

## From growth points to partnership

From January 1, 2020 the Republic of Belarus assumed the chairmanship in the bodies of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEC), opening a new five-year cycle of development of this integration formation in the post-Soviet space. The action program of the Belarusian presidency in the framework of the Union promises to be very rich. In particular, it is planned to focus joint efforts of the Union's member states on the complete removal of barriers, the maximum reduction of exceptions and restrictions in their markets, and the prevention of the possibility of new types of obstacles to a free competitive environment. In addition, Belarus will initiate additional measures aimed at global and regional positioning of the Union with a view to developing and implementing a common or unified information policy. Successful accomplishment of these tasks depends on a number of factors, including adequate media articulation of the Eurasian integration theme by the international segment of national journalism not only in the EAEC member-states, but also in the entire Commonwealth of Independent States. How is this task being solved in the Republic of Belarus? This is the subject of the proposed research.



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Zalessky



## From growth points to partnership

*Eurasian interaction in the context of global challenges*

**Boris Zalessky**

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## **Eurasian integration: the way to the future will determine the development strategy**

From January 1, 2020 the Republic of Belarus assumed the presidency of the bodies of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEC), thus opening another five-year cycle of development of this integration formation in the post-Soviet space. The action program of the Belarusian presidency within the Union promises to be very rich. In particular, it is planned to focus joint efforts of the EAEC member-states on the complete removal of barriers, the maximum reduction of exceptions and restrictions in their markets, and the prevention of the possibility of new types of obstacles to a free competitive environment. In addition, the Belarusian side will initiate additional measures for the global and regional positioning of the Union with the entry into the development and implementation of a common or unified information policy, which "requires the development of a common information policy concept, a strategy for its implementation and action plans for their implementation. I<...> The most important thing is to ensure broad support for the Eurasian integration by the citizens of our states" . The successful accomplishment of this task undoubtedly depends on a number of factors, among which should be mentioned the adequate media articulation of the Eurasian integration theme by the international segment of national journalism in the EAEC member states, which requires from international journalists, first of all, a competent approach to its coverage in the media sphere.

Recall that from February 1, 2020 began its work and a new Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), which was headed by a representative of Belarus M.. Myasnikovich. And already at the first meeting of this formation the main priorities of the EEC work were announced.

Firstly, real working markets should be formed in the UAE by 2025, which requires more effective measures in this direction.

Secondly, the strategic directions of the development of the Eurasian economic integration up to 2025 should be promptly finalized.

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<sup>1</sup> Address by President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko to the heads of member states of the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/obraschenie-prezidenta-respubliki-belarus-aleksandra-lukashenko-k-glavam-gosudarstv-chlenov-evrazijskogo-22827/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/obraschenie-prezidenta-respubliki-belarus-aleksandra-lukashenko-k-glavam-gosudarstv-chlenov-evrazijskogo-22827/).

Thirdly, the urgent task is to increase the international authority of the Union, for which "it is planned to intensify cooperation with international organizations and associations, jointly develop transport and logistics infrastructure, including participation in the projects of the initiative "Belt and Way"<sup>2</sup>.

Fourth, there is a need to ensure real benefits for union countries in conducting mutual trade. So far, as it was noted at the first meeting of the new EEC membership, "there are still cases of new obstacles imposed by countries, and the task of the commission is to improve the mechanisms of monitoring the rights of the union and fully implement it"<sup>3</sup>. The statistics here are as follows: four years ago, the list of barriers, restrictions and obstacles in the EEEC was 60 points, and at the end of January 2020 - 71 points. As a result, the pace of development of mutual trade within the Union cannot be called rapid. Suffice it to say that "the volume of mutual trade in goods of the UAE states in 2019 amounted to \$55.3 billion, or 100.2% to the level of 2018"<sup>4</sup>.

In the light of the tasks set for the development of the Union, a lot, of course, should be taken into account in the Strategic Directions of the Eurasian integration until 2025, which are being developed now within the framework of the EAEC. As of the middle of February 2020 in this complex document "the parties agreed on 318 positions, the remaining disagreements concern only 15 mechanisms of interaction"<sup>5</sup>. At the EEC meeting in February, the parties were able to agree on several more positions of the draft strategy. "In particular, they agreed on the formulations in the sphere of application of special protective, anti-dumping and compensatory measures, in the sphere of sanitary, veterinary and phytosanitary

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<sup>2</sup> Participation in the meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9245>.

<sup>3</sup> Brewery, E. Common markets, fight against obstacles, infrastructure projects - Myasnikovich named priorities of EEC / E. Brewery // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/obschie-rynki-borba-s-prepiatstvijami-infrastrukturnye-proekty-mjasnikovich-nazval-prioritety-eek-378306-2020/>.

<sup>4</sup> Brewer, E. In EAES in 2019 industrial production and retail turnover grew / E. Brewer // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-eaes-v-2019-godu-vyrosli-promproizvodstvo-i-roznicnyj-tovarooborot-380320-2020/>.

<sup>5</sup> Pivovar, E. Myasnikovich: the work on the project of the Eurasian integration strategy till 2025 is being completed / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-rabota-nad-proektom-strategii-evrazijskoj-integratsii-do-2025-goda-zavershaetsja-380272-2020/>.

(SPS) measures, as well as conceptual approaches to the formation of mechanisms to promote economic development of the Eurasian Economic Community"<sup>6</sup>.

The key points that are laid down in the strategy are related:

- a) complete elimination of obstacles in the union market;
- b) improvement of customs regulation;
- c) formation of the digital union space;
- d) building a management system and financing joint cooperation projects.

Among the new directions that should be reflected in the strategy is the development of green technologies, renewable energy sources, economic aspects in health care, tourism, education and science. At the same time, the quality of the developed program document should be positively influenced by the fact that the Scientific Council of the Russian Academy of Sciences in February 2020 decided to provide scientific support and support the implementation of the Strategic Directions of the Eurasian economic integration until 2025. It only remains to add that in a revised form this document should be approved at the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in May 2020.

The plans for Belarus' presidency of the Eurasian Economic Community include the adoption of a single import substitution programme based on national programmes, the elaboration of a long-term strategic programme for innovative development and the strengthening of cooperation in science, technology and innovation.

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<sup>6</sup> Pivovar, E. Vice-Premiers agreed on SPS measures in the strategy of Eurasian integration / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vitse-premjery-soglasovali-sfs-mery-v-strategii-evrazijskoj-integratsii-380580-2020/>.

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## Eurasian Economic Union: interaction on the foundation of technological platforms

On January 1, 2020 the Republic of Belarus became chairman of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEC). Among the tasks that need to be resolved in the near future in this integration association were "elaboration of a long-term strategic program of innovative development and strengthening cooperation in science, technology and innovation"<sup>7</sup>. At present, the EAEC is working intensively to agree on such important documents as the projects of strategic directions of the Eurasian economic integration and the main directions of industrial cooperation for the period until 2025. Belarus is also in favour of expanding scientific, technological and innovation cooperation, including through the creation of Eurasian technology platforms whose main objective is to "ensure the systematic accumulation of national and international best practices in scientific and technological development and the mobilization of the scientific potential of its member states to solve applied problems in the development of innovative products and technologies and their introduction into industrial production"<sup>8</sup>. The fact is that "the EAEC Treaty does not contain any basic provisions on scientific and technical cooperation that would allow regulating the innovation interaction between the countries of the Union"<sup>9</sup>. For this reason, the Republic of Belarus initiates the inclusion of a separate article in the EAEC Treaty that would define the areas of cooperation of the Union's Member States in the scientific, technological and innovation spheres.

Recall that back in April 2016 by decision of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council was formed a list of Eurasian technology platforms, which included 14 areas: 1. Medical and medical biotechnology, pharmacy. 2. Information and communication technologies. 3. Photonics. 2. Information and communication technologies. 3. 4. Aerospace technologies. 5. Nuclear and radiation technologies. 6. Energetics. 7. Technologies of transport. 8.

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<sup>7</sup> Address by President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko to the heads of member states of the Eurasian Economic Union [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/obraschenie-prezidenta-respubliki-belarus-aleksandra-lukashenko-k-glavam-gosudarstv-chlenov-evrazijskogo-22827/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/obraschenie-prezidenta-respubliki-belarus-aleksandra-lukashenko-k-glavam-gosudarstv-chlenov-evrazijskogo-22827/)

<sup>8</sup> Eurasian technological platforms [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-vystupaet-za-rasshirenie-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-v-caes-shumilin-397579-2020/>.

