

## A space of trust

The Declaration on Further Development of Economic Processes within the Eurasian Economic Union until 2030 and for the Period until 2045 "The Eurasian Economic Way" identifies the task of positioning the EAEU as one of the centers for the formation of the Greater Eurasian Partnership as one of the key directions of prospective integration construction, which involves all interested regional and global economies in trade, logistics and economic interaction in mutually beneficial formats, based on the Eurasian Economic Way. In December 2024, at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, the leaders of the Eurasian Five countries approved the main directions of the EAEU's international activities for 2025. The priority areas include continuing the dialogue on trade and economic issues with the nearest neighbors, developing cooperation with the Union's observer states, and deepening cooperation with key integration associations in Eurasia, Africa, and Latin America. How are these program provisions implemented in practice? This is the subject of this paper.



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*Evolution of international cooperation of the Eurasian Economic Union Eurasian Economic Union on different continents*

**Boris Zalesskij**

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Evolution of international co-operation

Eurasian Economic Union on different continents

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## From memorandums and agreements to practical cases

Intensification of economic cooperation with international organisations and foreign countries is one of the most important areas of development of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) until 2025. At the same time, the international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as "creating conditions for joint entry of enterprises of member states into the markets of third countries..."<sup>1</sup>. In December 2022, at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Bishkek, the main directions of the EAEU's international activities for 2023 were approved, where, in the context of the idea of the Greater Eurasian Partnership, the EAEU's priorities will promote the realisation of the export potential of the Union's countries.

As of mid-November 2022, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) had already concluded "46 memorandums with international organisations, 27 memorandums with governments, ministries and agencies of third countries, 14 memorandums with regional integration and interstate associations, 7 trade agreements with third countries"<sup>2</sup>. In 2023, the EAEU will interact with the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the European Union, the BRICS countries, as well as with the World Customs Organisation, the World Trade Organisation and the African Union. In this context, the development of dialogue with the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** (ASEAN) is one of the priorities of the EAEU's international activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Zalessky, B. Format of Eurasian integration. Collection of articles / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Approved the Main directions of the EAEU international activities for 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/utverzhdeny-osnovnye-napravleniya-mezhdunarodnoy-deyatelnosti-eaes-na-2023-god/>



ASEAN is a regional organisation comprising 10 Southeast Asian countries - Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia - established to promote social, economic and cultural cooperation in the region. The ECE has been successfully cooperating with the ASEAN Secretariat since 2018 under the Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Cooperation. The purpose of this document is to promote economic cooperation to enhance trade, economic and investment interaction between EAEU member states and ASEAN in "the following areas: a) customs regulation and trade facilitation; b) sanitary and phytosanitary measures; c) technical regulation; d) e-commerce; e) trade in services and investment; f) entrepreneurship development, primarily for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises..."<sup>3</sup>

A Cooperation Programme for 2020-2025 has been adopted to implement the Memorandum. It covers such areas as customs legislation and law enforcement, trade policy, business activities, technical and antimonopoly regulation, SPS measures, energy, functioning of domestic markets. All this work contributes to the growth of trade and economic co-operation of EAEU states with ASEAN countries. "In 2021, the Union's foreign trade turnover with ASEAN increased by 34.6 per cent to \$23.9 billion". The Union's exports rose to \$10.2bn (up 53.5 per cent) and imports to \$13.7bn (up 23.3 per cent). ASEAN's share in the Union's foreign trade turnover was 2.8 per cent"<sup>4</sup>. The Parties focus on new points of growth, search for balanced solutions for successful interaction and new long-term forms of cooperation, identifying prospects for the

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<sup>3</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the field of economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/%D1%8E%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82+%D0%90%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%8F+%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81+%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BB.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> EAEU and ASEAN increase the volume of trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeu.org/news/eaes-i-asean-narashchivayut-obemy-tovarooborota/>.

development of scientific, technical and innovative interaction, industrial cooperation, as well as mechanisms for the exchange of practices and competences, taking into account the goals of sustainable development. In particular, the digitalisation of the economy, where the EAEU and ASEAN have their own serious developments of mutual interest, is among the promising areas of cooperation. In order to steadily increase trade, it is necessary to strengthen co-operation in the financial and banking sphere, including the use of payments in national currencies. The Eurasian Economic Union is successfully developing co-operation with the governments of a number of ASEAN countries in bilateral formats, including **Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia**.

Speaking about cooperation with **Indonesia**, we recall that in September 2022, the EEC Council decided to start negotiations with this country to conclude a free trade agreement in 2023. Indonesia is the largest economy in ASEAN and the fourth in the world - in terms of population, so trade relations with this Asian state have significant potential. "The EAEU's trade turnover with Indonesia in 2021 increased by 41.5% to \$3.7bn compared to 2020. At the same time exports added 34.1 per cent, imports increased by 44.5 per cent"<sup>5</sup>. At the end of the three quarters of 2022, trade turnover between the parties grew by almost half, with EAEU exports increasing more than two and a half times. And there is confidence that the liberalisation of trade conditions may allow to increase trade turnover by at least another \$1.5 billion. In December 2022, the EAEU and Indonesia recorded an agreement to hold the first negotiating round in the first quarter of 2023, emphasising that the parties "have prospects both for agricultural goods, which traditionally make up the bulk of the Union's imports from Indonesia, and for an industrial

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<sup>5</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "Within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Forum in 2023 it is proposed to hold a business dialogue with Indonesia" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-v-ramkakh-evraziyskogo-ekonomicheskogo-foruma-v-2023-godu-predlagaetsya-provesti-bizn/>

group actively traded in both directions"<sup>6</sup>. So the potential for partnership in 2023 remains high.

If we talk about the EAEU's co-operation with **Thailand**, the first meeting of the joint working group on interaction was in November 2019. In September 2021, at the 2nd meeting of the working group, the parties stated that "at the end of the first half of this year [2021], the trade turnover of the EAEU countries with Thailand increased by 32.6% compared to the same period last year and reached USD 1.2 billion". The EAEU's trade turnover with Thailand increased by 32.6 per cent compared to the same period last year and reached USD 1.2 billion. The EEU's exports totalled USD 330.5 million, imports USD 907 million, and imports USD 1.2 billion. USD"<sup>7</sup>. Exports increased mainly due to the export of metals and metal products, food products and agricultural raw materials, leather raw materials, fur and fur products. And imports from Thailand increased due to increased imports of machinery, equipment and vehicles. Further development of co-operation between the parties is inextricably linked to the strengthening of ties between business circles in the field of transport infrastructure, introduction of new technologies. Bioengineering, supplies of energy resources and energy equipment, as well as agricultural products can be mentioned as promising areas.

Another ASEAN country developing interaction in the EAEU is **Cambodia**. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in May 2016. In September 2021, following the third meeting of the working group between the EEC and the Government of Cambodia, the parties expressed a strong interest in increasing trade and investment and identified such areas of cooperation as trade and investment, customs

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<sup>6</sup> EAEU and Indonesia gave a start to negotiations on a free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eacunion.org/news/eaes-i-indoneziya-dali-start-peregovoram-po-soglasheniyu-o-svobodnoy-torgovle/>

<sup>7</sup> EAEU and Thailand are interested in developing cooperation in infrastructure, new technologies, digitalisation and green economy [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eacunion.org/news/eaes-i-tailand-zainteresovany-v-razvitiy-sotrudnichestva-v-sfere-infrastruktury-novyh-tehnologij-tsifrovizatsii-i-zelenoj-ekonomiki/>

cooperation, innovation, telecommunications and information and communication technologies, industry and infrastructure, technical regulation, SPS measures, intellectual property issues. Recall that in 2020 the EAEU trade turnover with Cambodia declined for objective reasons, but already in the first half of 2021 statistics inspired cautious optimism. "Trade increased by 1.4 times compared to the same period last year [2020] and reached \$130 million. US\$130 MILLION. At the same time, growth was observed in all EAEU states"<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, the existing trade turnover does not fully reveal the full potential of cooperation between the EAEU countries and Cambodia, so the parties plan to develop dialogue and intensify trade.

In 2023, the EAEU also plans to co-operate with other Asian states, including the **United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran.**

In June 2022, the EEC signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Government of the **UAE**. The EAEU considers this country as one of the most promising partners for trade and economic co-operation in the Middle East region. "According to the results of 2021, the dynamics of trade and economic co-operation between the EAEU and the UAE is positive. The trade turnover increased by 60.9% and reached \$6.3bn, while in the EAEU as a whole the foreign trade turnover increased by 35.1%"<sup>9</sup>. In the memorandum, the parties agreed to increase the volume of mutual trade, as well as to implement measures aimed at removing barriers. The EEC and the UAE intend to cooperate in the areas of customs and technical regulation, application of sanitary, veterinary-sanitary and quarantine phytosanitary measures, financial markets,

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<sup>8</sup> ECE and the Government of Cambodia signed a joint statement on enhancing co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-pravitelstvo-kambodzhi-podpisali-sovmestnoe-zayavlenie-o-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva/>

<sup>9</sup> The EAEU and the UAE Government signed a Memorandum of Co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-pravitelstvo-oae-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimodeystvii/>

transport, industry and agro-industrial complex, competition policy and antimonopoly regulation, intellectual property.

In April 2022, the parties established a joint EAEU-UAE research group to study the prospects of concluding a free trade agreement. In December 2022, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council decided to launch negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EAEU and the UAE. The negotiations are planned to be held in accelerated mode. The fact is that the formation of a free trade zone with the UAE will create conditions for the growth of supplies of more than 1,300 commodity items in both the industrial sector and the agro-industrial complex. "The relevance of multifaceted interaction is confirmed by the high interest and presence of a large number of companies of the Union's countries, including innovative ones, in the United Arab Emirates, as well as the role of this state as an international trade and transport and logistics hub. In addition, the agreement with the UAE is seen from the point of view of strengthening the positions of EAEU exporters in countries throughout the Persian Gulf in the context of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and the North-South corridor"<sup>10</sup>.

In January 2023, the EEC, discussing with the Emirati side the issues of trade and economic co-operation between the EAEU countries and the UAE, including the prospects for increasing export and import supplies and diversifying trade, invited the UAE leadership and entrepreneurs to take an active part in the Eurasian Economic Forum, which is scheduled for May 2023. Note that "according to the EEC, from 2015 to 2021, the volume of trade between the EAEU countries and the UAE increased 4 times, EAEU exports to the UAE grew 4.7 times, and EAEU imports from the UAE increased by 47 per cent. At the same time,

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<sup>10</sup> EAEU will start negotiations with the UAE on the conclusion of a free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-nachnet-peregovory-s-oea-o-zaklyuchenii-soglasheniya-o-svobodnoy-torgovle/>

trade turnover in the period from January to October 2022 compared to the same period in 2021 increased by a further 55%"<sup>11</sup> .

There are also plans to conclude a new comprehensive trade agreement between the EAEU and **Iran in 2023**, which "will provide an impetus to increase mutual supplies"<sup>12</sup> . In this context, the prospects for the development of long-term mutually beneficial co-operation in transport, co-operation in industry, agriculture and food security, as well as in other areas, are impressive. A future agreement will provide a strong contractual basis for these joint plans. As for the figures, "in 2021, trade turnover between the EAEU and Iran grew by 74 per cent, and in the first 10 months of 2022 - by another 25 per cent compared to the same period of the previous year"<sup>13</sup> . In January 2023, the parties agreed on all issues to finalise negotiations and sign the agreement with the exception of mutual market access for certain categories of agricultural products, for which discussions are still ongoing, but the issue will soon be closed.

**The African Union is** another key vector of EAEU international co-operation. The EEC considers interaction with African countries, regional and sub-regional associations of this continent as an important and priority area of the EAEU's international activities, which should be intensified, first of all, with the participation of the business community. The most important tasks in this direction are to strengthen economic ties and create conditions for unlocking competitive advantages. The EEC is engaged in a dialogue with the African Union within the framework of the

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<sup>11</sup> Pivovar, E. Negotiations on a free trade zone between the EAEU and the UAE are planned to be conducted in an accelerated mode [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/peregovory-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-mezhdu-eaes-i-oe-planiruetsja-vesti-v-uskorennom-rezhime-546918-2023>

<sup>12</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "Today we have a serious incentive for the development of regional agreements and regional connectivity" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-segodnya-my-imeem-sereznyy-stimul-dlya-razvitiya-regionalnykh-soglasheniy-i-regionaln/>

<sup>13</sup> Andrey Slepnev discussed in Tehran the issues of finalising negotiations on a free trade area agreement with Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-obsudil-v-tegerane-voprosy-zaversheniya-peregovorov-po-soglasheniyu-o-zone-svobodnoy-/>

Memorandum of Understanding in area of economic cooperation dated 24 October 2019. Note that "in 2021, the Union's foreign trade turnover with African countries increased by 21.9 per cent (to \$18.9 billion), exports by 24.0 per cent (to \$15.4 billion) and imports by 13.7 per cent (to \$3.5 billion)"<sup>14</sup>.

