in the forum. In particular, taking into account the specialization of the forum participants, industrial goods and agricultural products were considered as priority areas of Belarusian-Hungarian exchange trade. In particular, the issue of supplies of Belarusian rapeseed oil, beet pulp and molasses, as well as milk powder and whey to Hungary was discussed. These products are successfully sold through the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) to a number of European countries, with demand remaining at a high level, which ensures regularity of transactions. "In January-April 2024, exchange exports of the above commodity items reached \$28.5 million, exceeding the same indicator of the previous year by 5.4 times. As for imports from Hungary, Hungarian companies participating in the forum expressed their willingness to supply Belarus with agricultural seeds, as well as lighting fixtures and equipment for the energy sector, using the BUTB industrial and consumer goods platform"²⁰. Besides, BUTB discussed with the Hungarian Export Promotion Agency the prospects of cooperation in organizing joint information events on the subject of exchange trade for Hungarian commodity producers. It should be noted that as of May 1, 2024, only 25 Hungarian resident companies have been accredited at BUTB.

Let us summarize the results. As we can see, both the 12th meeting of the Belarusian-Hungarian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation and the regular Belarusian-Hungarian Business Forum have shown that Minsk and Budapest, sharing the conviction that they have

¹⁹ Agriculture, tourism, medicine. More than 100 companies united Belarusian-Hungarian business forum [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/selskoe-hozjajstvo-turizm-meditsina-bolee-100-kompanij-objedinil-belorusko-vengerskij-biznes-forum-637709-2024>

²⁰ Belarus and Hungary intend to intensify exchange trade [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-vengrija-namereny-aktivizirovat-birzheviju-torgovlju-637694-2024>

common economic interests, maintain a good pace in bilateral relations, strengthen trade, economic and investment interaction in order to more fully realize the potential of joint projects in industrial cooperation and agriculture.

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Belarus-Azerbaijan: roadmap defines prospects

In June 2024, the 14th meeting of the intergovernmental Belarus-Azerbaijan Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation (IGC) in Minsk signed a Roadmap for the development of interaction between the two post-Soviet republics until 2025. This document covers almost all spheres of trade in order to progressively increase trade turnover between Minsk and Baku to one billion dollars by 2030, while balancing export and import flows. Recall that in 2023 the volume of trade between Belarus and Azerbaijan "exceeded \$400 million, with Belarusian exports amounting to \$370 million, increasing by 77% by the level of 2022"²¹. In particular, the Belarusian side sells to the Azerbaijani market the entire range of woodworking products: from longitudinally sawn timber to wallpaper and toilet paper. Belarus supplies Azerbaijan with significant volumes and a wide range of meat and dairy products, including as raw materials for the food processing industry. Cooperation in machine building, oil refining, and pharmaceuticals is developing steadily. Thanks to the roadmap, by the end of next year the parties expect "an economic effect of about \$200 million in equivalent plus the already existing <...> rather serious figures"²². So there are good reserves for the growth of trade turnover.

First, it is the **intensification of mutual trade**. For example, exports of organizations of Belgospischeprom Concern to this South Caucasus country increased by almost ten percent in 2023. Last year, supplies of Belarusian sugar were resumed. Belsolod OJSC gained a foothold in the brewing market of Azerbaijan. Belarusian liquor products, alcohol, salt, bottled sunflower and rapeseed oil, ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, potato products, chips,

²¹ Ravkov: the effectiveness of interaction between Belarus and Azerbaijan is really impressive [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ravkov-rezultativnost-vzaimodejstvija-belarusi-i-azerbajdzhana-dejstvitelno-vpechatljaet-634465-2024/>

²² Foreign Ministry: Belarus and Azerbaijan are actively developing industrial cooperation and technology transfer [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/mid-belarus-i-azerbajdzhan-aktivno-razvivajut-promkooperatsiju-i-transfer-tehnologij-639523-2024/>

snacks, grain flakes, mixed and food concentrate seasonings were exported. A total of 18 enterprises shipped the products of Belgospisheprom Concern to the Azerbaijani market in 2023. And for two months of this year, the structure of foreign trade turnover of the concern with Azerbaijan "looks as follows: alcohol - 30.7%, spirits - 20.8%, confectionery - 18.9%, sugar - 18.3%, malt - 6.3%, salt - 2.2%, other products - 2.8%"²³. Another example of such a plan: the growth rate of supplies of the enterprises of the concern "Bellesbumprom" in 2023 to Azerbaijan increased by 20 percent. "The nomenclature of commodity items exported there includes board products, plywood, doors, wooden windows, furniture, sawn timber, paper, cardboard and products made of them"²⁴.

Exchange trade is also among the measures that contribute to the increase in Belarusian-Azerbaijani export-import supplies. For reference: as of June 1, 2024, 109 residents from this country were accredited at the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB). For five months of the current year, the total amount of transactions concluded by Azerbaijani importers on the BUTB amounted to more than \$47 million, which is almost four and a half times more than in the same period last year. It is noteworthy that "the entire volume of exchange exports to Azerbaijan fell on wood products, mainly sawn timber of coniferous species. At the same time, in physical terms, supplies increased 4.6 times to 265 thousand cubic meters"²⁵. As for the expansion of the nomenclature of goods involved in mutual trade, the most promising in this regard is the products of the agro-industrial

²³ "Belgospisheprom" told what products the enterprises of the concern supply to the Azerbaijani market [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospisheprom-rasskazal-kakuju-produktsiju-predpriyatija-kontserna-postavljajut-na-azerbajdzhanskij-634405-2024/>

²⁴ Export of woodworking products to Azerbaijan increased by 20% [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-produktsii-derevoobrabotki-v-azerbajdzhan-v-2023-godu-vyros-na-20-639640-2024/>

²⁵ Azerbaijan more than 4 times increased imports through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/azerbajdzhan-bolee-chem-v-4-raza-uvelicuil-import-cherez-butb-639795-2024/>

complex. In particular, the issue of using the opportunities of BUTB to sell Belarusian dairy products to Azerbaijan is currently being worked out. As for imports, bidders from Belarus are ready to buy food raw materials and groceries, including nuts and dried fruits, from this country.

The development of **transport ties between** Belarus and Azerbaijan is also related to the intensification of mutual trade. In May this year, Baku hosted a meeting of the heads of transport departments of the two countries, where it was noted that all the necessary conditions for the development of rail, air, and road transportation of cargo and passengers have been created. "Belavia Airlines performs flights on the route Minsk - Baku with a frequency of five times a week. The load of flights is 75%, which shows that the direction is in demand"²⁶. In the sphere of road transportation of goods, the parties exchange a sufficient number of permits, which actually corresponds to the permitless system. As for railway export-import transportation, "according to the results of work in 2023, the volume of loaded cargo to Azerbaijan increased 1.8 times compared to 2022, for five months of 2024, more than 270 thousand tons have already been loaded"²⁷. The most attractive for shippers is the land route through the border crossing "Astara" on the Azerbaijan-Iran border, where for five months of 2024, the volume of transportation amounted to about 34 thousand tons, which is 1.2 times more than in the same period last year. As part of the development of the North-South international transport corridor, Belarusian Railways in cooperation with Azerbaijan Railways created conditions for the organization of container service, which makes it possible to ensure the

²⁶ Belarus offers Azerbaijan to cooperate in the design of roads and railroads [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlagaet-azerbajdzhanu-sotrudnicat-v-proektirovanii-avtomobilnyh-i-zheleznih-dorog-634486-2024/>

²⁷ BZHD develops container service in communication Belarus-Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bzhd-razvivaet-kontejnernyj-servis-v-soobshchenii-belarus-azerbajdzhan-638753-2024/>

delivery of Belarusian products to Azerbaijan by rail in the shortest possible time, namely seven days.

The second reserve for the growth of trade turnover is the **expansion of industrial cooperation**. Back in May 2024, during the state visit of the Belarusian delegation to Baku, an agreement was reached to expand the production line at the Ganja Automobile Plant, where Belarusian machinery has been assembled for a long time. About 14 thousand tractors and almost four thousand cars from Belarus have already been produced. By the end of this year, Minsk Tractor Plant (MTZ) will supply 725 Belarus machines to Azerbaijan, while the total contract will amount to about \$16 million. The tractors will be delivered unassembled. Today the capacity of Ganja Automobile Plant is about two thousand tractors a year, and the range of varieties of these machines is very solid - 16 models. MTZ delivered to Azerbaijan "in January-April 2024 - about 200 units for the amount exceeding \$3 million"²⁸. If in 2022 in Ganja produced 700 tractors, last year - 777 units. By the end of 2024, it is planned to reach a thousand machines. In general, "the share of Belarusian tractors in the Azerbaijani market has already reached 80%"²⁹.