<sup>9</sup> Belarus advocates the expansion of scientific and technical cooperation in the EAEC - Shumilin [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-vystupaet-za-rasshirenie-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-v-caes-shumilin-397579-2020/>.

Technologies of metallurgy and new materials. 9. Extraction of natural resources and oil and gas processing. 10. Chemistry and Petrochemistry. 11. Electronics and Engineering Technologies. 12. Environmental development. 13. Industrial technologies. 12. Ecological development. 14. Agriculture, food industry, biotechnologies.

In January 2019, the 15th Eurasian platform - "Energy and Electrification" - was formed in the EAES. Nine enterprises and scientific institutes of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia became the founders of this platform, which identified such main areas of activity as "power engineering, electrification, as well as the creation and distribution of smart electrical networks - electrical installations that provide parallel operation in the network of different energy sources. In addition, it is planned to develop and use renewable sources for energy saving of remote consumers"<sup>10</sup>. In August 2019, the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission approved the 16th Eurasian technology platform - "Technologies for maintenance and repair of industrial equipment", which is designed to address such issues as "the development of industrial partnership and import substitution, reengineering of obsolete units and assemblies on the basis of technical re-equipment and modernization of production, implementation of breakthrough technologies"<sup>11</sup>. At the same time, the Eurasian Machine Tool Center was established to keep a single register of machine-tool equipment manufactured in the EAEC countries, which will make it possible to determine what competencies and production capacities they possess.

Participation in the implementation of these Eurasian technology platforms is important for the Republic of Belarus because the focus here is on highly innovative projects that have not only economic, but also political and social significance. In particular, this is typical of Belarus' participation in the implementation of the technological platform related to space and geoinformation technologies. "This has made it possible to create its own satellite, as well as a whole sector of the economy that deals with space, and to assert itself as a space power on the international arena"<sup>12</sup>. Important addition: in April 2020, the Board

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<sup>10</sup> Brewery, E. Technological platform in the field of power engineering was created in the EAES / E. Brewery // [Electron resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/tehnologicheskaja-platforma-v-sfere-energetiki-sozdana-v-eaes-333240-2019/>

<sup>11</sup> A new Eurasian technological platform on technologies for maintenance and repair of industrial equipment has been formed in the EAES [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/nae/news/Pages/13-08-2019-1.aspx>.

<sup>12</sup> Nikitina, Yu.F. Perspectives of the technological platforms: Synergy effects (in Russian) / Yu.F. Nikitina// Design of the future. Digital Reality Problems: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference (February 7-8, 2019, Moscow). - Moscow: Keldysh IPM, 2019. -- C. 88–89.

of the Eurasian Economic Commission approved a global cooperative project in the field of space and geoinformation services based on remote sensing data, which is scheduled for implementation in 2021-2025. "At the first stage it is planned to unite existing and prospective constellations of satellites of the EAEC countries. At the second stage, a unified information portal will be created"<sup>13</sup>.

Among other interesting directions of Belarus' participation in the implementation of Eurasian technology platforms is the EurasiaBio technology platform, which involves the development of joint projects in the field of biotechnology for effective use in the interests of science, education, economic sectors, social sphere and government needs, as well as the project "Organization of LED lighting equipment production", the participants of which are Belarusian, Russian, Armenian, Kazakh and Kyrgyz organizations.

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<sup>13</sup> The EAEC countries intend to create the Eurasian space constellation [Electronic Resource]. -- 2020. - URL: [https://www.tvr.by/news/obshchestvo/strany\\_eaes\\_namereny\\_sozdat\\_evraziyskuyu\\_kosmicheskuyu\\_gruppirovku/](https://www.tvr.by/news/obshchestvo/strany_eaes_namereny_sozdat_evraziyskuyu_kosmicheskuyu_gruppirovku/).



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## **Commonwealth of Independent States: from concept to program**

In October 2019, Ashgabat hosted a meeting of the Council of Heads of States of the Commonwealth of Independent States, where it was planned to present a new version of the concept of development of this international organization in the post-Soviet space. It was expected that the document would reflect the goals and objectives of promising areas of cooperation between the CIS member states, primarily economic cooperation. "It is expected that the document will focus on further deepening interaction between the CIS countries and integration associations in the post-Soviet space. These are the main directions"<sup>14</sup>.

We would like to remind that the Concept of Further Development of the CIS appeared back in October 2007 in order to help increase the practical benefits of this integration cooperation, preserve its multi-disciplinary nature, and harmoniously develop all existing and new areas of cooperation of post-Soviet countries. In April 2018 in Minsk, at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CIS, it was decided to start work on updating the Concept, not so much to radically change it, as to adapt it to the current realities and needs in the development of partnerships.

It seems that one of the most promising areas of cooperation in the post-Soviet space may be cooperation in the innovation sphere. As early as October 2018, the International Fund for Innovation Development of the Commonwealth of Independent States was established in Minsk for the practical implementation of the decisions of the supreme bodies of the CIS on the development of the interstate innovation space, which should ensure the formation of a new technological platform for full-cycle interstate innovation cooperation for large-scale implementation of innovative developments. By combining the functions of several interstate institutions - financial, expert, consulting and implementation - that are relatively heterogeneous but interrelated in the context of future activities, the new formation will create "the necessary foundations for structural growth and

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<sup>14</sup> The new version of the CIS development concept will be presented at the summit in Ashgabat [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/novuju-redaktsiju-kontseptsii-razvitija-sng-predstavjat-na-sammite-v-ashhabade-345096-2019/>.

teams of future independent institutions in their main areas of activity, as well as the basis for systemic interaction between them"<sup>15</sup>.

In April 2019, St. Petersburg hosted the meeting of the Interstate Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States on Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation. The Council was established in November 2009 to coordinate the CIS science, technology and innovation policy as a whole and its individual components, as well as to create financial and economic mechanisms to support joint programs and projects in this sphere. The meeting in St. Petersburg summarized the main results of the Interstate Program of Innovation Cooperation of the CIS member-states for the period until 2020, which is aimed at uniting the intellectual, scientific and technological, production and financial potential of the CIS countries. And these results show a considerable potential of cooperation in the innovation sphere in the post-Soviet space. Suffice it to say that "over 300 scientists from Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan are involved in the implementation of the projects of the current program"<sup>16</sup>. One of the main outcomes of the Program is the fact that the regulatory and methodological framework for innovation cooperation in the CIS countries has been developed over the years and has led to certain results.

In particular, only Belarusian organizations have already fully implemented four out of nine pilot projects: 1) development and creation of pilot industrial technologies and pilot replicable technological lines for production of especially wear-resistant cutting and drilling tools based on nanodiamonds; 2) development of an expert system for rehabilitation of geological environment contaminated with oil products based on self-organization principles for territories of CIS countries; 3) on magnetoelectric interactions in ferromagnetic-piezoelectric structures and their application to create miniature sensors of magnetic fields and autonomous sources of electric energy; 4) on processes of high power influence of concentrated energy flows to form surface layers with amorphous, nanocrystalline and inert metal structure for products used in hydrogen energy and industrial ecology.

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<sup>15</sup> Minsk has established the International Fund for Innovative Development of the CIS [Electronic Resource]. - - 2018. - URL: [http://gknt.gov.by/news/2018/v\\_minske\\_sozdali\\_mezhdunarodnyy\\_fond\\_innovatsionnogo\\_razvitiya\\_sng/?special\\_version=N](http://gknt.gov.by/news/2018/v_minske_sozdali_mezhdunarodnyy_fond_innovatsionnogo_razvitiya_sng/?special_version=N)

<sup>16</sup> The draft interstate program of innovation cooperation in the CIS until 2030 will be discussed in St. Petersburg [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/proekt-mezhgospromy-innovatsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-v-sng-do-2030-goda-obsudjat-v-sankt-peterburge-345290-2019/>.

Belarus is also actively involved in the elaboration of the draft Interstate Program of Innovation Cooperation of the CIS countries for the period until 2030. In particular, at the St. Petersburg meeting, Belarus presented proposals in this document "on the advisability of maintaining the implementation of interstate projects related to the commercialization of scientific research and the production of new high-tech products as the main practical component of innovation cooperation among the CIS countries"<sup>17</sup>. In addition, Belarus is in favor of including in the draft of a new program of activities aimed at organizing the digital transformation of the economy and the formation and development of cross-border innovation and industrial clusters in high-tech sectors.

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<sup>17</sup> The draft interstate program of innovation cooperation in the CIS until 2030 will be discussed in May in Turkmenistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/proekt-mezhgosprogrammy-innovatsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-v-sng-do-2030-goda-obsudjat-v-mae-v-345804-2019/>.