In the context of the EAEU's interaction with regional and subregional associations of this continent, the first working meeting of official representatives of the EEC and the **Economic Community of Central African States** (ECCAS) was held in June 2022. This is an integration association of Central African countries, established in 1983, which includes Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe. "The stated objectives of the organisation are to develop integration processes between member countries, to promote their comprehensive deepening with reliance on their own economic strengths, and to move towards the creation of a common market. In addition to the "classic" set of integration tasks, ECCAS is also engaged in the functions of promoting peace and stability, combating terrorism and piracy, and supporting electoral processes in the community space"<sup>15</sup>. In 2023, the parties hope to take new steps towards a more substantive dialogue aimed at practical interaction.

With regard to specific countries on the African continent, in 2023, ECE plans to intensify cooperation with African States such as **Egypt**, **Ethiopia** and the **Republic of South Africa (RSA)**.

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<sup>14</sup> Sergey Glazyev: "I invite the African continent to co-operate with the EAEU in the creation of a new financial and economic architecture". [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sergey-glazev-priplashayu-afrikanskiy-kontinent-k-sotrudnichestvu-s-eaes-v-sozdaniy-novoy-finansovo-/>

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

As for **Egypt**, this country has already actively entered into negotiations with the EAEU on the creation of a free trade zone. "This African state will be the first to have a joint industrial infrastructure with the EAEU, the creation of which will become a window for the countries of the integration association to promote <...> industrial products to the countries of Africa and the Middle East"<sup>16</sup>. The signing of this agreement in the near future will open up opportunities for large-scale diversification of trade and expansion of cooperation both in traditional areas and in building new logistical and financial links, jointly addressing the issues of technological transformation, which are determined by the climate agenda and the tasks of technological sovereignty.

For reference: the EAEU's trade with Egypt "in the first half of 2021 increased by 32.5% compared to the same period last year [2020]. In particular, exports of EAEU member states to Egypt in this period increased by almost 40 per cent (from USD 1.4 billion to USD 1.95 billion), imports from Egypt to the EAEU increased by 11 per cent (from USD 437 million to USD 489 million)"<sup>17</sup>. In 2022, trade turnover increased by almost another 40 per cent. So in the near future the parties will really manage to "make significant progress on the key issue - on the parameters of mutual reduction of import duties, as well as on the preparation of the final text of the draft agreement"<sup>18</sup>. And the plans are to increase the scale of economic co-operation between the EAEU and Egypt, which in the near future may contribute to the emergence of new joint and effective projects.

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<sup>16</sup> Zalessky, B. With a focus on co-operation. Chronicle of international co-operation in the post-Soviet space / Boris Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. - C. 24.

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

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



**South Africa** stands out among the countries of the African Union for its high level of development of key areas of agriculture, such as livestock breeding, fish farming, fruit and wine production. South Africa pays special attention to soil conservation and efficient farming, and applies advanced agricultural techniques. This has enabled the country to fully meet its domestic food needs. In January 2023, the EEC proposed the creation of a Eurasian industrial zone in South Africa, which could become an entry point for EAEU producers to enter the untapped markets of the African continent. The parties agreed that "in order to implement the agreements reached, the first step will be to hold consultations between representatives of the EEC and interested authorised officials of South Africa, which will allow the parties to reach a new level of exchange of successful practices of agricultural production, solving the tasks of creating modern, competitive industrial and agro-industrial complexes, and increasing the volume of mutual trade"<sup>19</sup>.

In addition, areas of co-operation of mutual interest may include the development of agricultural products (fruit) and seafood production, material and technical resources, in particular agricultural machinery, as well as winemaking. Stimulation of investments in the agro-industrial complex will contribute to increasing the efficiency of agricultural production and the development of infrastructure. Moreover, the dynamics of mutual trade between the EAEU and South Africa in agricultural raw materials and foodstuffs shows the potential for growth. And the potential for this co-operation between the parties is simply enormous.

Another African country that intends to continue to actively engage with the EAEU in 2023 is **Ethiopia**. The Memorandum of Understanding

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

between the parties in the field of economic co-operation was concluded in October 2019. The country is a traditional EEC partner in Africa. "The trade turnover between the EAEU member states and Ethiopia in January - October 2021 increased 4.7 times against the level of the same period in 2020. This is of particular importance in connection with plans to double trade turnover with the countries of the continent"<sup>20</sup>. It should be noted that such goods from Ethiopia as flowers, textiles, coffee and beans are traditionally in demand and competitive in the EAEU market. Apparently, in 2023, the parties intend to engage the business community in the dialogue in order to raise their awareness of the possibilities of using the EAEU's unified system of tariff preferences for developing and least developed countries, as well as some aspects of supranational regulation within the EAEU. After all, Ethiopia is particularly attractive for investors due to the Chinese New Silk Road passing through its territory, as well as the growth rate of the Ethiopian economy. So the parties have a serious reserve for increasing trade, economic and investment co-operation.

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

## Specific projects as a tool integration diversification

The Strategic Guidelines for the Development of Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, which were adopted at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in December 2020, contain 330 measures and mechanisms to develop cooperation, grouped into 11 system blocks, the implementation of which should lead to the achievement of high results by 2025, including building a system for managing joint cooperation projects and developing high-productivity sectors, as well as harnessing the potential of cross-border arteries and logistics. "It is expected that all these measures will help to increase non-resource exports to third countries from EAEU [Eurasian Economic Union] states by a quarter by 2025 alone. This can be achieved by following the path of creating joint Eurasian companies to mutually complement each other and produce competitive products"<sup>21</sup> . In this context, it appears that the EAEU will focus on a number of specific promising Eurasian integration projects, which include the Eurasian **Agro-Express** and the **Eurasian Electric Bus**.

Recall that in February 2022, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council at a meeting in the capital of Kazakhstan supported the implementation of a joint project of the EAEU countries on implementation of accelerated rail and multimodal transport "**Eurasian Agroexpress**", aimed at increasing the volume of mutual supplies and exports of agricultural products and food, as well as its diversification. It was expected that initially regular shipments outside the EAEU would be organised to and from the Chinese and Uzbek directions. "In the future, the routes of realisation may be extended to other countries of the Asian

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<sup>21</sup> Zalesky, B. With the aim of sustainable development. Collection of articles / Boris Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 4.

and European regions. Regularity of shipments will make it possible to form tariffs competitive with respect to sea freight, as well as to reduce the delivery time of goods (up to 10-14 days to China and 4-7 days to Uzbekistan)"<sup>22</sup> .

In this case, we are talking primarily about supplies of oil and fat, dairy, meat, fruit and vegetable and ready-to-eat food products. The joint project envisaged the launch of two full trains per week along the route Belarus - Russia - Kyrgyzstan - Kazakhstan - China, including trains with refrigerated containers for frozen products. At the same time, the monthly volume of transportations in the direction of China may reach about 10 thousand tonnes. The coordinator in this project is ANO Eurasian Agrologistics, and participation in it has been confirmed by Bremino Group LLC (Belarus), KTZ Express JSC (Kazakhstan), NC KTZ (Kyrgyzstan), RZD Logistics JSC (Russia), and Slavtrans-Service JSC (Russia).

The Belarusian side, noting "the importance of the Eurasian Agroexpress project for food exports"<sup>23</sup> , expects to use it to increase food supplies, primarily to China. The fact is that today the carriers of products from Belarus "are mainly Chinese companies"<sup>24</sup> . The launch of this project will provide another profitable opportunity in this regard. Especially since the Celestial Empire market is traditionally one of the main directions of Belarusian food export development. "In 2021, \$366.1 million worth of products were exported to China (47.9% growth by

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<sup>22</sup> Pivovar, E. Prime Ministers of the EAEU approved the project "Eurasian Agroexpress" for accelerated delivery of food / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/premjer-ministry-eaes-odobrili-proekt-evrazijskij-agroekspress-po-uskorennoj-dostavke-prodovolstvija-486781-2022/>

<sup>23</sup> Industrial cooperation, import substitution, food safety: Golovchenko on the key tasks of the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkooperatsija-importozameschenie-prodbezopasnost-golovchenko-o-ključevyh-zadachah-eaes-486890-2022/>

<sup>24</sup> Belarus expects to increase food supplies to China with the launch of "Eurasian Agroexpress" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-rasschityvaet-narastit-postavki-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-s-zapuskom-evrazijskogo-agroekspressa-486858-2022/>

2020). At the same time, in 2016, exports of food products to China totalled \$18.8 million. The main share in the formation of export growth is occupied by beef in cut form, milk powder and whey, chocolate and confectionery products, whole milk and other products"<sup>25</sup> . Supplies of starch, fruit jams and jellies, flour confectionery and pasta products, cereal flakes and butter have also increased. Moreover, 119 accredited Belarusian enterprises have already received the right to supply agricultural products to the Chinese market. All this indicates that there are considerable prospects for diversification of commodity flows of Belarusian exports not only of meat and dairy products, but also of sugar, vegetable oil, and fish products.

In light of the trends observed in recent years, the Eurasian Agroexpress project may also become relevant for Belarus in the Uzbek direction. Recall that the same February (2022) meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in the capital of Kazakhstan approved Uzbekistan's initiative to expand its participation in the EAEU in four areas of mutual interest: climate agenda issues; digitalisation of freight rail transport; e-commerce; and implementation of the Eurasian Agroexpress project. This Central Asian country was granted observer state status in the EAEU in December 2020. And "in 2016-2021, Uzbekistan's total trade turnover with EAEU member states increased more than 2.5 times: from \$4.5bn to \$11.6bn"<sup>26</sup> .

As for Belarus, it is agriculture that is one of the most promising areas in the development of bilateral trade and economic cooperation with Uzbekistan. Suffice it to say that "in 2019, agricultural products and

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<sup>25</sup> Brylo, I. Sustainable demand in the country and abroad: Belarus is increasing food supplies to all regions of the world / I. Brylo // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/ustojchivyj-spros-v-strane-i-za-rubezhom-belarus-naraschivaet-postavki-prodovolstvija-vo-vse-regiony-mira-8088/>

<sup>26</sup> Pivovar, E. Eurasian Intergovernmental Council supported the expansion of Uzbekistan's participation in the EAEU projects / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/evrazijskij-mezhpravsovet-podderzhal-rasshirenje-uchastie-uzbekistana-v-proektah-eaes-486888-2022/>

foodstuffs worth \$35 million were supplied to the Uzbek market from Belarus, which more than doubled the level of 2018"<sup>27</sup> . The positive dynamics of mutual trade continued in the following years. Thus, in 2021, Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover exceeded \$300 million and "increased by 7.8% by the level of 2020, exports - \$245.4 million (3.3% growth). The balance is positive - \$188.9 million"<sup>28</sup> . The main items of Belarusian exports included meat and meat products, milk powder, cheese and cottage cheese. Undoubtedly, the current dynamics of bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in the area of food and agricultural products suggests that the joint project of the EAEU countries "Eurasian Agroexpress" may become a very timely and effective tool for Minsk and Tashkent to diversify export supplies.

In February 2023, at a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council held in the Kazakh city of Almaty, the heads of government of the EAEU countries supported the proposal of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) to include in the joint integration project "Eurasian Agroexpress" the transportations carried out along the North-South international transport corridor in the direction of Turkmenistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of India. The point is that "without stably functioning logistics adapted to new geopolitical realities, the prospects for the development of our [EAEU countries'] economies will not be bright. <...> In order for the North-South corridor to work, it requires the full-scale involvement of all member states"<sup>29</sup> .

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<sup>27</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Belarus - Uzbekistan: priority of cooperation - agriculture / B.L. Zalesky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Modern european science - 2020", June 30 - July 7, 2020: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Golovchenko: there are prerequisites for increasing trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-est-predposylki-dlja-naraschivaniya-tovarooborota-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-uzbekistanom-486939-2022/>

<sup>29</sup> Golovchenko: full-scale involvement of the EAEU countries in the work of the North-South corridor [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL:

It should be noted that due to the reorientation of a number of transport routes, the demand for the North-South corridor is growing significantly. Pilot shipments to Iran and India made under the project have confirmed the attractiveness of the direction. The EAEU countries here have great potential to expand their transit and export potential. All the more so that the exceeding of the Eurasian Agroexpress targets for the first year of its operation is very encouraging. "A total of 525,500 tonnes were transported under the project in 2022, including 282,900 tonnes of refrigerated cargo. The nomenclature of goods included chicken and beef meat, milk powder, oil and fats, fruit and vegetables and grain legumes"<sup>30</sup>. Even in spite of China's restrictions on product shipments due to the pandemic, multimodal transportations to this country were very active.

Of course, at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Council, a number of aspects that hinder the effective operation of the project were also noted. In particular, the problem concerns obtaining permits to import frozen products to China via overland railway routes through the Dostyk-Alashankou and Altynkol-Khorgos border crossings. Its solution could give a significant advantage in terms of cost and time of cargo delivery compared to multimodal transportations through the ports of the Far East. In this regard, the EEC has been instructed to work with the authorised bodies of the interested EAEU member states to reach agreements with the Chinese side to remove restrictive measures and optimise customs and other administrative procedures.