In addition, Azerbaijan intends to assemble Belarusian fire and municipal vehicles, including garbage trucks and Belarusian elevators. In this regard, a trilateral agreement has been signed to assemble fire-fighting equipment based on the chassis of Minsk Automobile Plant at the site of Ganja Automobile Plant. "The planned volumes are about 400 units"³⁰. A multi-brand service center will be built to service this equipment together

²⁸ MTZ will supply more than 720 tractors to Azerbaijan by the end of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-do-kontsa-goda-postavit-bolee-720-tractorov-v-azerbajdzhan-634350-2024/>

²⁹ The share of Belarusian tractors in the Azerbaijani market reached 80% [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dolja-belorusskih-tractorov-na-azerbajdzhanskom-rynke-dostigla-80-634341-2024/>

³⁰ Belarusian fire and municipal equipment is planned to be assembled in Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskuju-pozharnuju-i-kommunalnuju-tehniku-planirujut-sobirat-v-azerbajdzhane-639559-2024/>

with partners from Azerbaijan. Plus, joint production of medicinal and veterinary preparations, as well as mixed fertilizers made of Azerbaijani nitrogen and Belarusian potash will be established.

Another interesting project "will be the creation of a complex modern agro-town in Aghdam district, including production and processing of agricultural products, as well as housing and social facilities for workers and their families"³¹ . The settlement will be designed for 420 families. And to support local farmers, Azerbaijan plans to buy cattle from Belarus to implement self-employment programs. The fact is that 80 percent of agriculture in this South Caucasus country is based on small farms. And rural residents keep several heads of livestock. And the state is trying to support them. "At the first stage it is planned to bring in 500 heads"³² .

The third reserve for the growth of trade turnover is the **development of scientific and technical cooperation**. The basis for bilateral cooperation in this area is the agreement between the governments of Belarus and Azerbaijan on cooperation in science and technology, which was signed on June 3, 2010. A joint Belarusian-Azerbaijani working group on scientific and technical cooperation has been set up to coordinate cooperation between the countries. Three meetings of the working group have already been held, and two contests of joint scientific and technical projects have been held. In particular, "based on the results of the contest of joint scientific and technical projects held in 2022 jointly with the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, 4 projects are being implemented in the field of new materials, petrochemistry, plant protection"³³ . The Belarusian University of

³¹ Petrishenko told what joint productions Belarus and Azerbaijan will create [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/petrishenko-rasskazal-kakie-sovmestnye-proizvodstva-sozdadut-belarus-i-azerbajdzhan-639430-2024/>

³² Azerbaijan plans to buy Belarusian cattle to support local farmers [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/azerbajdzhan-planiruet-zakupit-belorusskij-krs-dlja-podderzhki-mestnyh-fermerov-634752-2024/>

³³ Belarus is interested in the development of scientific and technical cooperation with Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-razvitii-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-azerbajdzhanom-639498-2024/>

Informatics and Radioelectronics and the Institute of Physics of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan are developing new thin-layer composite materials for the production of memory elements. The United Institute of Mechanical Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Institute of Catalysis and Inorganic Chemistry of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan are developing innovative lubricants for heavily loaded and high-temperature friction units. The Institute of Biophysics and Cell Engineering of NAS of Belarus and the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology of NAS of Azerbaijan are developing new plant protection technologies based on silver nanoparticles. The National Research Center for Materials Science of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus together with the Institute of Physics of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan are developing innovative magneto-soft composite materials for the production of high-efficiency electric motors and other electrical devices. Realization of these projects in accordance with the calendar plan will be completed in 2024. And now the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus together with the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan is working on the preparation and holding of the fourth meeting of the working group, which is scheduled for the second half of this year, as well as on the next competition of joint scientific and technical projects for 2025-2026.

The fourth reserve for strengthening Belarusian-Azerbaijani relations is the **expansion of interregional interaction**. In May 2024, as part of the state visit of the Belarusian delegation to Azerbaijan, three documents were signed to establish twinning ties between the cities of the two countries: Minsk-Baku, Hrodna-Gabala, and Homel-Ganja. They added to the package of 11 similar documents that existed earlier. It should be noted that the cooperation of these twin cities will allow a wider use of regional potential to activate multifaceted interaction. "Special attention will be paid to the

implementation of joint projects in the field of economy, urban planning, local government, transportation and road infrastructure, housing, science, education, culture, preservation of historical and cultural heritage, urban planning, health care, environmental protection, sports and tourism"³⁴ . It is also envisaged to establish closer cooperation and develop direct contacts between industrial enterprises and companies, educational and scientific institutions, youth associations and creative unions. In general, the parties believe that "in the future, we will organize a forum of the regions of Belarus and Azerbaijan. This is a form that has proved itself well <...> with other countries"³⁵ .

In general, speaking about the results of the 14th meeting of the intergovernmental Belarus-Azerbaijan Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, we note that these two post-Soviet countries demonstrate positive dynamics in the development of bilateral relations, intensively accelerating their efforts to further expand and diversify trade and economic cooperation on mutually beneficial terms. Moreover, the parties have all the necessary resources to bring the partnership between Belarus and Azerbaijan to a qualitatively new level.

³⁴ Minsk, Homel and Hrodna established twinning ties with Azerbaijani cities [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minsk-gomel-i-grodno-ustanovili-pobratimskie-svjazi-s-azerbajdzhanskimi-gorodami-634656-2024/>

³⁵ Aleinik believes that Belarus and Azerbaijan may hold a forum of regions in the future [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/alejnik-schitaet-cto-belarus-i-azerbajdžan-v-perspektive-mogut-provesti-forum-regionov-635093-2024/>

Belarus - Tajikistan: task - to develop joint productions

In June 2024, Minsk hosted the 17th meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) on cooperation, at which the parties discussed the status and prospects of trade, economic and investment cooperation in transport and logistics, industrial cooperation, education and medicine, as well as interregional partnerships. Recall that at the 16th meeting of the IGC, held in the Tajik capital in September 2023, Minsk and Dushanbe noted "positive dynamics and untapped potential to emphasize not only simple supply of products, but also the expansion of cooperation ties, the creation of long-term joint projects, assembly plants..."³⁶

This time in the Belarusian capital, in order to make a new step in terms of deepening trade and economic cooperation, the parties set a clear task - to improve joint Belarusian-Tajik production. Moreover, there are already interesting examples. In particular, there is already a joint venture in Tajikistan that processes Belarusian milk and produces dairy products. Another area of cooperation is the assembly of Belarusian machinery in Tajikistan. At the 17th meeting of the IGC, it was noted that today there is a need to expand the area, the line of manufactured machinery and the range of products. The Tajik side is also interested in the assembly production of processing machinery, as well as motor vehicles and transport of housing and communal services. It should be recalled that the Belarusian-Tajik enterprise Agrotekhservis has been opened in Tajikistan, where machines of the Minsk Tractor Plant are assembled. The demand for this equipment is very high. Tajik agricultural producers are interested not only in Belarusian tractors, but also in combines. And there is already an agreement to buy

³⁶ Zalesky, B. Innovative Prospects. Evolutionary dynamics of economic relations of Belarus in the course of creating new partnerships / Boris Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. - C. 97.

machinery from Gomselmash. There are plans to expand cooperation with the Bobruisk Plant of Tractor Parts and Units.

Speaking about the sphere of Tajikistan's interests in Belarus, first, Tajikistan has been buying Belarusian pedigree cattle for the development of farms for several years. Last year alone, about two thousand cattle were purchased. And one of the enterprises in this Central Asian country is engaged in growing breeding stock for its further sale. Second, Tajik partners buy potatoes in Belarus. In 2023, their purchases amounted to 800 tons. This year, these figures will be increased. Third, another position of Belarusian exports to Tajikistan is flax seeds, which will be developed. Fourth, in turn, the Tajik side has already supplied Belarus with a trial version of safflower seeds, an oilseed crop, and can also provide tomato and cucumber seeds for growing in greenhouses. Finally, fresh potatoes, apples, cherries and apricots are already being harvested in Tajikistan from late April - early May. By setting up a logistics scheme, the parties could supply all these products in solid volumes.