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## Belarus - Russia: regions continue cooperation

In September 2020, the Seventh Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia is to be held in Minsk and Minsk region, with about five hundred participants, and the program includes sessions of sections on various topics, including agriculture, construction and industry. In addition, the Business Cooperation Council will be held, "it is planned to sign agreements on cooperation between the regions, to conclude commercial contracts"<sup>18</sup>. The very fact that this event will be held in the current difficult epidemiological situation demonstrates the enormous creative potential of partnership between the regions of Belarus and Russia, "the expansion of which allows to solve such important tasks as import substitution, promotion of export-oriented industries, bridging the technological gap with Western countries"<sup>19</sup>.

It should be reminded that today the cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the subjects of the Russian Federation is carried out in accordance with 78 agreements on trade-economic, scientific-technical and cultural cooperation with 71 Russian regions. In addition, "within the framework of interregional cooperation, about 400 agreements have been concluded between regions of Belarus, Minsk and subjects of the Russian Federation, as well as between Belarusian districts, cities and Russian municipalities"<sup>20</sup>. At the end of 2019, the top ten importers of Belarusian goods, which accounted for more than 70 percent of Belarus' exports to Russia, included Moscow Region, Moscow, Smolensk Region, St. Petersburg, Bryansk Region, Republic of Tatarstan, Kemerovo, Kaliningrad, Leningrad and Sverdlovsk Regions.

Among Belarusian regions actively cooperating with partners in Russia we should mention **Vitebsk region**, which has 25 agreements on cooperation with Russian regions. More than one hundred documents have been signed by the districts and cities of Vitebsk region with the relevant territorial subjects of Russia's regions. In 2019, the volume of exports of Vitebsk companies to the Russian market came close to one billion dollars. It is noteworthy that these

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<sup>18</sup> VII Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia is planned to be held in September [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vii-forum-regionov-belarusi-i-rossii-planiruetsja-provesti-v-sentjabre-393483-2020/>.

<sup>19</sup> Zalessky, B. Vector of Post-Soviet Integration. View from Belarus / B. Zalesskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. -- C. 59.

<sup>20</sup> Brewery, E. The Embassy named the top 10 Russian regions that import Belarusian goods / E. Brewery // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posolstvo-nazvalo-top-10-rossijskih-regionov-importirujuschih-belorusskie-tovary-388334-2020/>.

supplies have increased in the regions of six of the eight federal districts of Russia. The increase in this indicator by one and a half and more times was achieved in cooperation with partners from 16 regions of the neighboring country. "At the same time, exports to remote Russian regions grew most dynamically: to Magadan Region, North Ossetia-Alania and Khakassia - more than three times, to Amur and Irkutsk Regions, Khabarovsk and Primorsky Krai - 2.5-2.8 times, to Krasnoyarsk Krai and Stavropol Territory - 1.5 times. After a break resumed shipment of Vitebsk goods to the Republic of Ingushetia, Kamchatka Krai, the Jewish Autonomous Region<sup>21</sup>. Sales of peat to Russia developed well in this context - almost three times, the supply of veterinary drugs doubled, exports of polyethylene, flax fiber, linen fabrics, metal structures, medical equipment increased significantly. The leading suppliers were such enterprises as Vitebsk Concern Meat and Dairy Products, Naftan, Prodexim, VIC Animal Health, Energokomplekt Production Association, Alliansplast LLC, Vitebsk Carpets OJSC, Vityaz OJSC, JLLC Natrix, OJSC Polotsk Glass Fiber, JLLC Soyuz-Cable, JLLC Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Metal Constructions.

Among Russian regions actively developing trade and economic relations with partners in Belarus, we can name **Kirov region**, trade turnover with which in the first quarter of 2020 came close to ten million dollars. In this case, "Belarusian enterprises in January-March increased exports to Kirov region of Russia by almost a quarter compared to the first quarter of 2019<sup>22</sup>. Such dynamics was achieved through the supply of Belarusian machines and devices for lifting, moving, loading or unloading, unalloyed steel wires, vegetables, ready-made knitted or textile products, paints and varnishes based on synthetic polymers in an aquatic environment, fur and fur raw materials. This year the shipment of new types of Belarusian tractors and tractors, the first batches of unalloyed glass of Gomelsteklo, metalware of Gomel Casting and Normal Plant to this Russian region began, as well as the shipment of elevator equipment of Mogilevliftmash resumed.

In 2020, interaction between the regions of Belarus and Russia continues to develop using new formats of cooperation. For example, in spring of this year Belarusian Cement Company opened its representative office in **Kaliningrad region** - trading house "BCK-Kaliningrad" to provide even more effective

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<sup>21</sup> Export of Vitebsk Oblast companies' products to Russian regions increased by 4.2% in 2019 [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-produktsii-predpriyatij-vitebskoj-oblasti-v-rossijskie-regiony-vyros-na-42-v-2019-godu-385596-2020/>.

<sup>22</sup> In the first quarter Belarusian enterprises increased exports to Kirov region of Russia by almost a quarter [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-v-i-kvartale-uvlechili-eksport-tovarov-v-kirovskuju-oblast-rf-pochti-na-393710-2020>.

partnerships with construction companies of the region. The fact that the Kaliningrad region is one of the most promising Russian directions for the Belarusian Cement Company, where almost all products of the holding are in demand. With the opening of the representative office, "the work with both large customers and small firms that are more interested in discounted cement and supplies of building materials in small batches, under the order will be intensified<sup>23</sup>. Undoubtedly, this step will only strengthen ties between Belarusian manufacturers and consumers in this Russian enclave and will allow cooperation between the regions to reach a qualitatively new level.

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<sup>23</sup> Belarusian Cement Company opened a representative office in Kaliningrad region [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorususkaja-tsementnaja-kompanija-otkryla-predstavitelstvo-v-kaliningradskoj-oblasti-385897-2020/>.



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## Belarus - Ukraine: benchmark - industrial cooperation

In July 2017, the 25th meeting of the Belarusian-Ukrainian mixed commission on trade and economic cooperation was held in Kiev, where the parties reached an agreement to promote mutual trade and cooperation in the field of industrial cooperation to ensure the growth of mutual trade turnover. Recall that a record year in cooperation between the two countries was 2012, when the volume of Belarusian-Ukrainian trade amounted to 7.866 billion dollars with a surplus for the Belarusian side - 3.247 billion dollars. Since then, the bilateral cooperation indicators began to decline quite significantly - to \$3.47 billion in 2015. And only "at the end of 2016 the trade turnover with Ukraine increased by 10.5%, export - by 13.2%, import - by 3.2%. The balance of mutual trade for the specified period is positive in the amount of 1.87 billion dollars"<sup>24</sup>. The positive dynamics is also noted in 2017: "Thus, in January-May the trade turnover grew by 26.7% and made up \$1.7 billion. At the same time, the growth of supply volumes was noted on both sides"<sup>25</sup>

One of the main reserves, the potential of which is now being actively updated by the parties in terms of solving the task to return in the coming years to a record figure of mutual trade turnover of \$ 8 billion, is the development of industrial cooperation. It should be noted here that "in Ukraine, successfully operating assembly plants for the production of Belarusian tractors, combine harvesters, elevators, trolley buses".<sup>26</sup> and on the Belarusian soil, modern enterprises with the participation of Ukrainian capital for the production of passenger cars, welding electrodes, modernization of helicopter equipment.

In September 2017, this list was added to JLLC "Beltribo" - the first enterprise in Belarus for the production of brake pads and linings, opened in the Old Roads of Minsk region. The founders of the enterprise - Starodorozhsk Mechanical Plant and Belotserkovsky Plant "Tribo" - set a serious task - to achieve a turnover of five million dollars within the next two years. The

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<sup>24</sup> On the results of foreign trade of Belarus and Ukraine in 2016 [Electronic resource]. -- 2017. - URL: [http://ukraine.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/trade\\_economic/](http://ukraine.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/).

<sup>25</sup> Belarus and Ukraine will discuss the promotion of mutual trade [Electronic resource] at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission in Kiev. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-ukraina-na-zasedanii-mezhpravkomissii-v-kieve-obsudjat-stimulirovanie-vzaimnoj-torgovli-257135-2017/>.