But on the whole, in the course of implementing the joint project "Eurasian Agroexpress", its participants are already reaching common parameters, a common approach to this issue. This means the point of

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<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-nuzhno-polnomasshtabnoe-vovlechenie-stran-eaes-v-rabotu-koridora-sever-jug-548158-2023/>

<sup>30</sup> Pivovar, E. The project "Eurasian Agroexpress" will include transportations to Turkmenistan, Iran, UAE and India / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-proekt-evrazijskij-agroekspress-vkljuchat-perevozki-v-turkmenistan-iran-oae-i-indiju-548163-2023/>

collection and the localisation of loading. After all, EAEU partners from third countries have their own special requirements. That is why the project participants must be impeccable, supply perfect and at the same time meeting all the requirements of the host country and at the same time it is necessary to ensure the seamless passage of such a container train at all stages. "It has to be ready for dispatch at a specific time at a specific place. Therefore, we need to synchronise the processes. This will ensure predictability of train formation, fulfilment of plans"<sup>31</sup>. And at the head of the corner - serving the interests of manufacturers and enterprises that are engaged in transport and logistics schemes.

Important detail: in September 2022, the Eurasian Agroexpress project directorate - ANO Eurasian Agrologistics - and the Russian Trading Company (RTC) in China, Hua No E Xiang, signed a co-operation agreement, which sets out a common legal framework for practical assistance in the development of foreign trade in EAEU food products at the so-called "last mile", within the contour of the Chinese sales market, including a wide range of services that can be provided to suppliers from the "five" countries. The parties "agreed to jointly work out demanded trade services in conjunction with transport and logistics services, including the organisation of fast and affordable transport of goods in containers, providing for multimodal solutions, assistance in search, selection and negotiations with the Chinese buyer, gradual transition to a digital format and the provision of of a range of services in the "from supplier to counter" mode"<sup>32</sup>. The projected annual traffic volume of the Eurasian Agro Express project was expected to be around

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<sup>31</sup> Legal relations in the currency sphere, common industrial policy and "Eurasian Agroexpress": what is discussed in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pravootnoshenija-v-valjutnoj-sfere-edinaja-prompolitika-i-evrazijskij-agroekspress-cto-obsuzhdajut-v-547995-2023/>

<sup>32</sup> Trade instrument of the project "Eurasian Agroexpress" will be the Russian trading company in China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/torgovym-instrumentom-proekta-evrazijskiy-agroekspress-stanet-rossijskaya-torgovaya-kompaniya-v-kita/>



500,000 tonnes by the beginning of 2023. The observed growth in sales volume in 2022 allowed the project's logistics operators to dispatch scheduled route trains with long-term competitive tariff rates on an almost daily basis. So the first results of this project in the EAEU are already encouraging.

As for another integration project, the **Eurasian Electric Bus**, we must first make a small digression. The EEC has proposed to conclude a treaty in the EAEU on import substitution and to develop a corresponding Eurasian development programme. In this regard, the EEC has already formulated the Union's Industrialisation Map, which already involves 158 projects in 25 sectors worth more than \$270 billion. This map also includes 669 technological directions in 30 industries. Recall that "in 2021-2022, the union has already implemented 25 import substitution projects totalling over \$21 billion - these are automotive, machine tool, electrical, chemical, metallurgical, medical, pulp and paper industries, as well as the production of lifting and transport, lifting equipment, construction and road, special, municipal equipment"<sup>33</sup>. In this regard, in 2023, one more interesting project in terms of import substitution should find its "face" in EAEU.

The EEC industrial block has started work on the implementation of the pilot project of industrial cooperation "Eurasian Electric Bus", which was initiated by the Belarusian side. The project "is aimed at maximising the import-independence of the Union and involving as many industrial enterprises of the Union's member states as possible in the cooperation process"<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Pivovar, E. EEC proposes to conclude a separate agreement on import substitution in the EAEU / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eek-predlagaet-zakljuchit-v-eaes-otdelnyj-dogovor-povoprosam-importozameschenija-548223-2023/>

<sup>34</sup> Golovchenko: it is necessary to work on achieving technological sovereignty within the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-neobhodimo-rabotat-nad-dostizheniem-technologicheskogo-suvereniteta-v-ramkah-eaes-548144-2023/>

The decision to launch the Eurasian Electric Bus pilot project was made in mid-July 2022 at a meeting of the EEC Council. "At the first stage, lists of critical components, assemblies and materials for the production of electric buses and companies of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries with the necessary own production and technological potential will be formed"<sup>35</sup>. This will not only create a basis for the full-scale launch of the project, but also assess the possibility of reorienting and adapting the production of units and components designed for other types of passenger vehicles - buses, trolleybuses - for their further use in electric buses.

In early September 2022, a decision was made to form a special working group comprising representatives of state authorities of the Union's countries, manufacturers of vehicles with an electric motor and automotive components, as well as academia of the member countries. In October 2022, representatives of the EAEU countries discussed approaches to the implementation of the joint project "Eurasian Electric Bus" at an off-site meeting of the expert group in the automotive industry under the EEC Industry Advisory Committee, which was held at the site of the Belarusian holding Belkommunmash. The members of the expert group confirmed their interest in the development of electric transport in the EAEU countries, noting "the need to focus on organising the production of critical components, units and materials for the production of electric buses, such as traction motors and their control systems, energy storage systems, and bridges. It is proposed to consider setting up in the EAEU the production of cells for high-voltage batteries used in electric transport"<sup>36</sup>. In addition, an agreement was reached for the Belarusian

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<sup>35</sup> Pivovar, E. Implementation of the pilot project "Eurasian electric bus" started in the EAEU / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/realizatsija-pilotnogo-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-nachalas-v-eaes-521716-2022/>

<sup>36</sup> Pivovar, E. Experts of the EAEU countries discussed the implementation of the project "Eurasian electric bus" at Belkommunmash / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. -

side to send a list of investment projects being developed in Belarus in this area for consideration by EAEU experts in order to analyse specific proposals for the implementation of joint projects for the production of components for electric buses.

The proposal was actively supported at the meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in Yerevan in October 2022. After all, the implementation of the Belarusian initiative and the resolution of financing issues, both funding and preferential treatment, should launch "an irreversible process of further development of the industrial sphere and the real sector of the economy in our states on the principles of technological sovereignty. Eurasian integration should first of all ensure the interests of industrial enterprises, domestic businesses of the real sector of the economy"<sup>37</sup>. The implementation of this project with relatively cheap credit resources will create strong co-operation chains between the EAEU member states and develop the relevant competences. It is clear that "electric transport means highly productive jobs, so everyone will benefit from it"<sup>38</sup>.

In February 2023, at a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in Almaty, a discussion was held, at which it was noted that "the possible details of the implementation of this project are currently being worked out on the platform of the EEC. We need not only to identify partners for co-operation (such proposals from Belarus have already been received), but also to prepare all the necessary documents so that in the future these projects could qualify for some benefits in terms of

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URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksperty-stran-eaes-obsudili-na-belkommunmashe-realizatsiju-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-528846-2022/>

<sup>37</sup> Golovchenko: projects to create an innovative product under the Eurasian brand should be more [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-proektov-po-sozdaniyu-innovatsionnogo-produkta-pod-evrazijskim-brendom-dolzno-byt-bolshe-530593-2022/>

<sup>38</sup> About \$20 million per year will be allocated to support co-operation projects in the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/okolo-20-mln-v-god-budut-napravljat-na-podderzhku-kooperatsionnyh-proektov-v-eaes-530531-2022/>

financing"<sup>39</sup> . At the next meeting of the EEC Council with the participation of deputy prime ministers of the EAEU countries, which took place in February 2023, the recommendation "On measures to develop co-operation between the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union in the formation and implementation of projects in the field of electric vehicle construction" was approved.

This document lays down the main basic approaches to cooperation between the Member States for the development of electric transport production in the Union and measures to launch specific joint projects for the production of components. The recommendation also fixes the formed Lists of critical components and organisations with the necessary production potential. "First of all, it is necessary to develop competences in electric bus construction, since such products are already manufactured in most countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and demand for them is stimulated mainly through government procurement <...> Further work in this area will continue, but the main focus is planned to be on the formation of potential cooperation projects with the development of the possibility of subsidising interest rates on loans at the expense of the Commission's funds"<sup>40</sup> . In addition, during the elaboration of this issue, Belarus made proposals to consider the experience of Member States in the construction of charging centres, including chargers for charging electric buses, electric trucks and electric cars. Additionally, this issue will be worked out on the platform of the Commission on Cooperation and Import Substitution in priority and high-tech industries within the Union. And if necessary, the possibility of creating a joint co-operation project by

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<sup>39</sup> Pivovar, E. EEC discusses the details of the project "Eurasian electric bus" initiated by Belarus / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/EEK-obsuzhdaet-detali-initsirovannogo-belarussju-proekta-evrazijskij-elektrobus-548208-2023/>

<sup>40</sup> The EEC Council approved measures to develop co-operative cooperation of the EAEU countries in electric vehicle construction [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/soviet-EEK-odobril-mery-po-razvitiyu-kooperatsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-stran-eaes-v-elektromobilestroj/>

the interested member states will be considered. Thus, the Belarusian project "Eurasian Electric Bus" is already really starting its journey.

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## Vectors of co-operation - Latin America and Africa

Leaders of the Eurasian Economic Union at the December (2024) meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council approved the Main Directions of the Eurasian Economic Union's (EAEU) international activities for 2025. The priority areas include "continuing dialogue on trade and economic issues with the nearest neighbours, developing cooperation with the Union's observer states, deepening cooperation with key integration associations in Eurasia and Africa..."<sup>41</sup>. The EAEU countries count on active international positioning of the association also with the states and integration associations of Latin America and the Caribbean to develop the established mechanisms of cooperation, including within the framework of memoranda, declarations and trade agreements. An important detail: "Now the share of Latin American countries in the EAEU trade turnover is only 3%, although the potential for cooperation is huge"<sup>42</sup>.

It should be recalled that by the beginning of 2025, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) has formed an extensive network of co-operation with states and integration associations in Latin America and the Caribbean by concluding memoranda of co-operation. At the governmental level - with Chile, Peru and Cuba; at the ministerial level - with Ecuador and Argentina; at the level of integration structures - with the Andean Community, the Latin American Economic System, the Southern Common Market, the Pacific Alliance and the Secretariat for

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<sup>41</sup> Approved the Main directions of the EAEU international activities for 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/utverzhdny-osnovnye-napravleniya-mezhdunarodnoy-deyatelnosti-caes-na-2025-god/>

<sup>42</sup> EEF-2023: EAEU and Latin America outlined new priorities for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeef-2023-caes-i-latinskaya-amerika-oboznachili-novye-prioritety-sotrudnichestva/>

Economic Integration in Central America. Let us familiarise ourselves with some of them.

Back in 2018, the ECE signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the **Latin American Economic System (SELA)**, an intergovernmental regional organisation founded in 1975 that brings together 25 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela. The LACEC was the first regional intergovernmental entity in Latin America and the Caribbean with which the ECE adopted a document of understanding aimed at "sharing experiences in regional economic integration, aiming at the sustainable and inclusive development of regional integration groupings, jointly developing a methodology for the calculation of integration indices"<sup>43</sup>, as well as on cooperation on regional and interregional trade, the development of fair competition, the regional labour market and the development of a regional integration index. Statistics state that "in 2021, the Union's foreign trade turnover with Latin American countries increased by 54.4 per cent to \$16.9 billion, of which exports of the Union increased by 2.2 times to \$8.7 billion and imports by 17.3 per cent to \$8.3 billion"<sup>44</sup>.

In June 2024, the parties discussed the overlapping benchmarks for the development of the associations, as well as the potential for co-operation in a number of economic areas, and decided to first hold joint thematic seminars. Six months later - in December - the first such meeting

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<sup>43</sup> Eurasian Economic Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Latin American Economic System [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: [https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/29-05-18-3/?sphrase\\_id=350633](https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/29-05-18-3/?sphrase_id=350633)

<sup>44</sup> SPIEF-2022: specific proposals to stimulate trade and investment cooperation between the EAEU and Latin America under the new economic reality [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/pmef-2022-vyrabotany-konkretnye-predlozheniya-po-stimulirovaniyu-torgovo-investitsionnogo-sotrudnich/>

was held under the title "EAEU-LAEC: Best Integration Practices", where participants exchanged experience "in such areas as transport and financial infrastructure, logistics, food security, technological cooperation in industry and agriculture, tourism and health care"<sup>45</sup>. The practice of these seminars will be continued in 2025.