Continuing this topic, we note that supplies of food products and agricultural raw materials from Belarus to Tajikistan last year amounted to more than 160 percent. "The basis of agricultural exports was formed by sugar (2.1 times growth), milk and milk products (growth rate of 140.9%), cattle (151.2%), meat and meat products (61.8%) <...>. Imports from Tajikistan in 2023 amounted to 103.8%. The basis of imports was supplies of dried fruits. Exports of food products and agricultural raw materials for January - March 2024 increased by 2.4 times"³⁷. In addition, within the framework of the 17th IGC meeting, the parties agreed to establish an

³⁷ Bartosz: deepening cooperation with Tajikistan is facilitated by the improvement of joint productions [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bartosz-uglubleniju-sotrudnichestva-s-tadzhikistanom-sposobstvuet-sovshenstvovanie-sovmestnyh-639287-2024>

exchange for the training of specialists in the field of agriculture, as well as students for internships.

Touching upon the topic of Belarusian-Tajik interregional partnership within the framework of the 17th IPC meeting, interesting examples of this interaction can be cited. In particular, Minsk and Dushanbe. In June this year, the two capitals discussed the possibility of supplying Dushanbe with snowplowing and passenger vehicles, spare parts, sugar, vegetable oil, as well as the construction in Minsk of a trade house of Tajikistan, the site of which is located in the vicinity of Pritytski and Leshchinski Streets. The necessary documents for the realization of this project are already being drawn up. In Dushanbe, Belarusian specialists are planned to assist in the implementation of a joint project with South Korea on the construction of a light subway. There are other areas of cooperation that are only developing. This is evidenced by the fact that "trade turnover [between Minsk and Tajikistan] exceeded the volume of the previous year only in the first quarter"³⁸.

The development of cooperation with Tajikistan is a promising direction for Gomel region as well. Suffice it to say that this year the trade turnover between the parties has already quadrupled. This Central Asian country supplies ferrous metal products, woodworking, dairy and confectionery products from the southeastern Belarusian region. And Tajikistan buys cotton yarn for the enterprises of Gomel region. As for the prospects of cooperation between the parties, they have already been practically defined in all directions. For example, batches of Gomel combine harvesters will be delivered to Tajikistan this year, and there are plans to purchase for the next year. In turn, Tajikistan is ready to supply lemons,

³⁸ Supplies of machinery, construction of a trading house. Minsk and Dushanbe discussed directions of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/postavki-tehniki-stroitelstvo-torgovogo-doma-minsk-i-dushanbe-obsudili-napraavljenija-sotrudnichestva-638915-2024/>

grapes, cherries, apricots, potatoes, dried fruits. The parties also have an opportunity to create trade houses, "which would allow to present goods from Tajikistan on Homel land, and in Tajikistan - what can please Homel producers"³⁹. The partners also have their own plans for cooperation in the sphere of agro-tourism and ecotourism, in health care institutions, in the educational sphere - especially in terms of personnel training for the agricultural sector.

Returning to the 17th meeting of the Belarusian-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission, we would like to note that the participants of this meeting focused on the issues of intensifying trade and economic cooperation, developing industrial cooperation and humanitarian interaction, emphasizing the importance of further fruitful progress in the most pressing areas of the partnership ties between Belarus and Tajikistan.

³⁹ From mechanical engineering to agrotourism. Gomel region and Tajikistan will develop partnership in agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ot-mashinostroenija-do-agroturizma-gomelskaja-oblast-i-tadzhikistan-budut-razvivat-partnerstvo-v-apk-639537-2024>

Belarus - Mongolia: a new stage of interaction begins

In March 2024, Belarusian Foreign Minister S. Aleinik paid an official visit to Mongolia. Aleinik's official visit to Mongolia in March 2024, during which an agreement was reached to raise the relations between Minsk and Ulaanbaatar to a higher level in order to intensify the whole range of contacts between the parties at the level of industries, economic entities, and business circles. In fact, we are talking about "a new stage in the relations between Belarus and Mongolia"⁴⁰. In this regard, the two countries will develop and soon sign a roadmap for cooperation until 2026, which will include the supply of Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment, municipal and road repair machines, emergency response equipment, elevator equipment, quarry equipment, and a full cycle of high-class and highly efficient agricultural production complexes specially adapted to the needs and requirements of Mongolian customers. The fact is that "Mongolia is actively developing, so there is a growing interest of Mongolian consumers in goods, including high-efficiency machinery and foodstuffs"⁴¹. In this context, the parties have already discussed the possibility of opening specialized trading platforms both in Minsk and Ulaanbaatar.

But the most urgent issue for this East Asian country is the development of the agro-industrial sector, as they intend to modernize a lot of things in agriculture, especially in the livestock industry, so that it goes from extensive nomadic to intensive state, as well as to create joint production of agricultural machinery for the subsequent equipping of Mongolian farms. During the visit it was noted that the sectoral ministries of

⁴⁰ Aleinik: a new stage begins in the relations between Belarus and Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/politics/view/alejnik-v-otnoshenijah-belarusi-i-mongolii-nachinaetsja-novyj-etap-621446-2024/>

⁴¹ Belarus and Mongolia will develop a road map of cooperation until 2026 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/politics/view/belarus-i-mongolija-razrabotajut-dorozhnyju-kartu-sotrudnichestva-do-2026-goda-621451-2024>

the parties "have prepared a road map for the development of cooperation in agriculture, there are prescribed projects and steps for their implementation. These include the construction of new and modernization of existing full-cycle dairy farms, supplies of cattle of Belarusian selection, veterinary drugs, seeds, specialized equipment, training and professional development of Mongolian specialists and, of course, supplies of agricultural machinery"⁴² .

There are already several production facilities in Mongolia that cooperate with Belarus. For example, the APU plant for the production of dairy, carbonated, and alcoholic beverages, which uses milk powder from Belarus to produce dairy products and Belarusian malt for beer production. In March this year, Minsk Tractor Works signed a road map with the Ministry of Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia to organize supplies of tractors with the capacity of 80-350 horsepower and plows. The road map reflects the plan of supplies for 2024-2025 with the prospect of cooperation until 2027. In March, the Belarusian side held talks with the Mongolian state-owned Agricultural Corporation to supply pedigree cattle, milking equipment, and build dairy production facilities for the needs of Mongolian farmers.

In addition, as part of this topic, following the results of the meetings in March this year in Ulan Bator, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) plans to diversify its commodity structure and increase the volume of exchange deliveries of Belarusian agro-industrial products to the Mongolian market. For reference, we note that "in September 2023, the first Mongolian stockbroker - United Meres Machinery, which has been working in the Belarusian market for quite a long time..."⁴³ . And the first

⁴² What are Belarus and Mongolia ready to offer each other? Details of Aleinik's talks in the government [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/chto-belarus-i-mongolija-gotovy-predlozhit-drug-dругu-podrobnosti-peregovorov-alejnika-v-pravitelstve-621640-2024/>

⁴³ Zalessky, B. Ideology of pragmatism. Features of partnership in the Belarusian economy: internal and external segments / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. - C. 146.

transaction involving a resident from Mongolia was concluded in January 2024. So far, the Mongolian market is supplied only with the products of Belarusian sugar mills. Almost one and a half thousand tons of this product have already been sold for a total of more than \$770 thousand. The work in this direction will be continued in the near future. Besides, "Mongolia is interested in importing Belarusian milk powder and butter. An agreement on cooperation on these commodity items has already been reached with four potential buyers - large food industry enterprises"⁴⁴ .

A separate topic is the interaction between Belarus and Mongolia in the sphere of emergency response. It is known that "thanks to the work of Belarusian equipment, more than 13 thousand people have already been rescued and property damage worth over \$20 million has been prevented"⁴⁵ . And now the parties are discussing several areas of prospective cooperation in this area. First, the Mongolian partners are interested in purchasing special fire-fighting equipment of Pozhsnab LLC based on MAZ chassis, as well as other equipment and special clothing. The parties are preparing to sign a new contract. We are talking about the delivery of more than 100 units of Belarusian fire-fighting equipment. Second, there is great interest in continuing training programs for Mongolian specialists on the basis of specialized institutions of Belarus.