<sup>26</sup> Interview by Igor Sokol, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Ukraine to the scientific annual magazine "Ukraina Diplomatichena" (№ 17, 2016) [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/c210c1737ece09bb.html>.

prerequisites for its successful solution can be seen in the wide range of products manufactured here. After all, it is not only the production of parts for the maintenance of dump trucks of the Belarusian Automobile Plant, but also the production of brake pads for the Minsk subway, Minsk Tractor Plant, and from the first half of 2018 - for the plant of cars "BelGi". It will also produce brake pads and clutch discs for Gomselmash equipment and pads for the Belarusian Railway. In addition, "it is planned to master the production of railway pads in Old Roads, which will be supplied to Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia"<sup>27</sup>. It is expected that in half a year the new plant will reach its full design capacity, and the volume of investments into it over the next two years will amount to about two and a half million dollars.

The heads of Gomel and Kherson regions announced their intention to establish a joint venture in mechanical engineering and processing of agricultural products in September 2017. In particular, it is about the assembly of combines "Gomselmash" at one of the enterprises of the Kherson region. The relevance of this joint project for the Ukrainian side is dictated by the fact that "in the coming years, local farmers need to replace about 500 units of equipment, which has already worked out its resource"<sup>28</sup>. On the Belarusian side, the interest in cooperation with Ukrainian colleagues is explained by the fact that the Gomel region buys abroad a significant amount of high-protein fodder for its livestock breeding, including sunflower meal. In this regard, it looks very promising to provide Kherson manufacturers with the capacity of the Gomel fat plant to process sunflower seeds and then sell the resulting vegetable oil under its own brands.

In addition, the developing cooperation between the parties to supply Belarusian heavy equipment to the Ukrainian market looks particularly promising in terms of increasing mutual trade turnover between Belarus and Ukraine. It is known that more than two thousand dump trucks of the Belarusian Automobile Plant are currently operating in Ukraine, accounting for more than 90% of the total fleet of this equipment in this country. Among them are the machines with carrying capacity of 220 tons, working at Ingulets Mining and Processing Integrated Works in Dnepropetrovsk region. At the end of August 2017 five more mine dump trucks with carrying capacity of 130 tons were delivered to Ukraine.

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<sup>27</sup>\_. The first enterprise in Belarus to produce brake pads opened in the Old Roads [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervoe-v-belarusi-predpriyatje-po-proizvodstvu-tormoznyh-kolodok-otkrylos-v-staryh-dorogah-267852-2017/>.

<sup>28</sup> Sidorchik, V. Gomel and Kherson regions plan to create a joint venture in machine-building and agricultural processing / V. Sidorchik // [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-i-hersonskaja-oblasti-planirujut-sozdat-sp-v-mashinostroenii-i-selhozpererabotke-266822-2017/>.

And now the specialists of the joint venture "Kryvbass-BelAZ-Service" are completing installation and commissioning works. "Soon 130-ton dump trucks will be put into operation at PJSC "ArcelorMittal Blood Horn", where more than 80 units of equipment produced by JSC "BelAZ" are already used"<sup>29</sup>.

Another rather tempting Belarusian-Ukrainian cooperative project, actively discussed today by the parties, is the construction of a port terminal on the Dnieper, on the border of Belarus and Ukraine. The fact is that the joint use of waterways would allow to organize uninterrupted transportation of passengers and cargo from the ports of the Black, Mediterranean, Caspian seas and Danube states.

All these examples demonstrate quite clearly the high potential of the Belarusian-Ukrainian production cooperation aimed at doubling the mutual trade turnover over the next two years.

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<sup>29</sup> BelAZ supplied to Ukraine five dump trucks [Electron resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavil-v-ukrainu-pjat-karjernih-samosvalov-264698-2017/>.

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## Belarus - Ukraine: potential of advisory council

One of the most effective forms of coordination of Belarusian-Ukrainian trade and economic interaction is the Business Cooperation Advisory Council, which was established in 2010. From the very beginning, the new bilateral structure was tasked with several main tasks. Namely, in addition to developing partnership relations between Belarus and Ukraine in the trade and economic sphere, the new council is intended to facilitate the expansion of contacts between representatives of the business community, as well as increase the volume of mutual trade. Today, "an advisory council is a platform where business discusses the most pressing problems. On the other hand, we discuss promising projects, new opportunities that open up for the parties"<sup>30</sup>. That is why the next, seventh, meeting of this advisory body was an important part of the program of the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine, which was held in October 2018 in Gomel.

The serious potential of the Belarusian-Ukrainian advisory council for business cooperation is evidenced, for example, by the list of issues considered at the October (2018) meeting, which included "the development of a draft agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of Belarus on the approval of the Regulations on the creation and application of an electronic system of certification of the origin of goods. The participants discussed interregional cooperation and the export potential of the regions, the prospects of using trade platforms to expand mutual trade between Belarus and Ukraine, and the interaction of business circles and enterprises in various spheres"<sup>31</sup>.

Another topic, which was continued during the meeting of the Belarusian-Ukrainian Business Cooperation Advisory Council, was the interaction of medium and small businesses of the two countries, as well as the development of industrial cooperation. In particular, the Ukrainian side voiced proposals to work with Belarusian partners on specific projects related to alternative energy,

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<sup>30</sup> Ulahovich, V. An important direction of cooperation between Belarus and Ukraine - development of industrial cooperation / V. Ulahovich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/opinions/view/vazhnoe-napravlenie-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-ukrainy-razvitie-promkoooperatsii-6508/>.

<sup>31</sup> Documents for \$10 million were signed at the session of the Belarusian-Ukrainian advisory council [Electronic resource]. - - 2010. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/dokumenty-na-10-mln-podpisany-na-zasedanii-belorussko-ukrainskogo-konsultativnogo-soveta-323029-2018/>.

processing of agricultural products, pharmacology, "so that these products then enter the markets of other countries"<sup>32</sup>.

Speaking about industrial cooperation, the Belarusian side sees attractive prospects for its development in mechanical engineering, road-building machinery, machine-tool construction. At the same time, Belarus can offer promotion of joint products in the market of the Eurasian Economic Union. And within the framework of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, there are possibilities for joint Belarusian-Ukrainian products to enter the European market, even if within certain quotas. It should be noted that concrete steps are already being taken to achieve these prospects. In particular, within the framework of the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine already mentioned above, the Memorandum of Cooperation Development was signed by the Republican Association of Industrial Enterprises "BelAPP" and the Ukrainian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (UUIE). This document "is designed to promote the development of industrial cooperation, the creation of joint ventures, opening of goods distribution networks and representative offices of member enterprises of the "BelAPP" and USPP"<sup>33</sup>.

As for the acute problems that are of concern to the business community of the two countries, they include, first of all, restrictions and barriers that arise due to the fact that in the process of interaction the national legislation is changing. In this regard, the discussion of this topic even went beyond the meeting of the Business Cooperation Advisory Board and acquired the format of the conference "Removal of technical barriers in mutual trade by methods of technical regulation. Industrial products", which brought together in Gomel more than 120 specialists from different sectors of the economy, who were able to discuss in detail the actual directions of development of systems of technical regulation, standardization, metrology and accreditation, in order to then use in practice these "most important tools to produce safe and quality products and reduce technical barriers to trade"<sup>34</sup>.

Besides discussing topical issues of interaction, the participants of the council meeting were also able to adopt a number of documents that show that

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<sup>32</sup> Interaction of medium and small businesses in Belarus and Ukraine is especially important - Chizhikov [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/vzaimodejstvie-srednego-i-malogo-biznesa-belarusi-i-ukrainy-osobenno-vazhno-chizhikov-323008-2018/>.

<sup>33</sup> Enterprises of the Belarusian Ministry of Industry will supply \$73.5 million worth of equipment to Ukraine [Electron resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-minproma-belarusi-postavjat-v-ukrainu-tehniku-na-735-mln-323286-2018/>.

<sup>34</sup> Ways to reduce technical barriers to trade will be discussed at the Regional Forum of Belarus and Ukraine [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/puti-snizhenija-tehnicheskikh-barjerov-v-torgovle-obsudjat-na-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-ukrainy-322764-2018/>.

this advisory structure is increasingly focused on the implementation of specific bilateral projects. In particular, the framework contract for providing credit security for goods turnover signed by LLC with AI "BNH Ukraine" and JSC "Bank Credit Dnipro". Cooperation agreements with Ukrainian colleagues sealed their signatures heads of Gomel and Vitebsk branches of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. And such Belarusian exporters as "Mozyrsol", Baranovichi Production Cotton Association, Domanovsky Production and Trade Plant, have concluded favorable contracts for the supply of their products to Ukrainian partners. In total, 9 documents for almost 10 million dollars were signed within the Council.