**Cuba** should be named among the LABEC countries that are actively developing co-operation with the EAEU. In January 2024, the third meeting of the Joint Commission on Cooperation between the EEC and the Government of Cuba was held, during which they discussed "issues of promoting trade and economic cooperation, cooperation in the areas of agro-industrial complex, tourism, industry, technical regulation, circulation of medicines and medical devices"<sup>46</sup>. The parties agreed to give the cooperation a practice-oriented character by means of defining and implementing joint projects, primarily in such spheres as industry, agro-industrial complex, energy and infrastructure. We would like to add that the EAEU-Cuba interaction already "covers 34 areas of co-operation, including trade, banking, finance, biotechnology, agriculture, information and communication technologies. The EAEU's trade turnover with Cuba in 2023 totalled \$290 million"<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>48</sup>And already in September 2024, within the framework of the EAEU-Cuba Business Dialogue, it was noted that it was possible to create joint ventures in Cuba to enter the consumer market of the entire Latin

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<sup>45</sup> Representatives of the Commission and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System discussed best practices [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/predstaviteli-komissii-i-latinoamerikano-karibskoy-ekonomicheskoy-sistemy-obsudili-luchshie-praktiki/>

<sup>46</sup> EAEU and Cuba intend to diversify trade and economic interaction [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-kuba-namereny-diversifitsirovat-torgovo-ekonomicheskoe-vzaimodeystvie/>

<sup>47</sup> EAEU and Cuba intend to deepen co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/eaes-i-kuba-namereny-uglubit-vzaimodejstvie-640962-2024/>

<sup>48</sup> New opportunities for the development of trade and economic cooperation discussed during the business dialogue "EAEU - Cuba" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/novye-vozmozhnosti-razvitiya-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-obsudili-v-khode-biznes-dialoga/>



American region, which "could be engaged in the production of citrus fruits, pork and poultry meat, modernisation of Cuban industrial production, digital transformation of the economy, production of organic fertilisers and other goods for export both to EAEU countries and third countries of the region, as well as generation of electricity using solar panels" xml-ph-00 But for this purpose it is necessary to work closely on such areas as legal relations in the field of land use and intellectual property, operation of mobile communications and payment systems in Cuba, opening of bank branches, improvement of logistics, including the entry of vessels flying the flags of third countries into seaports, and regulation of the Cuban labour market. So in 2025, the systemic dialogue will continue on topical issues, which will include "issues of intensification of trade and economic cooperation , implementation of agreements in priority areas of cooperation (pharmaceuticals, circulation of medicines and medical devices, technical regulation, logistics, industrial cooperation, informatization, tourism), strengthening cooperation of business circles and joint activity on international platforms"<sup>49</sup> .

Another country within the LAEC that is going to actualise cooperation with the EAEU is **Nicaragua**. In January 2024, the parties signed a memorandum of co-operation, which defines such key areas of co-operation development as customs and technical regulation, industry, agro-industry, SPS measures, and consumer protection. It should be noted that the EAEU's trade turnover with Nicaragua has positive dynamics. From January to October 2023, exports of the Eurasian Five to this country increased by 14 per cent, while imports more than doubled. Exports are dominated by medicines, cars and parts for them, nitrogen fertilisers, sunflower oil, oil products; imports include peanuts, coffee,

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<sup>49</sup> EEC and Cuba discussed plans to deepen dialogue [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/EEK-1-kuba-obsudili-plany-uglubleniya-dialoga/>

tobacco products and raw materials, knitwear and textiles"<sup>50</sup> . And already in December 2024, the first meeting of the joint working group on interaction was held, where the issues related to the activation of trade and economic cooperation in the field of pharmaceuticals, industry, agro-industrial complex were considered. The main emphasis was placed on the establishment and development of direct contacts between business communities in such promising areas of cooperation as "the creation of digital platforms for electronic trade, the introduction of innovations, processing of food raw materials, garment production, chemical and furniture industry, as well as agribusiness and energy"<sup>51</sup> . It is planned that in the future the parties will sign a relevant memorandum that will strengthen communication channels with key business associations of the EAEU countries and Nicaragua.

Now let's look at the **Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR)**. This is a trade union of South American countries founded in 1991. Today it comprises Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Paraguay and Uruguay. The total population of the association is more than 300 million people, and the combined gross domestic product exceeds three trillion dollars. The EEC and Mercosur signed a memorandum on trade and economic co-operation back in 2018. In the first eight months of 2024, trade turnover between the two sides grew by almost 17 per cent. In November 2024, during the talks between representatives of the EEC and MERCOSUR, specific proposals for cooperation were discussed. Among the areas of cooperation that are of particular interest is the study of experience in organising the exchange of information between the customs services of Mercosur member countries,

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<sup>50</sup> EEC and the Government of Nicaragua signed a Memorandum of Co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-pravitelstvo-nikaragua-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimodeystvii/>

<sup>51</sup> EAEU and Nicaragua develop trade and economic co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-nikaragua-razvivayut-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestvo/>

as well as in the digitalisation of customs infrastructure. It should be noted that **Brazil** plays "first fiddle" in this international organisation. Suffice it to say that "Brazil accounted for 87.9 per cent of the total trade turnover of the EAEU and Mercosur in January-August [2023]. The EAEU's trade turnover with Brazil in the first 8 months of 2024 increased by 15.9 per cent compared to the same period in 2023. Exports of the EAEU to Brazil increased by 32.1%"<sup>52</sup>. And in 2025, there seems to be a possibility of a bilateral memorandum between the EEC and Brazil.

Lastly. In 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between ECE and the **Secretariat for Economic Integration in Central America (SIECA)**, which aims to "intensify cooperation in areas such as mutual trade, technical regulation and standardisation, industry and agribusiness, and macroeconomics"<sup>53</sup>. This international organisation was formed in October 1993. Its members are Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and El Salvador. And "the signing of the memorandum is a first step to boost trade and investment co-operation and, in the long term, to be embedded in global value chains"<sup>54</sup>. In May 2024, the ECE and SIECA representatives agreed, as a further step to deepen cooperation, to hold a joint workshop to exchange integration experiences, which will allow to learn more about each other's economic opportunities. After all, in the first half of 2025, **Costa Rica** has already become the Chair of SIECA, which "will contribute in every

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<sup>52</sup> EEC and Brazil defined vectors of customs co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-brazilija-opredelili-vektory-tamozhennogo-sotrudnichestva/>

<sup>53</sup> ECE and the Secretariat for Economic Integration in Central America signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-sekretariat-po-ekonomicheskoj-integratsii-v-tsentralnoj-amerike-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii/>

<sup>54</sup> Zalessky, B. Looking ahead. Features of multi-vector partnership in modern conditions / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 21.

possible way to deepening the dialogue between the two integration structures"<sup>55</sup> . So this joint seminar is in the near future.

Assessing all these facts, it is safe to say that the functioning of the EAEU as a pole of economic attraction in the international arena is already actively developing and will continue to do so "with interested international integration associations and organisations, as well as countries seeking an equal and constructive partnership"<sup>56</sup> , which include partners from Latin America and the Caribbean and who want to promote joint projects with all states of the Eurasian Economic Union.

In 2025, the EAEU also intends to intensify the expansion of mutual cooperation, increase trade volumes, and establish an integration dialogue with the **African Union (AU)** countries and international regional organisations on the continent. Especially since "trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and the AU is of mutual strategic interest to the parties, based on the similarity of many competences and areas of integration construction"<sup>57</sup> . The fact is that in November 2024, representatives of the EEC and the AU Commission (AUC) discussed the practical aspects of preparing a new memorandum on cooperation, which will promote the realisation of trade and economic potential of the countries of the Eurasian Five and Africa.

It will be recalled that the African Union was established in 2002, uniting 55 states of the continent. Among the declared objectives of the AU are the protection of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of member states, strengthening peace, security and

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<sup>55</sup> EAEU and Costa Rica are interested in the development of economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-kosta-rika-zajinteresovany-v-razviti-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva/>

<sup>56</sup> Declaration on the further development of economic processes of the Eurasian Economic Union until 2030 and for the period until 2045 "Eurasian Economic Way" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: [https://docs.eaeunion.org/docs/ru-ru/01443175/ms\\_26122023](https://docs.eaeunion.org/docs/ru-ru/01443175/ms_26122023)

<sup>57</sup> EEC and the African Union Commission discussed the development of trade and economic co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/EEK-i-komissiya-afrikanskogo-soyuz-a-obsudili-voprosy-razvitiya-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestv/>

stability, accelerating political and socio-economic integration on the continent, promoting democratic principles and institutions, promoting coordinated approaches of African countries on the world stage, creating the necessary conditions to ensure Africa's dignified role in the global economy. The Memorandum of Understanding between the EEC and the AUC was signed in October 2019. And already "in 2021, the EAEU's foreign trade turnover with African countries increased by 21.9 per cent (to \$18.9 billion), exports by 24 per cent (to \$15.4 billion) and imports by 13.7 per cent (to \$3.5 billion)"<sup>58</sup>.

In November 2024, at the session "EAEU-Africa: identifying key points of interaction with the countries and regional integration associations of the continent", it was stressed that the logic of the Eurasian Five's dialogue with African partners is to promote trade and economic cooperation, as "integration is a tool that makes the economy more stable, unlocks competitive advantages, and makes a significant contribution to economic growth"<sup>59</sup>. For this reason, it was suggested that, as a first step, measures should be taken to reduce the lack of information on commercial opportunities and simplify market access procedures, to promote direct contacts between business associations, to intensify interaction with development institutions and sectoral cooperation in areas of common interest, and to deepen dialogue with integration structures on the African continent, including the Economic Community of Central African States.

At the already mentioned session in November 2024, representatives of the EAEU and the **Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)** agreed "to start work on formalising cooperation by developing a memorandum and a plan of joint activities

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<sup>58</sup> EAEU and Africa intend to develop co-operation in food security issues [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: [https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-afrika-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-voprosakh-prodovolstvennoy-bezopasnosti-/](https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-afrika-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-voprosakh-prodovolstvennoy-bezopasnosti/)

<sup>59</sup> Eldar Alisherov: "The logic of the EAEU dialogue with partners in Africa is to promote trade and economic cooperation" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eldar-alisherov-logika-dialoga-eaes-s-partnerami-v-afrike-sodeystvovat-razvitiyu-torgovo-ekonomicheskoy-sotrudnichestva/>

for the coming years"<sup>60</sup> . Also, the EAEU Business Council and the ECCAS business community association will work on the issue of concluding a joint document on co-operation. We would like to add that this international organisation - ECCAS - was established in 1994 on the basis of the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa. The member countries are Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe. The stated objectives of this structure are to develop integration processes, to promote their comprehensive deepening, relying on their own economic strengths, and to move towards the creation of a common market.

When it comes to the Eurasian Five's partnership with the **African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)**, it is a pan-African supranational multilateral financial institution that is mandated to finance and promote intra- and extra-African trade, as well as Africa's leading regional integration bank that plays a crucial role in supporting the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area. It was established in 1997 under the auspices of the African Development Bank and works with African and non-African export credit agencies, development finance institutions, commercial banks and other multilateral institutions.

As early as the end of 2023, during the talks between the EEC and Afreximbank, it was emphasised that "promising joint projects for companies from the EAEU and African countries could be the production of chemical products, machinery and equipment, including agricultural machinery, cultivation of crops and livestock products, their transportation, as well as such areas as exploration, mining and processing

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<sup>60</sup> ECE establishes direct interaction with Africa's subregional integration structures [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eacunion.org/news/cek-nalazhivaet-pryamoe-zaimodeystvie-s-subregionalnymi-integratsionnymi-strukturami-afriki/>

of minerals, energy, electronic services..."<sup>61</sup> . But the solution of these problems should begin with the elimination of "bottlenecks" limiting trade between the regions, including joint work on optimising logistics chains, certification and expertise, searching for mutually beneficial forms of payments for trade transactions using national currencies, including digital currencies, working out other issues of providing financial services related to foreign trade supplies, first of all. in the area of freight and insurance, establishing direct correspondent relations between the two countries.

In order to attract entrepreneurs to joint projects, it is necessary to promote awareness of each other's trade and economic opportunities and mechanisms of price formation for the main exchange commodities by using information systems to search for potential partners and goods, mutual recognition of ratings, as well as conducting joint Eurasian business missions to African countries. At the same time, the parties agreed to continue to develop constructive dialogue in the field of economic activities in the EAEU and AU, including through joint events and information exchange, as well as to work on deepening cooperation between the EEC and Afreximbank in order to reach a more effective and practice-oriented trade and economic cooperation at the level of the EAEU and Africa. And already in November 2024, the parties "agreed to work on the formation of a plan of joint events to offer business platforms for direct communication"<sup>62</sup> in 2025.

Finally, in the new year, the EAEC expects to promote partnerships with the **Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)**, which has 21 member states: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Eritrea,

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<sup>61</sup> EEC and Afreximbank intend to develop trade and economic co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/EEK-i-afreksimbank-namereny-razvivat-torgovo-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo/>

<sup>62</sup> EEC and the African Export-Import Bank intensify co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/EEK-i-afrikanskiy-eksportno-importnyy-bank-aktiviziruyut-vzaimodeystvie/>

Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In July 2022 , the EEC and the COMESA Competition Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Competition Policy and Enforcement, which "opens up new opportunities for closer cooperation between the agencies"<sup>63</sup> . In July 2024, the parties outlined "a common goal of promoting sustainable development of their regions through economic integration"<sup>64</sup> and outlined prospects for co-operation in 2025.

In general, the implementation of the high potential for the development of trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and African countries shows that it is taking place in the context of constructive dialogue, including through joint events and information exchange, elaboration of issues of deepening and expanding cooperation between the parties.