Among other promising areas of Belarusian-Mongolian interaction in Ulaanbaatar were discussed: cooperation in the mining industry; modernization of elevator infrastructure in residential buildings. In addition, "emphasis was placed on the supply of municipal and passenger vehicles for the needs of Ulaanbaatar. The Mongolian side was also offered opportunities

⁴⁴ BUTB plans to increase exports of agricultural products to Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-velichit-eksport-belorusskoj-selhozproduktsii-v-mongoliju-622030-2024/>

⁴⁵ How Belarusian machinery helps to save people in Mongolia and where our milk powder is used. New details about Aleinik's visit [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kak-belorusskaja-tehnika-pomogaet-spasat-ljudej-v-mongolii-i-gde-ispolzujut-nashe-suhoe-moloko-novye-621781-2024/>

for the Belarusian side to supply rolling stock for the subway"⁴⁶ . In the humanitarian field, Minsk and Ulaanbaatar outlined projects "in the light of the large-scale state programs that are currently being implemented in Mongolia. Including the Billion Tree Program, which requires special training of forestry workers"⁴⁷ . In short, the parties agreed, expanding the legal framework of the relations between Belarus and Mongolia, to accelerate the work towards the signing of about ten bilateral documents - in agriculture, education, inter-university cooperation, emergency response, between law enforcement agencies and scientific institutions of the two countries.

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⁴⁶ Belarus plans to supply municipal and passenger vehicles to Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-postavljat-v-mongoliju-kommunalnuju-i-passazhirskuju-tehniku-621673-2024/>

⁴⁷ Transcript of the approach to the press of Minister S. Aleinik within the framework of the official visit to Mongolia (March 15, 2024, Ulan Bator) [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b1f3b3594a37a807.html

Belarus - Saudi Arabia: it is time to reactivate the whole complex of relations

In May 2024, Riyadh hosted the third meeting of the Belarus-Saudi Arabia Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), during which its participants identified practical steps to expand the legal framework, develop cooperation in the areas of industry, investment, standardization and certification, agriculture, science and technology, education, sports and tourism, medicine, and security. In addition, the parties noted "significant progress in reactivating the whole range of bilateral political, trade, economic and humanitarian relations between Belarus and Saudi Arabia and agreed to promote the maintenance of high dynamics of bilateral contacts"⁴⁸.

It should be recalled that the first two meetings of the BCC were held in 2015 and 2016. At the first one - in Riyadh - the parties established the Belarusian-Saudi Business Council to "become a platform for fruitful interaction between representatives of business circles of the two countries. At the same time, a contract was concluded for the supply of soil mixtures from the Belarusian company EridGrow Production"⁴⁹.⁵⁰The second - in Minsk - was the Belarusian-Saudi Business Forum and Contact and Cooperation Exchange organized under the auspices of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, where representatives of 63 enterprises and organizations from Belarus and 11 companies from Saudi Arabia participated and considered prospects for expanding cooperation "in the fields of construction, chemical industry, heavy industry, energy, telecommunications, information technology, real estate, trade and investment, food production, pharmaceuticals, tourism" xml-ph-0000@dee

⁴⁸ On the third meeting of the Joint Committee for Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/e892dc96bef2ae42.html

⁴⁹ Zalessky, B. Horizons of the far arc. The potential of interaction of the Republic of Belarus with the countries of Asia and Africa / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 33.

⁵⁰ Business forum "Belarus - Saudi Arabia". [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.cci.by/o-palate/novosti/biznes-forum-belarus-saudoovskaya-araviya/#>

It should be noted that the decisions of the third meeting of the SCS focused on the expansion of the legal framework of the Belarusian-Saudi relations. For reference: since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1997, Minsk and Riyadh have adopted about ten documents that formed the legal framework for bilateral contacts. These include the General Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, signed in 2003 and "regulating issues of bilateral cooperation in trade and economic, investment, educational, scientific, technical, cultural, information, tourism, youth and sports fields"⁵¹, as well as agreements on avoidance of double taxation and mutual protection of investments signed in 2009.

In January 2024, when a Belarusian delegation led by Foreign Minister S. Aleinik visited Saudi Arabia, the parties worked out the industrial, scientific, and business clusters of cooperation between the two countries, focusing on "ways to intensify scientific cooperation, identify new promising research projects, and develop contacts between scientists"⁵². In particular, agreements were reached to resume joint work on a number of fundamental and applied projects, as well as to exchange visits of scientists and researchers from the two countries. The sides also discussed Belarus' involvement in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, a large-scale economic diversification program, opportunities for industrial cooperation, supplies of Belarusian machinery, and prospects for joint projects in third countries.

Following the January talks, the sides reached a number of practical agreements that will be implemented this year. For example, Minsk and Riyadh will create a coordinating structure to promote mutual trade. For this purpose, in January this year "a memorandum of understanding was signed

⁵¹ Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: https://export.by/saudi_arabia

⁵² Prospects for new projects in science and economy. Aleynik's visit to Saudi Arabia has been completed [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/perspektivy-dlja-novyh-proektov-v-nauke-i-ekonomike-zavershen-vizit-alejnika-v-saudovskuju-araviju-608909-2024/>

between the National Center for Marketing [NCM] and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry [of Saudi Arabia]"⁵³ . And recently, the next very important step was taken: in May, Riyadh hosted a Belarusian-Saudi business forum, co-organized by NCM and the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which signed a memorandum of cooperation. At this forum the attention of Saudi companies was "drawn to the prospects of cooperation in industrial (BELAZ, "Mogilevkhimvolokno", "Polotsk-Steklovolokno") and agricultural ("Servolux", Vitebsk broiler poultry farm) sectors"⁵⁴ . In the same May 2024, Belarus and Saudi Arabia supplemented the contractual legal framework and signed a draft agreement on air traffic, and a memorandum of understanding was adopted between the aviation administrations of the two countries.

Another relevant topic of interaction between the parties is the role of exhibitions in the development of trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Saudi Arabia. Even during the first round of political consultations between the foreign ministries in the history of bilateral relations, held in December 2023 in the Saudi capital, it was noted that by resuming the full range of bilateral contacts on the basis of economic partnership development, the parties would "promote the intensification of direct interaction between the business circles of the two countries, exchange information, encourage participation in exhibitions in the territory of their countries"⁵⁵ . And already in March this year, the Belarusian side invited Saudi partners to participate in the Belagro agricultural exhibition.

⁵³ Belarus and Saudi Arabia will create a coordinating structure to promote mutual trade [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-saudovskaja-aravija-sozdadut-koordinirujuschuju-strukturu-po-sodejstviju-vzaimnoj-torgovle-609070-2024/>

⁵⁴ Belarus and Saudi Arabia intensify interaction between trade institutions [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-saudovskaja-aravija-aktivizirujut-vzaimodejstvie-mezhdu-institutami-torgovli-633452-2024/>

⁵⁵ From tourism to investments. The Belarusian delegation held rich negotiations in Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/ot-turizma-do-investitsij-belorusskaja-delegatsija-provela-nasyschennye-peregovory-v-saudovskoj-aravii-605885-2023/>

As for the participation of Belarusian exporters in Saudi exhibition forums, back in September 2023, Belarus presented a collective national exposition at the Foodex Saudi International Food Industry Exhibition in Riyadh, where 40 countries and more than 600 brands participated. "The Belarusian stand featured the flagships of dairy products: Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1, Slutsk Cheese Factory, Gluboka Milk Canning Plant, Kalinkovichi Dairy Plant, a branch of OJSC Rogachev MCC"⁵⁶ ."

And in May this year, the Saudi capital hosted the 2nd International Exhibition of Food Industry Saudi Food Show 2024, which brought together on one exposition platform more than a thousand major companies in the food industry from 97 countries. The Belarusian stand Belarus. The Taste of Nature stand was presented at this exhibition forum for the first time, but domestic exporters demonstrated a wide range of dairy products, including those made of milk powder, assorted cheeses and desserts. In particular, Slutsk Cheese Factory presented a line of lactose-free dairy products, elite cheeses with ginger, chia seeds, safflower petals, black and white truffle, frozen cheeses of the trademark "Klets kaya Krynachka" and "Yas Belous", as well as an innovative product - A2 milk, which contains milk protein type A2 and lacks beta-casein A1. A wide range of products was shown by one of the leaders of the Belarusian dairy industry - the company "Molochny Mir", including elite hard cheeses "Parmesan", "Maasdam", "GorodenĬ", cheese with black truffle, natural milk, natural cream and whipping cream, frozen cheese "GorodenĬ", dry and innovative products. "The share of export supplies of the enterprise to the international market is more than 65% with the volume of raw material processing about 660 thousand tons per

⁵⁶ Belarus presented its national exposition at the International Food Exhibition Foodex Saudi in Riyadh [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-natsionalnuju-ekspozitsiju-na-mezhdunarodnoj-pischevoj-vystavke-foodex-saudi-v-er-589285-2023/>

year"⁵⁷. Milkavita, a leading industry enterprise with a product portfolio of more than 150 items, presented at the exhibition packaged liquid milk and cream with long shelf life, butter, dry dairy products with improved solubility and temperature processing characteristics. And in this respect Saudi Arabia is one of the main partners of the enterprise.