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## Belarus - Ukraine: regions intend to cooperate

The Third Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine is planned to be held in autumn 2020 in Grodno - an event aimed at accelerating the pace of "creation of new and implementation of joint industrial productions, implementation of joint projects on modernization of road and transport infrastructure, implementation of innovative technologies"<sup>35</sup>. The very fact of holding the Forum in Grodno region, which now has cooperation agreements with eight Ukrainian regions, can be explained by the fact that "Ukraine today is the third external partner of the region in trade turnover, which last year [2019] reached \$ 379 million"<sup>36</sup>. At the upcoming forum, it is planned to supplement the existing legal framework for cooperation of **Grodno region** with partners in Ukraine with two more agreements - with Lviv and Kherson regions. It should be noted that other Belarusian regions are also actively preparing for the third forum, focusing on the implementation of joint projects with Ukrainian partners today.

In particular, it is aimed at strengthening all-round cooperation with the same Lviv region and **Brest region**, whose delegation took part in the Third Lviv Export Forum in March 2020. It should be reminded that the parties signed an agreement on cooperation back in 2004. And today "in terms of export supplies Lviv region is the second most important Ukrainian region for Brest region (Kyiv region is in the first place). Last year [2019], the Brest region almost doubled its exports to this region in western Ukraine. In total, the Lviv region was supplied goods with Brest brand at \$ 9.4 million with a growth rate of 195%<sup>37</sup>. By the third forum of regions in Grodno the parties intend to develop a road map of cooperation to supplement the 2004 agreement with new concrete projects. The main emphasis will be placed on cooperation between regional centers. After all, Lviv experience is relevant for Brest, first of all, in the sphere of tourism

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<sup>35</sup> Zalesky, B. Vector of Post-Soviet Integration. View from Belarus / B. Zalesskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - - C. 151.

<sup>36</sup> The cooperation agreement is planned to be signed by Grodno, Lviv and Kherson regions [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-planirujut-podpisat-grodnenskaja-lvovskaja-i-hersonskaja-oblasti-382199-2020/>.

<sup>37</sup> The Brest region delegation will take part in the III Lviv Export Forum [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/delegatsija-brestskoj-oblasti-primet-uchastie-v-iii-lvovskom-ekspornom-forume-382618-2020/>.

organization. And "Ukrainian partners are interested in the best practices of Brest waste processing plant, peat processing plants' products"<sup>38</sup>.

Among the specific business entities of Brest region, which are set to significantly increase their activities in the regions of Ukraine in 2020, we can name the "Managing Company of Holding "Bobruiskagromash", which plans include the organization of assembly production of tractor trailers in the neighboring country with the implementation period in the first half of this year. This agreement was reached in March 2020 with PrJSC "Nizhinselmash". "In the next six months about 60 machine sets of tractor trailers will be delivered to "Nizhinselmash" for realization of reached agreements"<sup>39</sup>.

Such economic entity of Brest region as JSC 40"Road Construction Trust 1 4 of Brest", the volume of exports of which in 2019 to Ukraine increased by several times and amounted to 11 million dollars. The trust performed works "in Rivne, Kyiv, Zhytomyr and Volyn regions both on roads of national and local importance. The employees of almost all <...> branches from Brest Drohichyn, Pinsk, Baranovichi were involved" . In 2020, the business interests of the trust may again affect the four Ukrainian regions. First, back in 2019, the Brest people, together with their Gomel colleagues, signed a major contract for the construction of a bypass road around Rivne, and today have already begun work to complete the project until the end of 2021. Secondly, in early April 2020, Brest road builders will resume repairs on the road section in the Kiev region. Thirdly, DST No. 4 of Brest actively participates in tenders held by the Road Service of Zhytomyr region. Fourth, in 2020, Brest residents will participate in the procedure of selecting a general contractor for the facility in the Kherson region and hope to show their best side in this tender.

We intend to increase our presence in the regions of Ukraine, where there is a significant growth potential, and business entities of the **Gomel region**. In particular, this is the production association "Belorusneft", whose specialists in 2019 in cooperation with customers were able to reduce the cycle of drilling wells on Ukrainian soil from 6-7 to 3-3.5 months. The reputation of the reliable partner

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<sup>38</sup> Brest and Lviv regions will develop a road map for cooperation [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskaja-i-lvovskaja-oblasti-razrabotajut-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-383502-2020/>.

<sup>39</sup> "Bobruiskagromash" plans to assemble tractor trailers in Ukraine [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bobrujskagromash-planiruet-sobirat-traktornye-pritsepy-v-ukraine-382499-2020/>.

<sup>40</sup> This year Brest road builders plan to work in four regions of Ukraine [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskie-dorozhniki-v-etom-godu-planirujut-rabotat-v-chetyreh-oblastjah-ukrainy-382563-2020>.

allowed the association to conclude contracts "with JSC "Ukrgezdobercha" for 2020 - on works on hydraulic fracturing and coiled tubing technologies, with DTEK Neftegaz - on construction of wells in gas-condensate fields"<sup>41</sup>. Even today, two Belarusian well drilling crews are already working in the Ukrainian regions in order to commission up to five facilities by the end of 2020, and four more are scheduled for sidetracking.

Finally, the Belarusian Railway plans to seriously expand cooperation with Ukrainian regions in 2020. The fact is that only in communication with Ukraine is organized five pairs of trains. Of course, this is not enough. That's why the parties are already considering "the issue of destination of either trains or unloading cars, which will follow from Vitebsk to Belgorod-Dnestrovsk. 42<...> Plans also to expand communication to Lviv by organizing parity traffic" . In the meantime, only one train of the Belarusian train goes to Lviv.

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<sup>41</sup> "Belorusneft intends to increase its presence in the service market in Russia and Ukraine [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusneft-namerena-naraschivat-prisutstvie-na-rynke-servisnyh-uslug-v-rossii-i-ukraine-381445-2020>.

<sup>42</sup> Markovich, E. BZHD plans to expand communication with Ukraine / E. Markovich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bzhd-planiruet-rasshirjat-soobschenie-s-ukrainoj-380946-2020/>.

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## Belarus - Uzbekistan: cooperation priority - agriculture

The basic document of trade and economic interaction between Belarus and Uzbekistan is the road map of cooperation between the two countries, adopted in November 2018 and numbers 158 events. By May 2020, more than one third of them have already been implemented. This has immediately affected the Belarusian-Uzbek partnership: "According to the results of 2019, the volume of trade turnover between the countries reached \$239 million and increased by 1.5 times by 2018<sup>43</sup>. This means that the parties intend to quickly achieve the goal set by the heads of two states in the same 2018 - to increase the bilateral trade turnover to one billion dollars. "To solve the problem is planned for three or four years, updating all possible areas of interaction. <sup>44</sup>among which one of the most promising is agriculture.

The matter is that the main tendency of development of agro-industrial complex of Uzbekistan today is formation of cluster system of production. In other words, clusters should unite producers of agricultural raw materials and their processors into industrial enterprises. The Belarusian experience in this regard is viewed by Uzbek partners as very positive, so they demonstrate their high interest in establishing direct business contacts and partnerships with Belarusian producers and processors, the effectiveness of which is evidenced by figures.

In 2019 agricultural products and foodstuffs for 35 million dollars were supplied from Belarus to the Uzbek market, which more than twice exceeded the level of 2018. Positive dynamics of mutual trade in this sphere has been preserved this year too, despite restrictions, caused by coronavirus spreading. "During 4 months of 2020, Belarusian exports of such goods [agricultural products and foodstuffs] increased by 3.2 times. During this period, 16.1 million products were exported"<sup>45</sup>.

Thus cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan, certainly, is not limited only to mutual deliveries of food products, but also includes a wide spectrum of

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<sup>43</sup> Vladimir Dvornik held talks with Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Sardor Umurzakov [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9423>.

<sup>44</sup> Zaleskiy, B. Vector of Post-Soviet Integration. View from Belarus / B. Zaleskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - - C. 223.

<sup>45</sup> Markovich, E. Cooperation in the sphere of agro-industrial complex - priority direction of Belarusian-Uzbek interaction - Ambassador / E. Markovich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-apk-prioritetnoe-napravlenie-belorusko-uzbekskogo-vzaimodejstviya-posol-394939-2020>.

interaction, including on development of joint scientific approaches and modern technologies. In particular, "promising areas of cooperation in the agricultural sector are participation of the Belarusian side in the construction of dairy complexes, organization of milk processing, creation of a joint venture for the production of veterinary drugs, cooperation in breeding, training and retraining of Uzbek specialists on the basis of Belarusian agricultural educational institutions"<sup>46</sup>.