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<sup>63</sup> ECE and COMESA signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Competition Policy and Enforcement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/eeek-i-komesa-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-v-oblasti-konkurentnoy-politiki-i-pravoprimeneni/>

<sup>64</sup> ECE and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) will enhance opportunities for dialogue between the parties [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/eeek-i-obschij-rynok-vostochnoj-i-juzhnoj-afriki-komesa-rasshirjat-vozmozhnosti-dlja-dialoga-storon-640960-2024/>



## The aim is to develop robust partnership schemes

As one of the key directions of prospective integration construction, the Declaration on Further Development of Economic Processes within the **Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)** until 2030 and for the period until 2045 "Eurasian Economic Way" identifies the task of positioning the EAEU as one of the centres for the formation of the **Greater Eurasian Partnership**, which involves all interested regional and global economies in trade, logistics and economic interaction in mutually beneficial formats "Mutual benefit, voluntariness, respect for national sovereignties, transparency and the combination of concrete advantages are the inherent principles of a new type of integration"<sup>65</sup>. The Greater Eurasian Partnership is becoming an effective means of protecting the common economic interests of Asian countries, a platform for their consolidation in the name of a stable and secure future for the continent as a whole and for any state in the region. Modern Asia is 45 independent countries, which are uneven in terms of territory and population, as well as in the level and pace of development. At the same time, this continent is considered one of the most dynamic developing regions of the world. For this reason, the EAEU is finding new forms and ways of economic cooperation here, primarily in financial and economic, transport and logistics spheres, including with **Iran** and the states of the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**.

In particular, in December 2024, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council decided to grant **Iran** the status of an observer state to the EAEU. It should be noted that such status is granted to a state interested in mutually beneficial trade and economic co-operation with the EAEU and

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<sup>65</sup> Sergey Glazyev: "The Grand Partnership is a driver of the formation of a new world economic structure". [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sergey-glazev-bolshoe-evraziyskoe-partnerstvo-drayver-formirovaniya-novogo-mirokhozaystvennogo-ukla/>

its members and the convergence of legal regulation. "At present, Cuba and Uzbekistan also have observer state status at the EAEU"<sup>66</sup> .

For reference, we note that back in 2018, the EAEU and Iran adopted their first joint document - a temporary free trade agreement, which was "localised, covered few items and did not provide for zero duty rates..."<sup>67</sup> . In December 2023, the parties already signed a free trade agreement, which opened up a wide range of new opportunities and "will significantly improve the competitiveness of goods of the EAEU member states and through this increase exports to Iran"<sup>68</sup> and in general will contribute to the growth of trade turnover, intensification of co-operation and investment cooperation.

In April 2024, the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) approved an action plan aimed at implementing this agreement, which provides for deepening cooperation between the business communities of the parties. In order to create a business dialogue platform, the existing memorandum of cooperation between the EAEU Business Council and the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mining and Agriculture dated 25 September 2019 has been amended. "Activities under this platform will be carried out taking into account such areas of sectoral interaction as cooperation in transport, development of multimodal transport, joint projects in research and development, establishment of cooperation links between enterprises, projects of the fuel and energy complex, as well as energy efficiency, energy saving and

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<sup>66</sup> Iran received the status of an observer to the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/iran-poluchil-status-nabljudatelja-pri-eaes-685429-2024/>

<sup>67</sup> Pivovar, E. EEC: free trade zone between the EAEU and Iran can be created by the end of the year / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/eek-zona-svobodnoj-torgovli-mezhdu-eaes-i-iranom-mozhet-byt-sozdana-do-kontsa-goda-566030-2023/>

<sup>68</sup> EAEU agreement with Iran on free trade signed in St. Petersburg [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/soglashenie-eaes-s-iranom-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-podpisano-v-sankt-peterburge-607037-2023/>

renewable energy, education, medicine, telecommunications"<sup>69</sup> . Additionally, the sides prepared a plan of joint trade facilitation measures, including business forums, exhibitions and business missions. In addition, the Iranian side proposed to hold a presentation of the EAEU in 2025 in Tehran to "raise awareness among Iranian business circles about the Eurasian agenda, as well as the opportunities for foreign business. This initiative is aimed at strengthening mutually beneficial co-operation and expanding commercial ties between EAEU countries and Iranian partners"<sup>70</sup> .

Among the interesting initiatives on the part of the EAEU, in which Iran is already getting involved, is the Eurasian Agroexpress project. It should be recalled that the implementation of the joint project of the EAEU member states to carry out accelerated railway and multimodal transportations "Eurasian Agroexpress" in order to develop regular mutual deliveries of agricultural products and foodstuffs, as well as export deliveries in Asian and European directions, was supported by the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in February 2022. And in February 2023, the project was scaled to the routes of the North-South corridor. In this context, we are talking about the supply of products from the countries of the Union to Iran, as well as the organisation of large-scale transportations of Iranian vegetables and fruits to the market of the Eurasian Five countries. The point is that with the help of this project "agricultural products will be delivered more quickly, with better quality and fewer intermediaries"<sup>71</sup> . In this regard, it is planned to organise

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<sup>69</sup> Pivovar, E. The EEC Council approved the plan for the implementation of the free trade agreement with Iran / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/soviet-eek-utverdil-plan-po-realizatsii-soglasheniya-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-s-iranom-627572-2024/>

<sup>70</sup> EEC and Iran discussed cooperation plans [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eacunion.org/news/eek-i-iran-obsudili-plany-sotrudnichestva/>

<sup>71</sup> Pivovar, E. Iran joins the EAEU project "Eurasian Agroexpress" / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/iran-podkljuchaetsja-k-realizatsii-proekta-eaes-evrazijskij-agroekspres-619975-2024/>

interaction with a large Iranian holding company, which can either directly enter the project or act as a "single window" to organise the supply of agro-industrial products of the P5 countries to Iran and export Iranian products in the opposite direction.

All these facts show that Iran is gradually becoming one of the EAEU's important partners. Suffice it to say that "over the past five years of operation of the temporary trade agreement, trade turnover between the EAEU and Iran has more than doubled - from \$2.4 billion in 2019 to \$5.2 billion in 2023"<sup>72</sup>. The most promising areas of interaction between the parties are the development of transport and logistics infrastructure, expansion of co-operation ties between enterprises, cooperation in the agro-industrial complex, oil refining and petrochemical industries, scientific research and development. In addition, statistics for 2024 show that for ten months the trade turnover still "increased by 12.8%, exports of goods to Iran increased by 16%, imports - by 8%"<sup>73</sup>.

One last thing. Belarus ratified a free trade agreement between the EAEU and Iran in July 2024 to ensure diversification of export supplies by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers on access to the market of this country for a wide list of goods, as well as improving conditions for trade and economic co-operation. "The opening of the Iranian market through the zeroing of duties will provide exporters of Belarus with more competitive conditions for the supply of goods"<sup>74</sup>. By removing tariff barriers, Iran, whose population has already passed the 80 million mark, can already successfully trade with Belarus. And the Belarusian side has a

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<sup>72</sup> Pivovar, E. The EEC is confident that the EAEU-Iran trade will reach a new level / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/v-cek-uvereny-v-vyhode-torgovli-eaes-i-irana-na-novyj-uroven-637183-2024/>

<sup>73</sup> Bakytzhan Sagintayev: "The dialogue with Iran has the potential for development in a number of directions" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/bakytzhan-sagintaev-dialog-s-iranom-imeet-potentsial-razvitiya-po-tselomu-ryadu-napravleniy-/>

<sup>74</sup> Belarus ratified the EAEU free trade agreement with Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-ratifikirovala-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-eaes-s-iranom-645885-2024/>

great chance to promote its machine-building and food products, while enjoying good preferences.

Let us now look at the current issues of interaction between the Eurasian Economic Union and the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations**. In November 2024, the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur hosted the EAEU-ASEAN business dialogue, which was attended by more than 350 representatives of political, business and academic circles of the parties. And where it was noted that trade between the two integration platforms is showing steady growth at double-digit rates, which indicates great potential for the development of multi-vector dialogue, both at the inter-integration and country levels. The key driver of this process is the business community, as "joint expert and business platforms of the EAEU and ASEAN allow to create direct communication between entrepreneurs, eliminate information barriers and create a space of trust. The key task facing the two associations today is to create transparent and understandable conditions for business community interaction"<sup>75</sup>.

Let us recall that ASEAN is an economic association formed in 1967. The members of the association are Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. Papua New Guinea and East Timor have observer status. This is one of the largest regional integration associations in Asia with a total gross domestic product exceeding two and a half trillion dollars and a population of about 625 million people. We would like to add that the [memorandum of understanding](#) between the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and ASEAN in the field of economic cooperation was signed in November 2018 in Singapore, which created the foundation for the formation of a dialogue platform to discuss a wide range of issues of interaction between integration blocs on the scale of the Eurasian

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<sup>75</sup> Business dialogue between EAEU and ASEAN was held in Malaysia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/biznes-dialog-eaes-i-asean-sostoyalsya-v-malayzii/>

continent. And to implement the memorandum, the Cooperation Programme for 2020-2025 was adopted, which "covers such areas as customs legislation and law enforcement, trade policy, business activities, technical and antitrust regulation, SPS measures, energy, and the functioning of domestic markets"<sup>76</sup>.

In November 2023, the roundtable "Economic Agenda of the EAEU and ASEAN: Overlapping Interests" highlighted such promising areas of co-operation as technology platforms, food production and information technology being created in the Eurasian Five countries. And "the planned launch of a single energy market in the EAEU is potentially interesting for ASEAN countries, which import oil and natural gas, while drug manufacturers from ASEAN countries have the opportunity to work in the EAEU's single pharmaceutical market with a capacity of USD 10 billion"<sup>77</sup>. In addition, if we take into account that the EAEU by 2045 aims to become a self-sufficient, safe, harmoniously developed and attractive macro-region of the polycentric world, achieving economic, technological and intellectual leadership with a high level of well-being of the population, then such a task statement, given the large territory, population, economic potential and dense transport networks of these integration associations, determines new prospects for economic cooperation and civilisational connectivity between the EAEU and ASEAN. The creation of a global free trade zone between them, as well as technological partnership, could become possible mechanisms for realising promising areas of cooperation.

In June 2024, within the framework of the EAEU-ASEAN Business Dialogue, its participants noted that "the two associations need to create a

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<sup>76</sup> EAEU and ASEAN plan to develop trade and economic co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-asean-planiruyut-razvivat-torgovo-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-/>

<sup>77</sup> Sergey Glazyev: "The EAEU and ASEAN dialogue improves economic connectivity in Eurasia" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sergey-glazev-dialog-eaes-i-asean-uluchshaet-ekonomicheskuyu-svyazannost-v-evrazii/>

new dimension of dialogue, which will allow to multiply the volume of trade turnover and eliminate existing barriers. These include problems in international settlements and information barriers for business representatives"<sup>78</sup> . And the development of network forms of interaction with the participation of business and scientific circles of the parties will help to bring co-operation to a qualitatively new level. At the same time, more attention should be paid to the diversification of trade and economic cooperation, deepening dialogue and exchange of practical experience in the field of innovation, digital transformation and increasing market transparency. All the more so as the current points of growth and mutual strengthening of the economies of the two member states are such areas as cooperation in energy efficiency, food security, transport, logistics, finance and tourism.

Returning to the November (2024) EAEU-ASEAN Business Dialogue held in Malaysia, we note that its participants agreed to apply the experience of cooperation and best practices in such areas as artificial intelligence, green economy, big data economy, and to focus the greatest potential for cooperation between business communities on issues of digitalisation, industrial cooperation, food security, transport and logistics, financial policy. All this can be seen in the examples of interaction between a number of ASEAN countries - **Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar** - and the Eurasian Five.

In particular, 2025 will mark 10 years since the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement between the EAEU countries and **Vietnam**. During this time, the positive dynamics in this area has shown good growth. Suffice it to say that "in 2023 trade turnover increased 1.6 times compared to 2016, and in the first half of 2024 there was an increase in

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<sup>78</sup> Sergey Glazyev at SPIEF-2024: "The EAEU and ASEAN can use network formats to intensify interaction". [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://ecc.eaunion.org/news/sergey-glazyev-na-pmef-2024-caes-i-asean-mogut-ispolzovat-setevye-formaty-dlya-aktivizatsii-vzaimodey/>

this indicator by 17% compared to the same period of 2023"<sup>79</sup> . At the same time, the arrangements outlined in this agreement currently provide preferences for about 90 per cent of the commodity nomenclature, ensuring duty-free access for virtually all trade.

Back at the fifth meeting of the EAEU-Vietnam Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Free Trade Agreement, held in November 2023, the parties agreed to intensify work on major investment projects, which will undoubtedly provide prospects for further growth in mutual supplies of products. At the same time they discussed "issues of additional liberalisation of access of goods to each other's markets, safeguard measures, sanitary and phytosanitary regulation, climate agenda, exchange of information in the field of investment"<sup>80</sup> , as well as existing technical barriers to trade, issues of electronic exchange of customs information and rules of origin. In terms of sanitary and phytosanitary regulation, the participants of the meeting considered problems, including access of meat products from Belarus to the Vietnamese market.