Returning to the subject of the Belarusian-Saudi Joint Committee on Cooperation, we would like to emphasize that its third meeting clearly demonstrated the parties' focus on achieving concrete results in updating the entire range of trade and economic interaction. Let us hope that these decisions of the Committee will give a significant impetus to cooperation in other areas of bilateral relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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⁵⁷ Enterprises of Belarus present their potential at the exhibition of food industry in Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-belarusi-prezentujut-potentsial-na-vystavke-pischevoj-promyshlennosti-v-saudovskoj-aravii-635857-2024/>

Belarus - Zimbabwe: new step towards realizing the partnership potential

In February 2024, the first meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on Cooperation between Belarus and Zimbabwe was held in Harare. The Committee considered practical steps to develop cooperation between the two countries in the political, economic, social and security spheres, and identified promising areas and cooperation projects to be implemented in the medium and long term and to increase bilateral trade turnover. In particular, "the intention to continue the third phase of the complex project of mechanization of Zimbabwean agriculture was confirmed, agreements were reached on the supply of passenger and special equipment"⁵⁸.

It should be recalled that the first meeting of the commission was held against the backdrop of significant forward movement of the two countries in many areas. For example, the increase in exports of Belarusian products amounted to 103 percent by the end of 2023. The parties are successfully implementing tasks, primarily in the field of agricultural mechanization. Two phases of this project have already been implemented, "which allowed Zimbabwe to become self-sufficient in wheat production. By the end of 2023, Zimbabwe started exporting wheat to third countries for the first time in its history"⁵⁹. And new promising projects in a variety of areas have been outlined and will be implemented in the near future.

In particular, Belarus and Zimbabwe will reach a new level of cooperation in industry in 2024. This is stated in the memorandum of cooperation signed at the end of January this year by the two ministries - Industry of Belarus and Industry and Trade of Zimbabwe - to raise bilateral

⁵⁸ About the first meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on Cooperation between Belarus and Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c39b1509985063cc.html

⁵⁹ Transcript of the approach to the press of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs S. Aleinik on the results of his visit to Zimbabwe (February 23, 2024, Harare) [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/b0f6472abc0e46d5.html>

relations to a higher level and "to implement measures to develop international specialization and cooperation in production, to identify priorities in industries, as well as to promote the development and implementation of joint projects and programs"⁶⁰ .

Earlier, as part of the mechanization program launched in 2020, the Belarusian side supplied more than 1,800 tractors and about 80 combine harvesters to farms in Zimbabwe. "In addition to agricultural machinery, domestic fire trucks (more than a hundred in 2023) and BELAZs (more than fifty such vehicles are operating in Zimbabwe's quarries) are supplied to this country,"⁶¹ . And in January 2024, more than 30 tractors purchased in Belarus were put into service in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare, and sent to all parts of the city to help with garbage collection and any other tasks in which they may be involved. Especially since "Zimbabwe has people trained to maintain these tractors and also has workshops should the equipment need repairs"⁶² . Within the framework of the first meeting of the joint commission, the parties agreed to attract the necessary resources for the full implementation of the third phase of the mechanization program, "which provides for the supply of more than 3 thousand MTZ tractors and 80 Gomselmash combines to Zimbabwe" .⁶³

On the margins of the commission meeting in Harare, the Zimbabwe-Belarus business forum "Building a Strong Partnership: Leveraging a Shared Vision for a Sustainable Future" was also held, which, for example, included negotiations on a wide range of issues of economic and investment

⁶⁰ The Ministries of Industry of Belarus and Zimbabwe signed a Memorandum of Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://minprom.gov.by/18605-2/>

⁶¹ Belarus starts to supply tractor machinery and combines to Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-nachinaet-postavljat-traktornuju-tehniku-i-kombajny-v-zimbabwe-616746-2024/>

⁶² 31 tractors purchased in Belarus were put into operation in the capital of Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-stolitse-zimbabwe-vveli-v-ekspluatatsiju-31-traktor-zakuplennyj-v-belarusi-612817-2024/>

⁶³ Aleinik: Belarus is ready to organize a joint business forum with Zimbabwe in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/aleinik-belarus-gotova-organizovat-v-minske-sovmestnyj-s-zimbabwe-biznes-forum_i_167916.html

cooperation in medicine and pharmaceuticals, which resulted in "the signing of a memorandum between the management company of Belpharmprom Holding and the Zimbabwean company Graniteside Chemicals (PVT) Ltd. The document provides for the development of cooperation in terms of registration and supply of Belarusian medicines"⁶⁴. In addition, Belarus and Zimbabwe want to jointly enter the markets of southern African countries - Mozambique and Botswana. To this end, Minsk and Harare, moving on an upward trajectory, have outlined new projects. "These are joint assembly of Belarusian buses, cooperation in the gas mining industry, supply of Belarusian dairy products and baby food to Zimbabwe"⁶⁵.

The forum also heard information that in April 2024 Belarus intends to organize a national stand at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair 2024, a multi-sectoral international exhibition to be held in Bulawayo, which will showcase the industrial potential of Belarusian exporters. Last year the Made in Belarus exposition was represented by a range of products of 11 Belarusian companies. This time the products of Minsk Tractor Plant, Gomselmash, Minsk Automobile Plant, AMKODOR OJSC, Bobruiskagromash', Lidselmash and Pozhsnab OJSC will be demonstrated. "Also at the exhibition BELAZ OJSC will present a line of dump trucks and offer a number of services for further support and maintenance of its products"⁶⁶.

A new element of interaction between Minsk and Harare in the trade and economic sphere in 2024 will be the integration of the exchange mechanism into mutual trade between the two countries, which will open up

⁶⁴ Ministries of Health of Belarus and Zimbabwe have identified ways of cooperation in medicine [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdravy-belarusi-i-zimbabve-opredelili-puti-sotrudnichestva-v-meditsine-617370-2024/>

⁶⁵ Belarus and Zimbabwe want to enter the markets of southern African countries together [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-zimbabve-hotjat-vmeste-vyhodit-na-rynki-juzhnyh-stran-afriki-617255-2024/>

⁶⁶ Belarus will present a large-scale exposition at the multi-sectoral exhibition in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-predstavit-masshtabnuju-ekspozitsiju-na-mnogootraslevoj-vystavke-v-zimbabve-616800-2024/>

new opportunities for Belarusian and Zimbabwean business entities. In February this year, the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUTB) held talks with representatives of the African country, during which the parties emphasized that cooperation between Belarusian and Zimbabwean companies through the BUTB platform would not only ensure the growth of mutual trade turnover, but also facilitate access of Belarusian producers to the markets of third countries. Agriculture and metallurgy products are among the promising commodity areas. For example, "the possibility of using exchange trading to export Belarusian dairy products, rapeseed oil, and sugar to Zimbabwe is being considered. As for import transactions, Zimbabwean suppliers of non-ferrous metals, cotton and horticultural products will be attracted to the BUTB for this purpose"⁶⁷ .

And one more example in the context of cooperation between Belarus and Zimbabwe. An interesting continuation of cooperation between the two countries in the field of emergency response turned out to be at the end of 2023. In November in Harare, about 60 specialists from 22 Zimbabwean regions participated in training courses on two main programs - "Training of Operators of Fire Fighting and Rescue Equipment, Equipment and Tools in Fire Fighting" and "Training of Fire Fighting and Rescue Department Commanders" - based on the Belarusian technical center Bison Agra Machinery and the Fire Brigade City of Harare. The participants of these courses "practiced skills in working with firefighting equipment and mastered the technologies of emergency rescue operations, including firefighting in buildings and structures, extraction of victims, evacuation from the upper floors of buildings, elimination of the consequences of road accidents and first aid"⁶⁸ . The training has been a valuable experience in

⁶⁷ Zimbabwe is interested in the development of exchange trade with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/zimbabwe-zainteresovano-v-razvitiibirzhevoj-torgovli-s-belarusju-617283-2024/>

⁶⁸ Special course in 35 days. Teachers of the University of Civil Protection of the Ministry of Emergency Situations trained specialists in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

improving the skills and preparedness of Zimbabwean emergency responders.