This variety of effective partnership relations was demonstrated very clearly by the first Belarusian-Uzbek Agrarian Forum held in February 2020 and attended by over seven hundred people. Only the business part of the Belarusian delegation included about 150 representatives of enterprises-exporters of agricultural and food products, scientific and educational institutions of the country. In particular, an active participant in the forum was JSC "Gomselmash", which in autumn 2019 signed an agreement with the Tashkent plant of agricultural machinery. "The document provides for the establishment in the capital of Uzbekistan assembly production of combines"<sup>47</sup>. On the Uzbek side were presented delegations from all regions of the country, as well as from relevant ministries and organizations of the agro-industrial complex. As a result, in the fields of the forum "Belarusian exporting enterprises signed more than 30 agreements and contracts with Uzbek partners"<sup>48</sup>. In addition, the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation was adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan.

Simultaneously with the agrarian forum, an exhibition was organized in Tashkent, where only the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus presented over 60 innovative developments and technologies for agriculture in Uzbekistan. Vegetable marmalade aroused great interest among novelties of Belarusian scientists from the Scientific and Practical Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on food. "The line includes marmalade of sweet corn, red carrot, ripe pumpkin, juicy tomato and spicy celery. The marmalade contains prebiotics and no artificial dyes"<sup>49</sup>. The Institute of Soil Science and Agrochemistry

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<sup>46</sup> On results of Vladimir Dvornik's visit to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9301>.

<sup>47</sup> "Gomselmash" will present its potential at an agricultural forum in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-predstavit-svoj-potentsial-na-agrarnom-forume-v-uzbekistane-380486-2020/>.

<sup>48</sup> More than 30 agreements and contracts were signed as a result of the Belarusian-Uzbek Agrarian Forum [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-30-soglashenij-i-kontraktov-podpisano-po-itogam-belorussko-uzbekskogo-agrarnogo-foruma-381350-2020/>.

<sup>49</sup> The NASB presented more than 60 innovations for agriculture in Uzbekistan [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nan-belarusi-predstavila-v-uzbekistane-bolee-60-innovatsionnyh-razrabotok-dlja-selskogo-hozjajstva-381057-2020/>.

demonstrated a range of complex mineral fertilisers with a balanced nutrient ratio of cultivated crops. The Institute of Experimental Veterinary Medicine named after S.N. Vishelesky showed vaccines for prevention and treatment of viral and bacterial diseases of farm animals. Scientists from the Center for Identification Systems and Electronic Business Operations offered technologies for digital identification and traceability of animals and animal products. The Scientific and Practical Center for Potato Production interested visitors to the exhibition in new potato varieties - "manifesto", "uladar", "palats" - resistant to a complex of diseases. As we see, even this short list of novelties presented in Tashkent clearly showed what tempting prospects are opening up in the development of Belarusian-Uzbek partnership in agriculture in the near future.

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## Belarus - Kyrgyzstan: from trade to cooperation

The Kyrgyz Republic is among those Central Asian countries with which Belarus has seen steady positive dynamics in recent years in both the political and economic spheres. Back in May 2013, at a meeting with members of the Club of chief editors of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Baltic States and Georgia, the President of Kyrgyzstan, A. Kozhina, met with members of the Club. Atambaev noted: "I would like to see economic relations between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan develop dynamically. Belarus has a number of goods in which Kyrgyzstan is interested. In our turn, we are also ready to supply goods that are interesting for the Belarusian economy"<sup>50</sup>. In September 2015, at the meeting of the heads of government of the two countries, focusing on the need to increase mutual trade turnover, the parties agreed that "in addition to trade cooperation, efforts should be focused on the development of industrial cooperation"<sup>51</sup>. And already in the first quarter of 2017, the Belarusian-Kyrgyz trade turnover increased by one and a half times, amounting to \$ 15.2 million. The Intergovernmental Belarusian-Kyrgyz Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation played an important role in enhancing bilateral cooperation between the countries, the sixth and seventh meetings of which were held in June 2016 in Bishkek and in June 2017 in Minsk.

In particular, at the seventh session of the commission the parties noted a significant intensification of contacts between Belarusian enterprises and Kyrgyz partners, which only contributes to the expansion of cooperation between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in the supply of equipment and production cooperation, in energy, agriculture, health, education, science, culture, information and tourism, as well as to the development of cooperation between regions and free economic zones of the two countries. This extensive list of areas of Belarusian-Kyrgyz cooperation also included "training of specialists, improvement of their skills, creation of commodity distribution networks, joint ventures for the production of agricultural machinery, supply of Belarusian elevators to Kyrgyzstan"<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> Kyrgyzstan is interested in developing trade and economic relations with Belarus [Electronic resource]. -- 2013. - URL: <http://www.belvpo.com/ru/26710.html>.

<sup>51</sup> Andrey Kobayakov met with the Head of the Government of Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. -- 2015. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/6027>.

<sup>52</sup> On the meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Kyrgyz Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://kyrgyzstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/b7a170b217ff5943.html>.

As far as mutual trade is concerned, the leaders here are obviously supplies of Belarusian agricultural products to the Kyrgyz market, as evidenced by the figures: "According to the results of 2016, exports of products of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to Kyrgyzstan increased by 3.1 times, and the first quarter of 2017 - almost 14 times. The basis of export supplies is meat and dairy products"<sup>53</sup>. By agreeing to further increase mutual supplies of agricultural products and expand their product range, the parties also decided to consider joint projects in the field of livestock and crop production development.

The flagship of the Belarusian-Kyrgyz production cooperation can be called the opening in November 2016 in Bishkek assembly production of tractors and service center for agricultural machinery from Belarus on the basis of LLC "Avtomash Radiator". An important detail - "about 90% of radiators for tractors of Minsk assembly are supplied from Kyrgyzstan. At the same assembly shop, Gomselmash has now started assembling combines<sup>54</sup>. In addition, the parties are now actively considering the issue of creating joint ventures in the light industry, a prerequisite for which is the current update of trade relations in this area. Thus, in April 2017, the Kyrgyz company "Opt-Invest" first supplied to Belarus a batch of textile products, and in September 2017 signed a contract with the Belarusian side for the supply of sewing products.

If we talk about the development of ties between the regions of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, the obvious leaders here are the capitals - Minsk and Bishkek, which in 1997 signed the Agreement on Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation, and in 2008 established twinned relations. In the language of figures, this interregional interaction looks like this: "The growth rate of trade turnover of Minsk enterprises with Kyrgyzstan in January-June 2017 to the level of the same period of 2016 was 306%, exports of goods - 393.7%, services exports - 176.1%<sup>55</sup>. The Kyrgyz partners were supplied with tractors, paving stoves, radiators, air

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<sup>53</sup> Kyrgyzstan is interested in establishing assembly facilities for Belarusian agricultural machinery [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/kyrgyzstan-zainteresovan-v-sozdanii-sborochnyh-proizvodstv-belorusskoj-selhoztehniky-251058-2017/>.

<sup>54</sup> Omuraliev noted a positive trend in the development of relations between Kyrgyzstan and Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/omuraliev-otmetil-pozitivnuju-tendentsiju-v-razvitii-otnoshenij-mezhdu-kyrgyzstanom-i-belarusiju-269017-2017/>.

<sup>55</sup> Matveeva, N. Bishkek plans to purchase equipment for development of public transport from Minsk enterprises / N. Matveeva // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/bishkek-planiruet-zakupit-u-minskih-predpriyatij-tehniku-dlja-razvitiya-obschestvennogo-transporta-265609-2017/>.

heaters, refrigerators and medicines. New goods exported from Minsk were dairy products, chipboards and tools.

In the near future, cooperation between the two capitals in the field of public transport development may become very promising. After all, the plans of Bishkek include the purchase of about 400 buses of large capacity. And now the authorities of the Kyrgyz capital are studying the supplier market. At the same time, it is believed that Minsk transport equipment manufacturers have a good chance to participate in this project. Back in 2009 Minsk Belkommunmash delivered 20 trolleybuses to Bishkek, and later won the tender for export of another 30 units of electric transport.