In July 2024, the first meeting of the regular EAEU-Vietnam dialogue on market access issues related to the area of technical barriers to trade, products of the pharmaceutical and automotive industries was held in Hanoi. Based on the results of the dialogue, the parties "managed to significantly increase understanding of Vietnam's regulatory systems on specific issues and identify possible further actions to improve conditions for access of EAEU products to the Vietnamese market"<sup>81</sup> . And in the

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<sup>79</sup> Bakytzhan Sagintayev held talks with Prime Minister of Vietnam Pham Minh Tinh [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/bakytzhan-sagintayev-provel-peregovory-s-premer-ministrom-vetnama-fam-min-tinem/>

<sup>80</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "Further increase in trade with Vietnam will be facilitated by the implementation of joint investment projects" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-dalneyschemu-uvlicheniyu-obemov-torgovli-s-vetnamom-budet-sposobstvovat-realizatsiya/>

<sup>81</sup> EAEU discussed with Vietnam the issues of access to the market of automotive and pharmaceutical products [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-obsudil-s-vetnamom-voprosy-dostupa-na-rynok-avtomobilnoy-i-farmaceuticheskoy-produkcii/>



October 2024 talks, the parties noted the effectiveness of various tools for the development of trade and customs administration, including the introduction and application of digital solutions. And now joint work is underway to prepare a document on the electronic exchange of information on issued certificates between the EAEU and Vietnam. So in 2025, this interaction will undoubtedly reach new heights.

As for **Indonesia**, the EEC concluded a memorandum of co-operation with it in October 2019 to address issues of trade facilitation, customs and technical regulation, and financial market development. And in September 2022, the EEC Council decided to start negotiations with this country to conclude a free trade agreement. After all, "Indonesia is the largest economy in ASEAN and the fourth largest in the world in terms of population, so trade relations with this Asian state have significant potential"<sup>82</sup> . And from April 2023 to July 2024, five rounds of negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EAEU and Indonesia have already taken place. In September 2024, at the Indonesia-EAEU Digital Technology Dialogue, participants noted that "the future agreement lays down mechanisms to strengthen cooperation and cooperation ties between the businesses of our countries in the areas of telecommunications, innovation, digital technologies and e-commerce"<sup>83</sup> and will help connect digital companies to share solutions, technologies, expertise and explore new opportunities for cooperation. It appears that in 2025 the EAEU and Indonesia will reach the final stage of signing this important document.

Finally, **Myanmar** expressed interest in co-operation with the EAEU as early as 2021, and in June 2023 signed a memorandum of co-operation with the Eurasian Five, which "provides for co-operation in

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<sup>82</sup> Zalessky, B. Export Growth Strategy. Opportunities and challenges of open economy in modern conditions / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 5.

<sup>83</sup> . EEC supports interaction between the business communities of the EAEU and Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eek-podderzhivaet-vzaimodeystvie-biznes-soobshchestv-eaes-i-indonezii/>

such areas as customs, technical regulation, application of sanitary, veterinary-sanitary and quarantine phytosanitary measures, financial markets, transport, energy, agro-industrial complex..."<sup>84</sup> . On the basis of this document, the parties are already beginning to address specific tasks to remove barriers to trade, exchange information, and work out mechanisms for co-operation to create new projects and investments. In April 2024, at the first meeting of the Joint Working Group on Engagement, it was noted that "Myanmar has a geographically advantageous position - it neighbours economically powerful countries such as India and China, located as a bridge connecting Southeast Asia and the Eurasian market"<sup>85</sup> . For this reason, the establishment of direct large-scale and continuous cooperation through business circles will allow to intensify trade and economic interaction between Myanmar and the EAEU states, develop cooperation in construction, transport links, and create conditions for settlements in national currencies. The idea of business to establish trading houses was also supported, which will increase the supply of goods.

At the negotiations in June 2024, representatives of Myanmar expressed interest in "expanding exports of agricultural products to the EAEU market in order to strengthen food security in the countries of the region"<sup>86</sup> , as well as in co-operation in the production of medicines and pharmaceutical technologies and co-operation in the regulation of this area. And already at the first joint seminar of the EEC and Myanmar in December 2024, they discussed common approaches to a single customs

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<sup>84</sup> EEC and Myanmar signed a memorandum of co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/eeek-i-myanma-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimodeystvii/>

<sup>85</sup> EAEU and Myanmar develop trade and economic co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/eaes-i-myanma-razvivayut-torgovo-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo/>

<sup>86</sup> Sergey Glazyev: "The key task of cooperation between the EAEU and Myanmar is to eliminate the problem of trade imbalance and involvement of business circles in the sectoral dialogue" [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/sergey-glazev-kluychevaya-zadacha-sotrudnichestva-eaes-i-myanmy-ustranenie-problemy-torgovogo-disbal/>

regulation in the EAEU, the application of the "single window" mechanism and the implementation of interstate electronic exchange of information in the customs sphere. It should be noted that the high pace of development of the dialogue between the parties within the framework of the implementation of the memorandum on interaction and the great potential of the format of joint seminars "allows not only to carry out information exchange, but also to identify points of economic activity and effectively form proposals for the draft agenda of the next meeting of the joint working group"<sup>87</sup>. In 2025, the practice of joint seminars between the EEC and Myanmar on finance, digital economy and agro-industry will continue in order to deepen interaction in key areas of cooperation, increase the volume of trade turnover between the EAEU countries and Myanmar and eliminate imbalances in mutual trade.

Let us return to the Greater Eurasian Partnership. As we can see, this project is designed to help create favourable conditions in the Eurasian states for progressive sustainable development, improve the efficiency of industrial relations, and achieve strong and stable economic growth. And the EAEU is already accumulating the potential of Eurasian states on the sustainable development track in order to develop reliable, mutually beneficial and equal co-operation schemes with countries and associations in Asia.

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<sup>87</sup> The cycle of joint seminars between ECE and Myanmar has started [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://eec.eaunion.org/news/startoval-tsikl-sovmestnykh-seminarov-cek-i-myanmy-/>

## To ensure high dynamics trade and industrial co-operation

Belarus and Kazakhstan are strategic partners and allies. The relations between Minsk and Astana are systematically moving forward, developing co-operation and taking it to a new level of interaction. In June 2024, during the working meeting of the heads of the governments of the two countries R. Golovchenko and O. Bektenov, the parties agreed to make every effort to further increase the dynamics of the bilateral partnership and stated that "Belarus and Kazakhstan are able to increase trade turnover up to \$1.5 billion"<sup>88</sup>. Already in November 2024, a new working visit of the Kazakh government delegation to Minsk took place, where the parties agreed to ensure positive dynamics of bilateral trade. After all, the economies of Belarus and Kazakhstan have significant potential to increase and diversify trade flows and expand the range of goods supplied. Suffice it to say that Minsk and Astana "crossed the \$1 billion threshold in mutual trade a few years ago. <...> In fact, today we have no spheres left that would not be covered by co-operation"<sup>89</sup>.

One of the concrete results of this visit was the signing of **the roadmap between the two governments on the development of trade and economic cooperation for 2025-2029**, which envisages intensified interaction in the areas of production cooperation, agriculture, transport, communications and will allow to enlarge the pool of joint projects, establish even closer ties between the business communities of the two countries, including in the construction industry, high technology, and transit area. This programme, which is designed not for two years, as

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<sup>88</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus and Kazakhstan can increase trade turnover up to \$1.5 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarusi-i-kazahstanu-po-silam-narastit-tovarooborot-do-15-mlrd-638669-2024/>

<sup>89</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus and Kazakhstan need to ensure positive dynamics of bilateral trade [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarusi-i-kazahstanu-nuzhno-obespechit-polozhitelnuju-dinamiku-dvustoronnej-torgovli-675371-2024/>

before, but for the entire five-year period, was discussed in late May 2024 in Minsk at the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarus-Kazakhstan Commission (IGC) on Trade and Economic Cooperation.

It should be noted that the Belarusian-Kazakh trade turnover declined slightly in 2023 due to a number of reasons. For this reason, the parties formulated at a high level the main task for the next period - "to ensure the restoration of positive dynamics of bilateral trade and take measures to replenish mutual deliveries of sagging commodity items. One of the key drivers of intensification of trade and economic cooperation is interaction in the industrial sector"<sup>90</sup>. An important detail: to date, Belarusian-Kazakh industrial cooperation includes 14 projects totalling \$275 million. But this, as they say, is not the end of the story.

For reference, we note that "the trade turnover of the two countries in 2023 amounted to \$1.1 billion, including exports of Belarus - \$867 million. Our country supplies mainly tractors, machines and mechanisms for harvesting and threshing agricultural crops, cheese and cottage cheese, milk and cream, sausages and meat products, furniture, semi-finished products made of non-alloy steel"<sup>91</sup>. In addition, 55 enterprises with Kazakh capital, including 17 joint ventures and 38 foreign ones, are registered in Belarus, while in Kazakhstan there are more than 170 subjects of the commodity distribution network of domestic enterprises. Co-operation projects are being implemented for the joint production of tractor, agricultural, automotive and trailer, fire and rescue equipment, as well as lift equipment.

In this context, it should be noted that one of the most important areas of co-operation between the two countries is agriculture. First of all,

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<sup>90</sup> Relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan have always been based on friendship, mutual trust and respect - Roman Golovchenko [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/11054>

<sup>91</sup> Belarus and Kazakhstan will discuss the possibility of creating an industrial cooperation fund [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kazahstan-obsudjat-vozmozhnost-sozdaniya-fonda-promyshlennoj-kooperatsii-619287-2024/>

we are talking about the supply of food products from Belarus to the Kazakh market. Figures show that "exports of Belarusian agricultural and food products to Kazakhstan totalled almost a quarter of a billion dollars in 2023"<sup>92</sup>. The network of sales of Belarusian products is actively developing, the number of specialised shops, sections of supermarkets is growing. "In total, there are 270 branded retail facilities in Kazakhstan, where products under Belarusian brands are sold..."<sup>93</sup>

In addition, Belarus is ready to actively cooperate with Kazakhstan on localisation of agricultural machinery production. It should be recalled that "the existing joint production capacities already allow for the production of up to 10 thousand tractors and 1 thousand combines per year in Kazakhstan"<sup>94</sup>. As a positive example, we can mention the creation of a full-cycle production of cabins for tractor equipment in the city of Kostanai. Back in March 2024 in this Kazakh city Minsk Tractor Plant opened a workshop of cabins and a new machine assembly line "on the basis of the company "Machine-Building Plant MTZ-Kazakhstan". Today there are three assembly plants of BELARUS tractors in Kazakhstan"<sup>95</sup>. The cabins to be manufactured in Kostanai, "Machine-Building Plant MTZ-Kazakhstan" plans to use both in its own production and supply to other joint ventures - companies "Kazakhstan Agro Innovation Corporation and "SemAZ". And in the same Kostanai "in the near future it is planned <...> to organise a project for the production of

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<sup>92</sup> Golovchenko: we count on the transition to deeper co-operation with Kazakhstan in agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-rasschityvaem-na-perehod-k-bolee-glubokomu-sotrudnichestvu-s-kazahstanom-v-apk-638683-2024/>

<sup>93</sup> Milk, clothes, confectionery. What Belarusian products are popular in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/molochka-odezhda-konditerskie-izdelija-kakaja-belorusskaja-produktsija-populjarna-v-kazahstane-640064-2024/>

<sup>94</sup> Snopkov: Belarus is ready to actively cooperate with Kazakhstan in localisation of agricultural machinery production [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/snopkov-belarus-gotova-aktivno-sotrudnicat-s-kazahstanom-v-lokalizatsii-proizvodstva-selhoztehniki-638115-2024/>

<sup>95</sup> In Kazakhstan will open a new assembly line of BELARUS tractors [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/v-kazahstane-otkrojut-novuju-liniju-sborniki-tractorov-belarus-620534-2024/>

engines of Minsk Motor Plant"<sup>96</sup> . The Belarusian side, taking into account the large market of passenger vehicles and updates in this direction in Kazakhstan, proposes to work out a project with Kazakh partners "with Belkommunmash - on trolleybuses, trams, electric buses, which they produce"<sup>97</sup> . The next topic - a network of charging stations - is also suggested here. After all, Belarus also has the necessary competences in this respect.

In November 2024, during the visit of Kazakhstan's government delegation to Minsk, the Belarusian side offered to also set up joint production of fire and rescue equipment and agricultural loaders. "The partner from the Belarusian side is ready to act as a well-known manufacturer - the company "Pozhsnab", whose equipment has already proved itself well in Kazakhstan. In addition, AMKODOR OJSC together with a number of Kazakh enterprises are working on the issue of organising a new production of agricultural loaders in Kazakhstan"<sup>98</sup> . Belarusian manufacturers have other proposals for the development of industrial cooperation, including the production of components for vehicles and tractors. As for the supply of finished products, Belarusian companies are ready to meet Kazakhstan's needs in municipal, logging, road-building machinery and grain drying complexes. They are ready to provide support for putting machinery into operation, operator training, warranty and service support.

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<sup>96</sup> Golovchenko: production of MMZ engines is planned to be organised in Kazakhstan's Kostanai [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-proizvodstvo-dvigatelej-mmz-planiruetsja-organizovat-v-kazahstanskom-kostanae-638677-2024/>

<sup>97</sup> Construction of cars, housing, farms. What are the prospects for cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/stroitelstvo-mashin-zhilija-ferm-kakie-perspektivy-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-kazahstana-640062-2024/>

<sup>98</sup> Golovchenko offered Kazakhstan to create joint production of fire-fighting equipment and agricultural loaders [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-predlozhit-kazahstanu-sozdat-sovmestnye-proizvodstva-pozharnoj-tehniki-i-selhozopogruzchikov-675373-2024/>

As noted above, the agricultural sector is an important area of cooperation between Belarus and Kazakhstan. In addition to the already traditional supplies of agricultural machinery and food products, during the November talks, the parties agreed to explore the possibility of cooperation in providing Kazakhstan with the necessary amino acids and premixes produced by the Belarusian National Biotechnology Corporation. Cooperation in sorting and processing of municipal waste, water treatment and purification is also promising. All the more so because "the Belarusian enterprise Sifania-Ekotechnika has already implemented projects in a number of cities in Kazakhstan to process solid domestic waste and produce from it popular goods - from bags to paving tiles"<sup>99</sup>. And the company Polimerkonstruktsiya from Belarus, which successfully operates in different parts of the world, is ready to offer equipment and technologies for water treatment for various industries and housing and communal services.