All these examples show that Belarus and Zimbabwe are ready to further cooperate in a wide range of areas and to extend the opportunities of Belarusian-Zimbabwean cooperation to other countries of the Southern African region.

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Grodnoinvest Free Economic Zone: prerequisites for growth - new projects

According to the results of 2023, the Free Economic Zone (FEZ) Grodnoinvest became the leader among other Belarusian FEZs in terms of the volume of accumulated foreign investments by its resident enterprises - 880 million dollars. And this year the investment sites of this FEZ, having all the infrastructure for successful work, have all the prerequisites for further growth. Suffice it to say that "over the last 5 years foreign direct investment (FDI) on a net basis has grown 2.6 times, output - 1.9 times, revenue - 1.7 times <...>, export of products - 1.6 times"⁶⁹. Residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest account for up to 85 percent of FDI on a net basis, up to 25 percent of industrial output and up to 43 percent of exports in the regional indicators.

And in 2024 among the priority tasks of this FEZ should be named - "growth of investments in fixed capital by 5.7%, export of goods by 7.8%, wages of employees by 12.4%, registration of 4 new residents, development of engineering and transport infrastructure of FEZ with construction of 4 new facilities"⁷⁰. Fulfillment of these indicators will be ensured by increasing production volumes by existing residents, including at the expense of new enterprises in Grodno and Svisloch districts, as well as implementation of construction of a railway terminal in Svisloch district, a production building for organizing the production of containers and packaging in Slonim and expansion of a number of existing production facilities.

For reference, we would like to remind you that in the first quarter of 2023 alone, residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest commissioned nine production

⁶⁹ Abramenko: investment sites of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" have all the infrastructure for successful work [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-investploschadki-sez-grodnoinvest-obladajut-vsej-infrastrukturuj-dlja-uspeshnoj-raboty-577583-2023/>

⁷⁰ Abramenko: FEZ administrations need to keep under control the implementation of investment projects of residents [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/abramenko-administratsijam-sez-nuzhno-derzhat-na-kontrolje-hod-realizatsii-investproektov-rezidentov-631354-2024/>

and engineering facilities worth over eight million Belarusian rubles as part of the implementation of investment projects in Grodno Region. Among them is Aquapack Industrial LLC, which installed an automatic line for the assembly of grids as part of the project to create the production of packaging and flexible labeling. "Optik Plant" OJSC commissioned a glass furnace in the course of modernization of fiber production. Slonimbel" enterprise installed new equipment during the modernization of production, Slonim cardboard and paper plant "Albertin" reconstructed local treatment facilities. JLLC "BelGreenline" launched a new line for production and packaging of wet wipes"⁷¹. As for PT "Typhoon" LLC, the company reconstructed storage areas in the course of expanding the production of construction mixtures. Konus RUE completed the construction of the building of the administrative and household complex. Grodno Glass Plant within the framework of the project on creation of glass container production using innovative energy-efficient and resource-saving technologies organized the first ignition of the furnace and started the process of equipment debugging and industrial testing of production lines. "Smorgon Aggregate Plant" at this stage is carrying out technical armament to automate production processes, increase output and introduce new models of agricultural machinery.

Another important detail: in 2023, six new residents were registered in the FEZ Hrodnainvest. First, it is **ZapadTransGranitsa LLC**, which is building an international trade and logistics complex near Grodno airport - in the area of the agro-town of Obukhovo. "This complex will make it possible to use the logistic potential of Grodno region, to attract investments in the creation of a multimodal center that has no analogues in the region, to

⁷¹ FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents put into operation 9 new objects in the first quarter of 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-v-pervom-kvartale-2023-goda-vveli-v-ekspluatatsiju-9-novyh-objektov-559606-2023/>

involve in economic activity the building of the air terminal that has not been completed, to attract tourists and foreign trading companies..." .⁷²

Secondly, it is the **Novogrudok Construction and Installation Department OJSC**, which implements in Novogrudok the production of construction materials, including reinforced concrete and joinery products, metal structures, with the reconstruction of shops and maximum utilization of existing capacities, as well as the purchase of new equipment. This project will "create new jobs with decent wages, expand the range of products and increase production volumes, and establish export deliveries..." .⁷³

Thirdly, it is **JSC "Grodno Lathe Chuck Plant "BelTAPAZ"**, which produces lathe chucks and spare parts for machine-tool and tool industries. "The investment project involves the purchase and installation of new technological equipment to expand the existing and master the production of a new product line. The realization of the project will allow the plant to increase export deliveries, to provide an increase in revenues to the budget and extra-budgetary funds, to increase its own financial potential"⁷⁴ . It should be noted that more than ten projects in the FEZ "Grodnoinvest" are already being implemented in the sphere of production of machinery and auto components, industrial equipment and construction machinery, optics and electronics, the annual output of which exceeds two hundred million dollars.

In November, the FEZ registered the fourth resident of 2023 - **LuckyPat LLC**, which intends to organize the production of dry and wet food, as well as various accessories and natural fillers for pets in Hrodna, in

⁷² Zalesky, B. Export growth strategy. Opportunities and challenges of open economy in modern conditions / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 57.

⁷³ A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" will expand the production of construction materials in Novogrudok [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-organizuet-proizvodstvo-stroitelnyx-materialov-v-novogrudke/>

⁷⁴ A new resident with export-oriented production is registered in FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-s-ekspornno-orientirovannym-proizvodstvom-zaregistirovan-v-sez-grodnoinvest-596436-2023/>

the Kolbasino district. It is expected that these products "will contribute to the substitution of similar goods imported to the market of the Republic of Belarus, as well as will be exported to the EAEU countries and neighboring countries. The launch of finished products is planned for the second quarter of 2024"⁷⁵.

In the same November last year, another resident of FEZ Grodnoinvest appeared - **ErNex Adaptive Technologies CJSC**, which creates innovative production of sodium and LED lamps for the needs of agriculture and medicine. The point is that these products are able to adjust to the state of a living organism taking into account its personal living conditions, growth phases, climatic components, time of day, as this is in demand for both the greenhouse industry and the animal world. "The construction of a modern production and storage complex and a research center is planned. The total investment costs will amount to more than \$9 million. 82 new jobs are planned to be created during the whole period of the project realization"⁷⁶. In the course of the project realization the initiators intend to participate in scientific developments and interaction with major regional and foreign industry educational institutions. It is planned that the main part of manufactured products will be exported. The project will also be aimed at import substitution, as it will significantly reduce imports of similar products to Belarus.

The sixth FEZ resident in 2023 was **KOM-UNION LLC** with a project to expand the production of tools for the construction and agricultural sectors in Grodno district - in Novaya Goza. For this purpose, "it is planned to reconstruct the existing production facility, build an administrative and

⁷⁵ A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" organizes the production of products for pets [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-organizuet-proizvodstvo-produkcii-dlya-domashnix-zhivotnyx/>

⁷⁶ A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" organizes innovative production of adaptive lighting systems [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-organizuet-innovatsionnoe-proizvodstvo-adaptivnyh-sistem-osveschenija-600747-2023/>

utility building and warehouses, as well as modernize and purchase additional equipment to expand the range of products"⁷⁷. Interestingly, this project also has an export and import-substitution orientation. On the one hand, deliveries of finished products of the new resident will be made to the markets of the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union. On the other hand, they will make it possible to systematically reduce imports of similar products to Belarus.

And finally, in early January 2024, the 81st resident of FEZ Grodnoinvest was registered. This is **AgroFertCom LLC**, which is creating a multi-profile production of liquid fertilizers in the Aulsa district. The liquid fertilizers planned for production have high biological activity, provide better availability of nutrition elements for plants in comparison with the corresponding inorganic fertilizers. The products will be characterized by low toxicity and high manufacturability. "In order to implement the investment project, it is planned to acquire and reconstruct production areas, as well as modern technological equipment. It is planned to create more than 10 new jobs during the project realization period"⁷⁸. The products of the new resident will be focused on the development of export supplies to near and far abroad countries.