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## Belarus - Kyrgyzstan: trade, cooperation, cooperation of regions

In February 2020, the ninth meeting of the Belarusian-Kyrgyz intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation was held in Minsk, where topical issues of development and strengthening of system mutually beneficial partnership relations were considered. In Minsk and Bishkek, this meeting of the intergovernmental commission, where the status of co-chairmen has already been raised to the level of deputy prime ministers, was seen as "a new impetus for the development of relations between our countries"<sup>56</sup>. Recall that the Belarusian side has traditionally been interested in the closest partnership with this state in Central Asia, especially since "recently, trade and economic cooperation between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan has significantly increased. Our trade turnover over the last three years has not dropped below \$100 million"<sup>57</sup>. Indeed, in 2019 the volume of Belarusian-Kyrgyz trade amounted to more than \$105 million with a surplus for the Belarusian side of more than \$90 million, which was ensured by the supply of dairy products, tractors and tractors, meat and poultry by-products, medicines, furniture and chipboard from Belarus. But, according to the parties, "the current volume of mutual trade between Kyrgyzstan and Belarus does not meet the economic potential of the countries"<sup>58</sup>. In fact, and for this reason, at the next meeting of the Interstate Commission, the attention of the parties was focused on the priority areas of cooperation: 1) **increasing** mutual trade; 2) **deepening** industrial cooperation and establishing joint assembly facilities; and 3) **expanding** interregional cooperation.

In terms of **increasing the volume of mutual trade**, the Belarusian side made specific proposals to increase supplies of passenger, freight and municipal vehicles to Kyrgyzstan, which is quite consistent with the plans of the Kyrgyz side to upgrade, for example, the fleet of passenger vehicles in Bishkek and other cities. In addition, promoting its products in the Kyrgyz market, the Belarusian side intends to continue the practice of active participation in exhibition events in

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<sup>56</sup> The meeting of the Belarusian-Kyrgyz intergovernmental commission will be held in Minsk on February 21 [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zasedanie-belorussko-kyrgyzskoj-mezhpravkomissii-projdet-v-minske-21-fevralja-378085-2020/>.

<sup>57</sup> Sergey Rumas: Belarus is interested in increasing the supply of engineering products to Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9292>.

<sup>58</sup> Kyrgyzstan proposes Belarus to create an agrocluster for milk processing [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kyrgyzstan-predlagaet-belarusi-sozdat-agroklaster-po-pererabotke-moloka-380586-2020/>.

Kyrgyzstan in 2020. Thus, in April, the exposition of Belarusian exporters for the third time will be presented at the international exhibition of food industry "FoodExpo" in Bishkek, where visitors will be able to see products and beverages from Belarus. "The emphasis will be on healthy eating and products with "Halal" certificate. For the first time at the domestic exposition will be presented food additives, casings for meat and sausage products, baby food"<sup>59</sup>.

If we talk about **deepening production cooperation**, the Kyrgyz side proposed to intensify cooperation in agriculture and agro-industrial complex. First of all, we are talking about the creation of a joint agrocluster for milk processing in Kyrgyzstan using Belarusian technologies, as well as about "the construction of dairy complexes with the necessary equipment of Belarusian production and supplies of breeding livestock"<sup>60</sup>. In order to consolidate these agreements in the legal field, following the meeting of the intergovernmental commission, an agreement on cooperation in the field of agriculture and food between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of Kyrgyzstan was signed. As for industrial cooperation, the plans announced in Minsk to establish assembly facilities look quite realistic: transformers - with the Minsk Electromechanical Plant named after V.I. Kozlov; elevators - with "Mogilevliftmash"; gas meters - with the Belarusian Optical and Mechanical Association. The seriousness of these intentions of the parties is evidenced, in particular, by the fact of signing an agreement on cooperation between the Minsk Electromechanical Plant named after V.I. Kozlov and OOO "Mashelektrosnab" following the results of the intercommission meeting.

Speaking about the **expansion of interregional cooperation between Belarus and Kyrgyzstan**, we would like to remind that so far the capitals - Minsk and Bishkek - have been setting the tone in this cooperation. "Back in 1997 they signed the Agreement on Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation, and in 2008 they established brotherly relations"<sup>61</sup>. At a meeting of the Minsk interstate commission, the Gomel Regional Executive Committee and the Office of the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Government of Kyrgyzstan

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<sup>59</sup> Nemanikova, Yu. Exposition of Belarusian manufacturers will be presented at FoodExpo in Bishkek / Yu. Nemanikova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekspozitsija-belorusskih-proizvoditelej-budet-predstavlena-na-vystavke-foodexpo-v-bishkeke-378791-2020/>.

<sup>60</sup> Vladimir Kukharev: Belarusian electric buses may appear on the streets of Bishkek [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9293>.

<sup>61</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Belarus - Kyrgyzstan: from trade to cooperation / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XIII Miedzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Nauka i inowacja - 2017", Volume 3. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - - C. 10.

in Chui oblast signed an Agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical, humanitarian and cultural spheres. Although this agreement was the first of its kind for the Belarusian region with its Kyrgyz partners, even before that Gomel Oblast enterprises had already been present on the market of the Central Asian country. Suffice it to say that in 2019 the trade turnover of the region with Kyrgyzstan exceeded ten million dollars. "At the same time, exports were at the level of \$ 8.5 million. 26 enterprises of the region supplied their goods, including JSC "Gomselmash", Multipack, Mozyrsol, manufacturers of doors and wallpaper. The products of Turov Dairy Plant, in particular, soft cheeses, have started to be promoted to the Kyrgyz market<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> The Gomel region will develop cooperation with the Chui Oblast of Kyrgyzstan [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskij-region-budet-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-chujskoj-oblastju-kyrgyzstana-381123-2020>



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## Belarus - Azerbaijan: from industrial cooperation to participation in exhibitions

Azerbaijan is among those countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States with which cooperation is of strategic nature for the Republic of Belarus. This is evidenced, in particular, by the results of 2018, when the Belarusian-Azerbaijani trade turnover "was about \$465.3 million and increased by 3 times compared to 2017"<sup>63</sup>. The fact that the supply of Belarusian products to the Azerbaijani market is now more than 220 commodity items.

One of the key areas of cooperation between Belarus and Azerbaijan is increasingly becoming industrial cooperation, the flagship of which can be called the Ganja Automobile Plant. The plant has already established assembly plants of Belarusian tractors, grain harvesters "Gomselmash", machinery of Minsk Automobile Plant, electric buses "Belkommunmash". At least the fact that since 2007 more than 11 thousand tractors and about 3.5 thousand units of automotive and special equipment have been assembled here testifies to the efficiency of their activity. In May 2019, a new assembly line was opened at the Azerbaijan enterprise, "for the first time, grain-harvesting machine of KZS-575 brand "Palesse GS575" and electric bus E321 were pulled off the conveyor"<sup>64</sup>.

Of particular interest is the production of electric buses in Ganja - public transport, designed for 83 passengers, equipped with 26 seats, air conditioning, information monitor and video control system. This equipment is beneficial both in terms of minimal environmental impact and energy saving. "The battery of the electric bus, capable of speeding up to 60 km/h, < ...> has a full charge time of only six minutes" . It is expected that in the future the Ganja Automobile Plant will produce up to 40 percent of spare parts for this environmentally friendly equipment. In case of rather high demand, the capacity of the plant will allow producing up to 150 electric buses per year. And the projects on assembly and supply of municipal equipment of Minsk Automobile Plant and passenger vehicles of medium capacity are still under development here. In addition, in July 2019 in the Turkish city of Kyrykkala, which is 80 kilometers from Ankara, with the support of the Ganja Automobile Plant should begin its work assembly of

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<sup>63</sup> Igor Lyashenko made a working visit to Azerbaijan [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8786>.

<sup>64</sup> President of Azerbaijan met with Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Lyashenko [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/prezident-azerbajdzhana-vstretilsja-s-vitse-premjerom-belarusi-ljashenko-347392-2019/>.

Minsk tractors in such a way that by the end of this year to produce a hundred cars, next year - two hundred. As a result, "the capacity of the plant will allow to assemble up to three thousand tractors per year"<sup>65</sup>. The assistance of the Azerbaijani side in this matter allowed saving about one million dollars only on construction of one building of future production in Turkey.

Another important direction of Belarusian-Azerbaijani cooperation, which received a strong development in the spring of 2019, is the participation of Belarusian exporting companies in the exhibition events in Azerbaijan. In May, the exposition of Belarusian manufacturers "Belarus. Taste of Nature" was presented in Baku at the international agricultural exhibition Caspian Agro, which has already "proved to be an important platform for promoting Belarusian interests in agriculture in the Azerbaijani market"<sup>66</sup>. Among more than two hundred companies from 25 countries, which presented their traditional products and novelties in various sectors of agricultural industry, 25 organizations and enterprises from Belarus showed their capabilities. Thus, organizations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus demonstrated innovative equipment for agriculture - energy efficient combine for berry harvesting, LED lamps and greenhouse irradiators for growing plants in greenhouse farms. Belagro Bel company offered visitors to the exhibition "a multi-brand portfolio of agricultural machinery produced in Belarus and integrated solutions for processing a wide range of crops"<sup>67</sup>.