During the visit, the guests of honour from Kazakhstan also familiarised themselves with the capabilities of the Belarusian High Technology Park (HTP) and the developments of its residents. Among them is Mind Games Soft LLC, which produces professional digital simulators using virtual reality technologies for industry, education and safe life activities. Products include digital simulators for agricultural, logging, mining and emergency rescue equipment of such enterprises as Gomselmash, Minsk Tractor and Automobile Plants, AMKODOR and Belaruskali. And the developers and operators of the ecosystem of new financial instruments OOO "Oplati" presented the work of payment services through mobile and web solutions aimed at the use of electronic money in Belarus. "The unique payment system allows users to pay for

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<sup>99</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus is ready to supply amino acids to Kazakhstan and implement projects in the housing and utilities sector [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-gotova-postavljat-v-kazahstan-aminokisloty-i-realizovuyat-proekty-v-zhkh-675377-2024/>



utilities, transport costs and other purchases through a mobile application without the need to use physical cards"<sup>100</sup> and united all necessary banking services in one application. Another HTP resident, LLC "CometaRad", presented a software complex for processing, three-dimensional reconstruction, transmission and storage of medical diagnostic images 3D MeD with 3D modelling technology based on artificial intelligence. In addition, developers from R-NOKS LLC showed innovative solutions for monitoring atmospheric air quality using machine learning, Big Data, and the Internet of Things.

Returning to the decisions taken in November in Minsk between Belarus and Kazakhstan, we note two more documents: the **action plan on interaction in the sphere of cultural and humanitarian cooperation for 2025-2026** and the **cooperation agreement between the Belarusian National Agency for Tourism and the Kazakh National Company Kazakh Tourism**. In addition, "as a result of the working visit of the Kazakh government delegation to Belarus, contracts worth more than \$90 million were signed"<sup>101</sup>. In total, the parties signed 20 documents.

And one more touch to the visit of the Kazakh government delegation to Minsk. The parties agreed to hold the **first Kazakhstan-Belarus Regions Forum** in the near future, as this is "a very effective format that allows to significantly advance co-operation in various spheres"<sup>102</sup>. At the already mentioned 18th meeting of the IGC it was noted that the parties have all the necessary prerequisites and

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<sup>100</sup> High visit to the world of high technologies. Heads of the Governments of Belarus and Kazakhstan visited HTP [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: [https://www.park.by/press/news/vysokiy\\_vizit\\_v\\_mir\\_vysokikh\\_tekhnologiy\\_pvt\\_posetili\\_gla\\_vy\\_pravitelstv\\_belarusi\\_i\\_kazahstana/](https://www.park.by/press/news/vysokiy_vizit_v_mir_vysokikh_tekhnologiy_pvt_posetili_gla_vy_pravitelstv_belarusi_i_kazahstana/)

<sup>101</sup> Contracts for more than \$90 million signed following the visit of the delegation of Kazakhstan to Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/kontrakty-na-bolee-chem-90-mln-podpisany-po-itogam-vizita-delegatsii-kazahstana-v-belarus-675470-2024/>

<sup>102</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus and Kazakhstan plan to hold the Forum of Regions [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/golovchenko-belarus-i-kazahstan-planirujut-provesti-forum-regionov-675354-2024/>

opportunities for a significant increase in bilateral interaction aimed at intensifying joint work in various areas of partnership ties. At the same time, the parties also agreed to intensify interregional ties, the potential of which has not yet been fully utilised. For reference, it should be noted that to date, about 25 co-operation agreements have already been signed between the regions of Belarus and Kazakhstan. Let us see how the Belarusian regions will approach the upcoming important event.

Let's start with the **Belarusian capital**. Kazakhstan is already implementing a number of important and landmark projects in the economic sphere, which operate within the framework of industrial cooperation with the active participation of such Minsk-based enterprises as the tractor and automobile plants and AMKODOR. In particular, in May 2024 in Kostanai city a new workshop for production of cabins for BELARUS tractors was opened on the site of "Machine-Building Plant MTZ-Kazakhstan" LLP. This is the second stage of this project. Joint work started back in 2018. And a total of four stages will be realised until 2027. The opening of a new workshop for the production of cabins for BELARUS tractors means the emergence of another high-tech production and the creation of additional jobs on Kazakh soil. Thus "as of today 150 of them have already been created. By the end of the fourth stage of the project they are expected to exceed 500"<sup>103</sup>.

Another interesting project in the development of interregional cooperation between **Minsk** and partners from this Central Asian country could be the construction of the so-called "Kazakhstan neighbourhood" in the Belarusian capital. A place for it has already been identified in Minsk within the boundaries of Zheleznodorozhnaya, Dubravinskaya, Grushevskaya and Pryamaya streets. "The Committee of Architecture and

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<sup>103</sup> A new workshop for the production of cabins for BELARUS tractors appeared in Kazakhstan's Kostanai [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/novyj-tseh-po-proizvodstvu-kabin-k-tractoram-belarus-pojavilsja-v-kazahstanskom-kostanae-637069-2024/>

Urban Planning has agreed on the architectural and planning concept of the object, providing for the construction of more than 39.2 thousand square metres of apartment housing with an open-type garage-parking for 300 parking spaces"<sup>104</sup> . We would like to add that the Kazakhstani side has already approved the conceptual design. And by the end of 2024 it is planned to finalise the design.

Kazakhstan is one of the most important economic partners of **Mogilev Region** and ranks second in the foreign trade turnover and exports of the Belarusian region among the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. The main items of Mogilev exports to this country are tyres, dairy products, poultry meat, lifts, spare parts for cars and tractors, pumps, chipboard. Fruitful co-operation has been established also at the level of large-scale production facilities. In particular, "for JSC "Mogilevliftmash" Kazakhstan is one of the main sales markets, there are two assembly plants - in the cities of Aktobe and Almaty"<sup>105</sup> . In 2023, about 350 lifts were delivered there. But the potential of the Mogilev enterprise is much greater: it is ready to participate more actively in the programme for the replacement of lift equipment, as well as to supply its products for new construction. Bobruisk Belshina is also ready for further co-operation. In 2023, despite the fall in export prices more than twice, the enterprise will sell 51 thousand more tyres to Kazakhstan than in 2022. Also. To date, Mogilevshchina has signed co-operation agreements with only two regions of Kazakhstan - Turkestan and East Kazakhstan. And there is confidence that at the first Forum of Regions of the two countries these documents will be coloured with new colours.

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<sup>104</sup> Belarus and Kazakhstan plan to expand political and cultural interaction [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kazakhstan-planirujut-rasshirjat-politicheskoe-i-kulturnoe-vzaimodejstvie-663284-2024>

<sup>105</sup> Integration and joint productions. Isachenko on co-operation of the Mogilev region with Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/politics/view/integratsija-i-sovmestnye-proizvodstva-isachenko-o-sotrudnichestve-mogilevskoj-oblasti-s-kazhstanom-607349-2023/>

**The Gomel region** also intends to expand co-operation with partners from Kazakhstan. In this regard, it should be reminded that in September 2024, the annual Gomel Economic Forum was held for the 18th time. Among the active participants from the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States was Kazakhstan, "whose potential for cooperation with the Belarusian south-eastern region is simply enormous. This, first of all, concerns issues of industrial co-operation and agriculture"<sup>106</sup>. In particular, Kazakhstan has set up an assembly production of machinery in cooperation with Gomselmash, which is successfully developing. Within the framework of the economic forum, the parties agreed that the number of joint projects will increase. Apparently, this dialogue between the interested parties will continue at the first Forum of Regions of Belarus and Kazakhstan.

**Brest region** is also interested in closer co-operation with Kazakhstan in various areas. In particular, it is about increasing investment cooperation between the Kazakh side and Brest region in the field of agricultural production, processing of agricultural products in order to "invest in the production of dairy raw materials, given the great competence and high potential that the Belarusian side has in this area. Another interesting sector is the production of building materials, floor coverings, ceramic tiles, sanitary ware"<sup>107</sup>. The parties also have great potential in the sphere of transit, tourism, travelling, health improvement. In short, there are still many points for strengthening co-operation. Thus, Brest Oblast, to all appearances, will approach the first Forum of Regions of Belarus and Kazakhstan with new interesting projects and promising proposals.

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<sup>106</sup> Zalesky, B. From Programmes to Concrete Projects. Features of positive trends in the economy of Belarus / Boris Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2024. - C. 49.

<sup>107</sup> Investments, technologies, tourism. Brest region and Kazakhstan are aimed at closer cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/investitsii-tehnologii-turizm-breyskaja-oblast-i-kazahstan-natseleny-na-bolee-tesnoe-sotrudnichestvo-680543-2024/>

Let us summarise the results. The working visit of the government delegation of Kazakhstan to Belarus in November 2024 showed that the two countries of the post-Soviet space have long built strong, friendly and partnership ties. And today they continue to implement the promising areas included in the Roadmap of the Governments of the two countries on the development of trade and economic cooperation for 2025-2029 in order to reach a qualitatively new level of interaction.

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## Reach out to new projects, in order to mutually benefit

Belarus and Kazakhstan today demonstrate great potential for mutually beneficial co-operation in various sectors, from agriculture to high technologies and innovative developments. Joint investment projects in machine-building, chemical and petrochemical industries are being successfully implemented. During the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Kazakhstan Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, which took place in Minsk in May 2024, it was also noted that "it is necessary to continue and expand the practice of holding interregional business investment forums, exhibitions and fairs..."<sup>108</sup>. In this context, it should be said that our republic actively participates in this Central Asian country in many international exhibition events. For example, "the total exposition of Belarus at exhibitions in Kazakhstan in 2023 amounted to almost 1 thousand square metres, about 50 Belarusian enterprises took part"<sup>109</sup>. This was a significant contribution to the bilateral economic co-operation.

The most representative international event in Kazakhstan in 2023 in the exhibition sphere was the **first international industrial forum "INNOPROM. Kazakhstan"**, which took place in September in the Expo Centre of the Kazakh capital. The participants included enterprises and companies from 20 countries, including Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Myanmar, Vietnam, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, China, Russia, presented in such thematic sections of the exhibition as mechanical engineering, metallurgy and materials, energy solutions,

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<sup>108</sup> Agro-industrial complex, culture and education. In what spheres Belarus and Kazakhstan will strengthen mutual co-operation [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/apk-kultura-i-obrazovanie-v-kakih-sferah-belarus-i-kazhstana-budut-ukrepljat-vzaimnoe-sotrudnichestvo-638164-2024/>

<sup>109</sup> From agro-industrial complex to high technologies. Myatlikov named promising areas of cooperation with Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/ot-apk-do-vysokih-tehnologij-myatlikov-nazval-perspektivnye-napравlenija-sotrudnichestva-s-kazhstanom-637976-2024/>

chemical industry technologies, information and telecommunication technologies, machine-tool construction and infrastructure development. 32 Belarusian enterprises and institutions of the Ministry of Industry, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Belarus, the State Committee for Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Education also presented their products and technologies. "The national exposition of Belarus was spread over an area of 742 square metres (210 square metres in the pavilion and 532 square metres in the outdoor area"<sup>110</sup> .

The specifics of this exhibition were characterised by its innovative nature. For this reason, the products presented by the Belarusian participants of the forum included interesting technical and scientific novelties. In particular, 20 enterprises of the Belarusian Ministry of Industry showed samples of export equipment, and "the total amount of commercial documents (agreements, protocols, contracts) <...> totalled about \$64 million"<sup>111</sup> . For example, OJSC "Managing Company of Horizont Holding" demonstrated two directions of its products - consumer electronics and equipment, as well as professional products for transport, namely automotive and aviation electronics. For the first direction specialists of Horizont "for two days signed contracts worth \$25 million. We are talking about the supply of consumer electronics to eight retail chains in Kazakhstan"<sup>112</sup> . In the second direction, the Belarusian company received an order to produce electronics for cars. This shows that interest in Belarusian products in the Kazakh market remains traditionally high.

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<sup>110</sup> The International Industrial Forum "INNOPROM. Kazakhstan" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/v-astane-otkrylja-mezhdunarodnyj-promyshlennyj-forum-innoprom-kazahstan-590049-2023/>

<sup>111</sup> Enterprises of the Ministry of Industry at "INNOPROM. Kazakhstan" concluded contracts for \$64 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/predprijatija-minprom-na-innoprom-kazahstan-zakljuchili-kontrakty-na-64-mln-591102-2023/>

<sup>112</sup> Predko: production of "Horizon" will be realised by trade networks of Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/predko-produktsija-gorizonta-budet-realizovyvatsja-torgovymi-setjami-kazahstana-590599-2023/>

At this exhibition, Gomselmash also demonstrated machinery that is already assembled in Kazakhstan. The fact is that in order to develop industrial co-operation in this Central Asian country, joint assembly of combine harvesters under the Essil brand is already underway. "This is a very successful project, we are assembling 4,300 units. <...> Now the level of localisation is already up to 40%. The cutterbars, tilting chambers, hoppers are fully localised"<sup>113</sup>. And in the future it is planned to supply updated harvesters of the 4th class.