All these facts suggest that the FEZ Grodnoinvest, where in 2023 six enterprises in the fields of logistics, mechanical engineering and metalworking, production of construction materials in Grodno, Grodno and Novogrudok districts with total investments of more than 50 million dollars became residents, will show even more impressive results in 2024, based on

⁷⁷ A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" will expand the production of construction and agrotechnical tools [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyy-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-rasshirit-proizvodstvo-instrumentov-dlya-stroitelnyx-rabot/>

⁷⁸ A new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" will create a modern multi-profile production of liquid fertilizers [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyy-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-sozdast-sovremennoe-mnogoprofilnoe-proizvodstvo-zhidkix-udobrenij/>

a well-thought-out strategy that can give a significant boost to the socio-economic development of the Grodno region.

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Free Economic Zone "Brest": for realization of investment projects

In 2024, free economic zones (FEZs) of Belarus continue to successfully implement investment projects, which are related to the increase in exports, development of import substitution and profit growth. For example, FEZ "**Brest**" possesses the necessary potential for the implementation of regionally significant investment projects. In the first quarter of this year, its residents increased the volume of investment in fixed assets by 2.3 times, as well as "increased the production of goods (by 17%), added to the export of goods..."⁷⁹. In particular, in February, **OJSC "Barkhim"** - a resident of the FEZ since 2011 - implemented an investment project of about three million Belarusian rubles under the program "One district - one project". It is a workshop for the production of liquid detergents. As a result, "a second filling line was built and the existing production was modernized. This makes it possible to significantly increase the output of products, including laundry gels, liquid soap, conditioners and bleaches for laundry"⁸⁰.

Other FEZ residents will also ensure the pace of development of investment projects in key areas this year. In Pinsk, the establishment of an enterprise for the production of batteries will be finalized. A complex for extruded aluminum profile production will be built in Brest district by the end of the year. New projects will be launched: in Pinsk - the creation of the production of plastic components for car batteries, in Kobrin - the creation of the production of chrome-plated blanks for hydraulic cylinder rods. In addition, FEZ residents will continue to expand the geography of sales of

⁷⁹ FEZ "Brest" residents in the first quarter increased 2.3 times the volume of investment in fixed assets [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-sez-brest-v-i-kvartale-narastili-v-23-raza-objem-investitsij-v-osnovnoj-kapital-630171-2024/>

⁸⁰ A resident of FEZ "Brest" implemented an investment project under the program "One district - one project". [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/rezident-sez-brest%C2%BB-aoa-%C2%ABbarxim%C2%BB-realizoval-investproekt-v-ramkax-programmyi-%C2%ABodin-rajon-%E2%80%93-odin-proekt%C2%BB>

their products with the development of new directions in the Asian and African regions. All this will be done in order to solve priority tasks of FEZ for the current year, including "to provide growth of investments in fixed assets by 25%, export of goods - by 8%, production - by 5%, wages of employees - by 11.6%"⁸¹, as well as to attract at least three new residents.

Recall that now 78 residents are registered in FEZ "Brest". Four of them appeared in 2023. First, it is **SanSpectr LLC**, which is engaged in the implementation of an investment project to create a transport and logistics complex "West-East" on a section of railway tracks in the area of Brest-Severny station, where warehousing and storage of goods will be carried out, and related forwarding and customs services will be provided. The project realization period is five years. The FEZ resident intends to "invest more than seven and a half million Belarusian rubles and create about 20 new jobs"⁸². This complex will contribute to solving bottlenecks in the handling of container trains within the Brest railroad hub running in the East-West-East directions.

Secondly, it is the **Private Enterprise "EViYAR"**, which implements an investment project on the vacant premises of Brest Electromechanical Plant, associated with the organization of production of LED lighting fixtures and lighting systems for industrial and consumer use - for poultry farms and greenhouse complexes, for street lighting. As consumers of these products are considered the subjects of "agro-industrial complex, farms, housing and communal services and homeowners' associations. At the same time, a significant part of the enterprise's products

⁸¹ Abramenko: FEZ "Brest" has the necessary potential for the realization of regionally significant investment projects [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/abramenko-sez-brest-obladaet-neobhodimym-potentsialom-dlja-realizatsii-regionalno-znachimyh-630919-2024/>

⁸² Zaleskii, B. Hope for the positive future. Dynamics of partnerships under conditions of economic realism / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 48.

is expected to be exported..."⁸³. At least 500 thousand euros will be invested in the new production for three years and 20 additional jobs will be created.

Thirdly, it is **Sifaniya-Ekotechnika**, which plans to implement a project of export-oriented production of special machines and equipment for sorting and deep processing of waste, as well as grain drying equipment on a six-hectare plot of land. This resident produces full-cycle equipment that helps to solve problems in the field of ecology and environmental protection. "The production of new products will be set up in the production buildings, previously belonging to the Brestselmash plant, after reconstruction. Within the framework of the investment project it is planned to develop the production of technological equipment for processing rubber and plastics, which will be further used in the manufacture of various products"⁸⁴. In addition, the production of equipment for processing solid municipal and industrial waste using the latest technologies will be mastered.

Fourth, it is **"1 AK-Plastic" LLC**, which was registered in the FEZ on the eve of the new year with an investment project to create a production of plastic components for car batteries in Pinsk. We are talking, first of all, about the production of plastic casings, which are still purchased on foreign markets. "The project envisages investment in fixed capital in the amount equivalent to \$9.3 million. It is planned to employ about 90 workers at the additionally introduced workplaces"⁸⁵. Production, storage and administrative premises will be built.

And in 2024, two more new residents appeared in the FEZ "Brest". The first one is a specialized enterprise **Kobrin Tool Plant SITOMO**

⁸³ A new resident of FEZ "Brest" will establish the production of LED lamps [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-brest-naladit-praizvodstvo-svetodiodnyh-svetilnikov-565824-2023/>

⁸⁴ New resident of FEZ "Brest" plans to develop export-oriented production [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/novyj-rezident-sez-%C2%ABrest%C2%BB-planiruet-razvivat-eksportorientirovanoe-praizvodstvo>

⁸⁵ 1 AK-Plastic Ltd. is a new resident of FEZ "Brest" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/ooo-%C2%AB1-ak-plastik%C2%BB-%E2%80%93-novyj-rezident-sez-%C2%ABrest%C2%BB>

OJSC, which is the only one in Belarus that manufactures locksmith and assembly tools used in machine building, repair service, technological equipment and as household tools. In cooperation with OJSC "BMZ - managing company of the holding company "BMZ", the new resident will establish "production of import-substituting, innovative for Belarus products, which will be used in the manufacture of hydraulic cylinders and shock absorbers. For this purpose it is planned to demolish the old production building and build a new shop where modern high-tech equipment will be installed"⁸⁶ and where chrome-plated blanks of hydraulic cylinder rods will be produced. This project will be implemented with the support of the Innovation Fund of the Brest Regional Executive Committee with the inclusion of SITOMO in the State Program of Innovative Development for 2021-2025. The total investment for five years will exceed 28 million euros, and the number of new jobs will exceed 40.

In the second case, a new FEZ resident - **Industrial Vostok Engineering-Bel LLC** - will organize in Baranovichi the production of non-standard equipment for mining, chemical and oil refining industries, metallurgy, energy and construction industry. "The nomenclature of products planned for production includes: gas cleaning and dust collecting equipment and its parts for various types of production; non-standard metal structures and non-standard equipment (valves, membranes, fans, pumps)"⁸⁷. At the first stage the vacant production facilities of another enterprise-resident of FEZ "Brest" - **OJSC "Baranovichi Automatic Lines Plant"** - with the area of about two and a half thousand square meters will be used.

⁸⁶ A new resident creates import-substituting production on the territory of FEZ "Brest" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/novyij-rezident-sozdaet-na-territorii-sez-%C2%ABrest%C2%BB-importozameshhayushhee-proizvodstvo>

⁸⁷ "Industrial East Engineering-Bel" - a new resident of FEZ "Brest". [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/%C2%ABindustrial-vostok-inzhiniring-bel%C2%BB-%E2%80%93-novyij-rezident-sez-%C2%ABrest%C2%BB>

And the potential of new participants of this free economic zone is not exhausted by these residents. For example, only this year the representatives of FEZ "Brest" have already participated in such major business events as the Third Belarusian-Latin American Forum, business contacts forum "Brest-China. Strategic Partnership", the 53rd Chinese International Furniture Exhibition GIFF Guangzhou 2024, a meeting with representatives of Italian business circles from the association "Veneto-Belarus", where specific negotiations with business entities from a number of countries interested in cooperation took place. And in February 2024 in Uzbekistan FEZ "Brest" Administration signed a Cooperation Agreement with FEZ "Angren" Directorate "with the purpose of direct contacts on trade and economic interaction and elaboration of perspective projects on the basis of production cooperation"⁸⁸ . The parties agreed to develop business cooperation, maintain bilateral contacts on issues of mutual interest. And such facts show that FEZ "Brest" continues to strengthen the work on improvement and creation of conditions for attracting new investors.

⁸⁸ Business meeting with Uzbek partners [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://fezbrest.com/361959-delovaya-vstrecha-s-uzbekskimi-partnerami>

Gomel-Raton Free Economic Zone: to fulfill key objectives

The results of the first quarter of 2024 show that residents of Belarusian free economic zones (FEZs) demonstrate positive dynamics. In particular, exports of goods increased by three and a half percent in the first three months of this year and amounted to over two billion dollars. This figure is a record for such a period for all the time of FEZ functioning in Belarus. At the same time, resident enterprises "significantly increased the volume of supplies of their products to Asian countries: to Kazakhstan - 1.1 times, to India - 1.2 times, to Tajikistan - 1.3 times, to China - 1.5 times, to Turkey - 1.6 times, to Turkmenistan - 2.1 times, to Iraq - 4.5 times"⁸⁹. Domestic FEZs continue to have a significant impact on regional indicators, accounting for up to half of the export volumes of a number of Belarusian regions.

Among the leaders in this indicator is FEZ "Gomel-Raton", where in 2022 almost 105 million dollars of foreign direct investment was attracted for the implementation of investment projects, or more than half of the volume of foreign investment in Gomel region. At the same time, at the beginning of 2023, 67 residents worked in the FEZ, including 24 companies with foreign capital from 15 countries. "In total, 3 new resident enterprises with the volume of declared investments of \$2.3 million were registered in 2022. Foreign trade turnover of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents according to the results of work in 2022 increased by 7.8% compared to the same period of 2021 and amounted to \$2.6 billion"⁹⁰. The residents sold most of their products outside Belarus. Exports of FEZ participants' goods account for

⁸⁹ Export of goods of FEZ residents in the first quarter exceeded \$2 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-tovarov-rezidentov-sez-v-i-kvartale-prevysil-2-mlrd-635605-2024>

⁹⁰ Foreign trade turnover of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" increased by 7.8% last year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vneshnetorgovyj-oborot-sez-gomel-raton-uvelichilsja-za-proshlyj-god-na-78-552223-2023>

almost forty percent of the region's exports. In 2023, exports of FEZ residents amounted to almost one and a half billion dollars.

Now 63 investment projects are being implemented here at various stages. 25 enterprises with foreign capital from 13 countries operate in the FEZ. Residents' enterprises employ nearly 30 thousand people. In 2023, 545 people will be hired for additional jobs⁹¹. At the same time, the growth of investments of residents of this FEZ last year amounted to 163 percent or 315.5 million Belarusian rubles. If we talk about the growth of foreign direct investment on a net basis, it grew by 150 percent or \$38.2 million. "Among the new objects introduced by FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents in 2023 are a workshop for the production of sterile medical products at the enterprise "Alcopack", metalworking shop "Veza - G", reconstructed administrative and laboratory buildings "Mirtek-engineering" and "TM BELAR", a warehouse of mineral fertilizers of Gomel chemical plant⁹². In addition, FEZ resident - SvetlogorskKhimvolokno OJSC - has mastered the production of latex and nitrile gloves. For this purpose about 10 million dollars of investments were directed. And "the project on production of three-layer polyethylene film is at the stage of completion - now the equipment is being installed. Capacity - 4 thousand tons per year..."⁹³. Already in 2024, another FEZ resident - JSC "Milkavita" - began to produce fast-soluble milk powder, which has no analogues in Belarus. The thing is that milk in this case is subjected to low-temperature drying, while not losing its useful properties. "The innovative product can be subsequently used to

⁹¹ FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents exported goods worth \$1.4 billion in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-eksportirovali-tovarov-na-14-mlrd-v-2023-godu-618590-2024>

⁹² Over Br315 million invested in production by residents of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/svyshe-br315-mln-investirovali-v-proizvodstvo-rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-v-2023-godu-618608-2024>

⁹³ FEZ resident "Gomel-Raton" has established the production of import-substituting products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://gomelraton.com/press-center/news/rezident-sez-gomel-raton-naladil-vypusk-importozameshchayushchey-produktsii/>

produce cheese, sour cream, cottage cheese and other dairy products. The payback period of the project is about 8 years"⁹⁴ .

Another indicative fact: last year five enterprises were registered in this FEZ: two new residents - in Gomel, two - in Mozyr, one - in Svetlogorsk district. For example, LLC "Geflis" implements an investment project on development in the field of reconstruction, modernization and repair of sewage treatment facilities, LLC "GOSNIP" - on the organization of production of cable and wire products, LLC "Ameta-Electrod" implements "a project to organize the production of a full cycle of welding rutile electrodes for manual arc welding. <...> The project provides for the creation of 197 additional jobs"⁹⁵ . In June 2023 CJSC "BELPLASTKHIM" was registered in FEZ with an investment project on modernization and development of wallpaper production with the purpose of "development of a fundamentally new type of products - profile embossed wallpaper <...>. The number of employees hired for the additionally introduced workplaces will amount to 73 persons"⁹⁶ .

And in the third quarter of last year, another new FEZ resident, ProfitPlastMetal LLC, started implementing an investment project to create a production facility for cast iron products to meet the needs of domestic and foreign enterprises on the premises formerly owned by Mozyr Distillery. "The nomenclature of manufactured products will include both finished cast iron products (heating radiators, various fasteners, hatches, ladders, ladders,

⁹⁴ The enterprise-resident of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" OJSC "Milkavita" plans to switch to the production of quick-soluble milk powder, which has no analogues in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <http://gomelraton.com/press-center/news/predpriyatie-rezident-sez-gomel-raton-oao-milkavita-planiruet-pereyti-k-vypusku-sukhogo-bystrorastvo/>

⁹⁵ Registration of a new resident of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" took place [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://gomelraton.com/press-center/residents/sostoyalas-registratsiya-novogo-rezidenta-sez-gomel-raton/>

⁹⁶ In FEZ "Gomel-Raton" a new resident CJSC "BELPLASTKHIM" is registered [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://gomelraton.by/press-center/residents/v-sez-gomel-raton-zaregistririvan-novyy-rezident-zao-belplastkhim/>

consoles, plinths, grates, cast iron utensils) and cast iron blanks"⁹⁷ . At this enterprise it is planned to increase the number of employees to 105 people.

As for 2024, the FEZ is already negotiating "with potential domestic investors to organize export-oriented and import-substituting production of local treatment facilities, polyethylene and polypropylene products, metal structures of various complexity, reinforced concrete structures and reinforcement products"⁹⁸ . And in general, if we talk about the prospects of FEZ "Gomel-Raton", it should be noted: they plan to actively develop engineering and transport infrastructure, to provide resident enterprises with trained personnel in order to significantly expand opportunities and fulfill the key objectives of 2024 - "growth of investment in fixed capital by 25%, exports of goods by 5% and wages of employees by 11.8%, registration of 4 new residents"⁹⁹ , as well as to introduce new formats of interaction with FEZ participants, investors and foreign partners.

⁹⁷ A new resident of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" will launch the production of cast iron products [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-gomel-raton-zapustit-proizvodstvo-izdelij-iz-chuguna-579381-2023/>

⁹⁸ Five enterprises received the status of FEZ "Gomel" resident in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/pjat-predpriyatij-poluchili-status-rezidenta-sez-gomel-raton-v-2023-godu-618615-2024/>

⁹⁹ Abramenko: FEZ "Gomel-Raton" actively participates in personnel training for its residents [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/abramenko-sez-gomel-raton-aktivno-uchastvuet-v-podgotovke-kadrov-dlja-svoih-rezidentov-632039-2024/>

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