To expand its presence in Kazakhstan - this is the task for Mogilevliftmash OJSC, whose specialists participated in this exhibition. The Mogilevliftmash company already has "assembly production, dealers and distribution network, but it is not enough..."<sup>114</sup>. Co-operation should be developed further. Moreover, the market of Kazakhstan is very big. A lot of construction is going on there and many lifts need to be replaced. For this reason "Mogilevliftmash" potentially sets the task to sell up to 700 lifts annually.

Such a Belarusian exporter as Atlant CJSC intends to strengthen its co-operation with Kazakhstan. At the forum "INNOPROM. Kazakhstan" forum, the company presented household appliances. An important fact: Atlant has concluded "contacts with all major retail chains. In particular, for 8 months [2023] in this country <...> shipped 20 thousand refrigerators, 3 thousand washing machines"<sup>115</sup>. The Belarusian supplier intends to further strengthen this co-operation. And Minsk Tractor Plant showed a wide range of its new machinery and "signed a commercial

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<sup>113</sup> "Gomselmash" will supply Kazakhstan with updated combine harvesters [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-postavit-v-kazahstan-obnovlennye-zernouborochnye-kombajny-590179-2023/>

<sup>114</sup> "Mogilevliftmash" plans to sell to Kazakhstan up to 700 lifts a year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/mogilevliftmash-planiruet-prodat-v-kazahstane-do-700-liftov-v-god-590005-2023/>

<sup>115</sup> "Atlant" intends to increase cooperation in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/atlant-nameren-naraschivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-kazahstanom-590085-2023/>



contract for the delivery of 1.5 thousand cabins to MTZ Machine Building Plant - Kazakhstan LLP". 1.5 thousand units of cab kits for \$3 million"<sup>116</sup>

As for the enterprises of Belleprom Concern, following the forum "INNOPROM. Kazakhstan", agreements were reached on increasing supplies of Belarusian fabrics for various purposes to the Kazakh market, as well as "on the placement of an "island" with Belarusian light industry goods in the hypermarket Magnum. It is planned that the products of Orsha Flax Factory, Vitebsk Carpets, Dobrush Porcelain Factory, BPHO OJSC will be presented there"<sup>117</sup>. In addition, as a result of the negotiations, a memorandum of co-operation was signed between Belleprom Concern and Global-Spetsodezhda LLP and Union of Kazakhstan Manufacturers of Personal Protective Equipment. It may be added that for three quarters of 2023 the Concern's enterprises shipped nine million dollars worth of goods to Kazakhstan. Export growth is 131 per cent.

Speaking about the joint stand of Belarusian scientific organisations and educational institutions at the exhibition "INNOPROM. Kazakhstan", it should be noted that six organisations subordinate to the NAS of Belarus were represented there - Optron Plant, Optics, Optoelectronics and Laser Technology State Research and Production Association, United Institute of Informatics Problems of the NAS of Belarus, Minsk Research Institute of Radio Materials, Aviation Technologies and Complexes CJSC, Centre for System Analysis and Strategic Research of the NAS of Belarus, as well as three universities - Belarusian State University, Belarusian State Technological University, Belarusian State University of

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<sup>116</sup> MTW will supply to Kazakhstan 1.5 thousand units of cab kits for \$3 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/mtz-postavit-v-kazahstan-15-tys-edinits-kabinokomplektov-na-3-mln-590218-2023/>

<sup>117</sup> Belleprom" enterprises have increased supplies to Kazakhstan by more than a third since the beginning of the year [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-belleproma-s-nachala-goda-velichili-postavki-v-kazahstan-bolee-chem-na-tret-590675-2023/>

Science and Technology, Belarusian State University of Science and Technology, Belarusian State University of Science and Technology, Belarusian State University of Technology and Belarusian State University of Technology They showed "several thematic blocks: unmanned aerial vehicles, electric transport and component base, industrial technologies, microelectronics, laser technology, artificial intelligence and IT-technologies, biotechnologies and pharmacology, technologies for space exploration"<sup>118</sup>.

In particular, an ultralight aircraft was demonstrated - a gyroplane model "Yastreb", which is designed for border patrols, cargo transport, aerial survey, forestry monitoring and fire protection. "In the short term - operation as an air taxi"<sup>119</sup>. Compared to aeroplanes and helicopters, this gyroplane has a number of advantages: ease of control in all ranges of operation, no vibrations and "stalling on the wing", many variations of horizontal flight speeds. There is also no need for special preparation of a site for take-off, the device can be landed on unprepared country roads, soil, water and snow.

Among other presented developments of CJSC "Aviation Technologies and Complexes" one could see Agrodrone A60-X - a complex for field spraying using ultra-small volume technology, which has a number of advantages over traditional methods of plant protection agent application. In total, the national exposition of Belarus included more than 70 developments of organisations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and institutions of the Ministry of Education.

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<sup>118</sup> Shakhanovich, A. For the first time in Kazakhstan. What Belarus will present at the exhibition "INNOPROM. Kazakhstan" in Astana / A. Shakhanovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/comments/view/vpervye-v-kazahstane-cto-belarus-predstavit-na-vystavke-innoprom-v-astane-8893/>

<sup>119</sup> Gavrilova, V. Scientific and technical developments of Belarus will be presented at the exhibition "INNOPROM. Kazakhstan" / V. Gavrilova // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/nauchno-tehnicheskie-razrabotki-belarusi-predstavjat-na-vystavke-innoprom-kazahstan-589784-2023/>

Let us now look at some other interesting international exhibitions organised with Belarusian participation in Kazakhstan over the past two years. For example, the exposition of Belarusian producers under the brand Belarus - The Taste of Nature was presented at the **Kazakhstan International Exhibition "Food, Beverages, Ingredients, Packaging and Equipment for the Food Industry" - InterFood Astana** in Astana at the end of May 2023. This forum is a traditional meeting place for specialists from different countries in the food, processing and packaging industry. More than 70 companies from Armenia, Belarus, Vietnam, Germany, Kazakhstan, China, Malaysia, Russia, Vietnam and Uzbekistan presented at their stands new product portfolios, innovations in the food industry, beverages, ingredients and modern packaging technologies. The Belarusian exposition showed "a variety of products from Volkovysk, Grodno, Slonim meat processing plants and JV JSC Spartak: sausages, meat semi-finished products, confectionery products"<sup>120</sup>. The exhibition included a business programme including conferences, presentations, master classes and tastings of product lines.

A year later - at the end of May 2024 - at the same international exhibition - **InterFood Astana** - food industry leaders from 15 countries demonstrated the goods and services of more than 80 food manufacturers and brands. The honoured region of the exposition forum was the "European Union with the presentation of European goods from 30 producers of the member countries of the association"<sup>121</sup>. And in the exposition Belarus. The Taste of Nature exposition, a wide range of products was presented by Belarusian meat and dairy companies: Slutsk Cheese Factory OJSC and Slonimsky Meat Processing Plant OJSC.

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<sup>120</sup> Exposition Belarus - The Taste of Nature at the exhibition InterFood Astana [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.cci.by/o-palate/novosti/ekspozitsiya-belarus-the-taste-of-nature-na-vystavke-interfood-astana/#>

<sup>121</sup> Belarusian enterprises are presented at the international exhibition InterFood Astana in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-predstavleny-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-interfood-astana-v-kazahstane-637677-2024/>

One of the most visited and widely covered agricultural events in Kazakhstan - the **International Exhibition of Agriculture and Food Industry "KazFarm/KazAgro-2023"** - was held in October in Astana, where 250 companies from 20 countries participated and where the best developments were presented, from seeds and embryos to finished products of crop, livestock and processing industries. From our country the participants were LLC "Agropolyhim", LLC "RTiflex", LLC "Tekhmash", Minsk motor plant. And the Belarusian State Association for breeding livestock "Belplemzhivobedinenie" and the Republican Unitary Enterprise "Gomelgosplempredpriyatie" "organised an exposition stand with demonstration of video materials, which acquainted the guests and visitors of the exhibition with breeding livestock breeding of the Republic of Belarus"<sup>122</sup>. Negotiations were held with the heads of Kazakhstani breeding organisations and issues of mutually beneficial cooperation were discussed.

Finally, in early November 2023, Belarusian meat processing and dairy companies took part in Kazakhstan's largest specialised exhibition event - the **25th Central Asian International Food Industry Exhibition - FoodExpo Qazaqstan-2023**, which took place in Almaty and brought together over 300 companies from 33 countries. In addition to Belarus, collective country expositions were presented by Hungary, Indonesia, Poland, Russia, North Macedonia, the United States of America, Sri Lanka and the Republic of Korea. In the section "Meat and meat products" the enterprise "Veles-Mit", as well as Volkovysk, Grodno, Pinsk and Slonim meat processing plants were presented. Belarusian producers familiarised Kazakhstani consumers with a wide range of sausages, delicatessen, smoked and tinned products. Volkovysk meat processing plant demonstrated already favourite meat products, including

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<sup>122</sup> KazFarm/KazAgro-2023" Exhibition was held in Astana on 19-21 October [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.mshp.gov.by/printv/ru/news-ru/view/19-21-oktjabrja-v-gastana-proshla-vystavka-kazfarm-kazagro-2023-9164-2023/>

beef steaks and new types of semi-smoked sausages. Grodno Meat Processing Plant offered beef sausage with prunes. Pinsk meat processing plant surprised visitors with products made of game meat. "Among the novelties - meat paste and Italian sausage series from "Veles-Mit". Boiled sausage with pistachios according to the Italian recipe aroused special interest among the visitors of the exhibition. Enterprises of the dairy industry - Bellact, Molochnye Gorki, Lida Dairy Canning Plant - brought milk, cheese, butter, dried baby food, milk powder"<sup>123</sup>. Bellakt presented its new products to the Kazakh market - frozen cheesecakes, dessert paste with cocoa and hazelnut and a new line of glazed cheesecakes. Goretsky Food Combine for the first time brought to Kazakhstan its legendary line of Exponenta products, rich in protein and functional characteristics. Dairy Horki presented not only its traditional line of whole-milk products, but also a new range of lactose-free products, including cottage cheese, sour cream and butter. Among the novelties we should mention clarified butter presented in glass packaging. By the way, at the professional competition-tasting "The Best Product of FoodExpo Qazaqstan-2023", which was held on the opening day of the exhibition, the company "Molochnye Gorki" was awarded a diploma in the category "Dairy Products", and Goretsky Food Complex received an award in the category "Best Sour Milk Drinks". Traditionally, this exhibition was accompanied by a rich business programme, participation in which gave the representatives of Belarusian business an opportunity to exchange experience and vision of further development of the food industry. In particular, a business session "Sustainable Development of Food Industry Enterprises" was held and direct negotiations between retail chains and distributors were held in the retail centre.

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<sup>123</sup> Belarus presented its exposition at the food exhibition in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-ekspozitsiju-na-prodovolstvennoj-vystavke-v-kazhastane-597496-2023/>

A year later, in mid-November, **the 26th Food Industry Exhibition - FoodExpo Qazaqstan-2024** - was held, where Belarusian meat processing, dairy and confectionery companies participated in the exposition Belarus. The Taste of Nature. They were represented by eight companies, among which one could see flagships and well-known brands - Volkovysk, Grodno, Oshmian, Pinsk and Slonim meat processing plants. Turovsky Dairy Plant presented at the exhibition a product line of cheese for consumers of the professional market and chain retail. Under the auspices of the enterprise a thematic location Show-Kitchen was organised, within the framework of which pizza preparation with these cheeses was demonstrated. OJSC "Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1" presented novelties of 2024 - Edelweiss cheese in different spices, "Imeruli" cheeses and cheeses with the addition of goat's milk. The company showed a lactose-free product line including milk, cottage cheese, sour cream and butter. "Also presented are unique cheeses without added sugar, the assortment of which was supplemented with two new types: sugar-free glazed cottage cheese with fillings "mango-orange-ginger" and "blueberry-jevica" with a mass fat content of 20%"<sup>124</sup>. Spartak presented a product line without added sugar: bitter chocolate with collagen, strawberry and hazelnut, a range of mini granola bars, wafer bars, No sugar biscuits with flax seeds and bran, and Truffles candies without added sugar.

Let us summarise the results. All these exhibitions 2023-2024 organised in Kazakhstan have shown that the participation of enterprises from Belarus in these business forums provides an opportunity not only to exchange experience with Kazakh partners and visions for further development in the most relevant sectors of the economy, but also

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<sup>124</sup> Belarusian enterprises became participants of a large exhibition of food industry in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2024. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-stali-uchastnikami-krupnoj-vystavki-pischevoj-promyshlennosti-v-kazahstane-675060-2024/>

provides access to specific bilateral cooperation projects. Moreover, the parties see great potential for co-operation thanks to the exhibition events, which have significant potential and unique opportunities for mutual benefit.

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