Even more diverse Belarusian products could be seen at the exhibition in the section of confectionery, drinks and groceries. In particular, "Red Foodstuff" from Bobruisk attracted attention with such novelties as: zephyr - in the form of a rose flower, with the taste of pomegranate and duchesse; marmalade - in the form of bottles with the taste of tequila, wine and cognac. "Spartak" from Gomel showed chocolate - bitter and dairy, as well as white with almonds and coconut, with hazelnuts and sponge balls, with hazelnuts and cereals. The Belarusian exposition in Baku was supplemented by baby food, meat and poultry products, as well as products of Minsk Margarine Plant. The business part of the exhibition Caspian Agro also proved to be very effective for the Belarusian participants. In

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<sup>65</sup> Matievsky, M. Assembly production of Belarusian tractors in Turkey should earn in July / M. Matievsky // [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-belorusskih-traktorov-v-turtsii-dolzno-zarabotat-v-ijule-344079-2019/>.

<sup>66</sup> Belarus is interested in developing cooperation with Azerbaijan in the agricultural sector and industrial operation [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-razvivat-s-azerbajdzhanom-sotrudnichestvo-v-apk-i-promkoooperatsiju-347429-2019/>.

<sup>67</sup> Belarus presented the largest national exposition at the agricultural exhibition in Baku [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavila-krupnejshuju-natsionalnuju-ekspozitsiju-na-selskohozjajstvennoj-vystavke-v-baku-347619-2019/>.

particular, the document on cooperation was signed by the "Belgospisheprom" concern and the Azerbaijan Industrial Corporation, in which the parties agreed to cooperate "in the supply of tobacco products between the agro-industrial complex "Azertabak" and the Grodno Tobacco Factory, which is part of the "Belgospisheprom" concern.<sup>68</sup> as well as to share production experience.

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<sup>68</sup> "Belgospisheprom and the Azerbaijan Industrial Corporation signed a protocol on cooperation [Electronic Resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospisheprom-i-azerbajdzhanskaja-promyshlennaja-korporatsija-podpisali-protokol-o-sotrudnicestve-347723-2019/>.

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## Belarus - Armenia: in line with positive growth dynamics

Armenia is one of those countries in the post-Soviet space, the trade turnover with which in 2018 the Republic of Belarus had a positive growth dynamics, having increased by more than 17 percent and having exceeded 50 million dollars. This trend continues to dominate in 2019, in the four months of which the volume of mutual Belarusian-Armenian trade increased by almost a third and amounted to almost 20 million dollars. At the same time, the surplus for the Belarusian side exceeded 10 million dollars due to strengthening of the key export positions of Belarusian enterprises - producers of milk, condensed and dried cream, tractors and tractors, medicines, tires, paper and cardboard.

Investment cooperation is an important element of Belarusian-Armenian cooperation. Suffice it to say that "in 2018 Belarus received \$7.6 million of investments from Armenia, including \$7.5 million of direct investments. During the first quarter of this year [2019] \$3.5 million of direct foreign investments were attracted<sup>69</sup>. This picture of partnership between Belarus and Armenia is significantly complemented by more than 80 entities of the Belarusian distribution network of Belarusian enterprises operating today on Armenian soil, as well as 57 enterprises with Armenian capital - 17 joint ventures and 40 foreign ones operating now in Belarus. In addition, "three enterprises with Belarusian capital are functioning in Armenia: Armenian-Belarusian Trade House "Ar-Be" LLC, "BelAZ Caucasus Trans Service" LLC and "Trade House "BelAR" CJSC<sup>70</sup>. However, according to the parties, "so far there have been few joint investment projects, and those for which work is being carried out are often implemented in a sluggish mode<sup>71</sup>. That is why it is especially important today not just to trade with each other, but to create joint companies so that businesses of the two countries could work more actively with each other. And such opportunities exist in many areas of cooperation.

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<sup>69</sup> Armenian President Sargsyan has arrived in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/prezident-armenii-sarkisjan-pribyl-v-belarus-353322-2019/>.

<sup>70</sup> Meeting with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to Belarus [Electronic resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8605>.

<sup>71</sup> Myasnikovich suggested that Armenia should intensify investment cooperation [Electronic Resource]. - – 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mjasnikovich-predlozhit-armenii-aktivizirovat-investsotrudnichestvo-343419-2019/>.

One of the priority directions of the bilateral Belarusian-Armenian cooperation in modern conditions has become agriculture, as the theme of saturation of the market with safe and quality food products is very important for Armenia nowadays. That is why international cooperation in this direction has great prospects. They now want to do so, as the President of Armenia A. A. stated during his visit to Minsk in July 2019. Sarkisian, "to create a platform of food safety on the basis of which certain agreements with producers of different countries will be implemented"<sup>72</sup>. And the partnership with the Belarusian side in this regard looks very promising. This is evidenced by the fact that in 2018, exports of agricultural products from Belarus to Armenia grew by 30 percent to \$13 million. In the first four months of 2019, this figure increased by more than 20 percent, exceeding five million dollars.

The parties today consider not only joint actions in the sphere of food trade, but also expansion of supply of agricultural and other equipment, strengthening of the role of the Belarusian trading house in Yerevan, creation of the Armenian trading house on the Belarusian land, as well as organization of joint ventures and cooperation in the sphere of animal breeding as measures contributing to the growth of trade turnover in agriculture. Realizing that the next step in bilateral relations should be to reach a higher level of cooperation, the Belarusian side also proposed, in particular, "to take part in the renovation of Armenia's passenger equipment fleet, in the program of elevator farm renovation"<sup>73</sup>.

Another promising area for the development of Belarusian-Armenian partnership is the improvement of transport links between the two former Soviet republics. As is known, there are no direct communications between Belarus and Armenia, but there is an opportunity to create them within the Eurasian Economic Union, together with the relevant infrastructure that ensures the delivery of goods and transit traffic between the countries. In particular, the parties are now considering the possibility of transporting Armenian goods to Belarus and transit through its territory by rail. A promising logistical direction in this regard is the use of the "North - South road under construction, which will connect Georgia

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<sup>72</sup> Armenia is interested in developing cooperation with Belarus in the field of agriculture [Electronic resource]. - - 20190. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/armenija-zainteresovana-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-belarusiju-v-oblasti-selskogo-hozjajstva-353502-2019/>.

<sup>73</sup> Belarus is ready to participate in the renewal of the park of passenger equipment of Armenia [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-gotova-uchastvovat-v-obnovlenii-parka-passazhirskoj-tehniki-armenii-334782-2019/>.

with Iran, and FEZ in the city of Meghri, which has a free economic zone. This is a good opportunity to expand the geography of Belarusian goods deliveries<sup>74</sup>.

All these facts testify to the fact that Armenia was and remains for Belarus the state with which official Minsk aims at expanding the trade and economic component of bilateral relations and is ready "to participate in any projects, including those in Armenia, which will be of interest to Armenian partners"<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> The heads of transport agencies of Belarus and Armenia have outlined the points of growth of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/glavy-transportnyh-vedomstv-belarusi-i-armenii-nametili-tochki-rosta-sotrudnichestva-354239-2019/>.

<sup>75</sup> Presentation of credentials by ambassadors of foreign countries [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/vruchenie-veritelnyx-gramot-poslami-zarubezhnyx-gosudarstv-20325/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vruchenie-veritelnyx-gramot-poslami-zarubezhnyx-gosudarstv-20325/).



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## Belarus: anti-crisis component - export

Sustained economic growth at a rate of three to four percent per year - such a specific task is set today in the Republic of Belarus to ensure stable socio-economic development of the country for the medium term. For its successful solution it is necessary to fulfill a number of conditions - "to ensure efficient operation of each enterprise, equal and sustainable development of the country's regions; to create conditions for attracting foreign and domestic investments; to increase exports, including to new markets"<sup>76</sup>. The presence of the export theme in this list of the most important conditions is explained by the fact that "export is the basis of an open Belarusian economy, as it provides for foreign currency inflows into the country, profits for enterprises and taxes for the Belarusian budget"<sup>77</sup>. Belarusian companies that are active in the current difficult conditions on foreign markets include, first of all, the world's largest manufacturer of mining dump trucks and transport equipment for the mining and construction industries, which occupies about one third of the world market for mining dump trucks of particularly high load-carrying capacity, the **Belarusian Automobile Plant**, whose exports in 2020 are developing along several major vectors.

The first vector is **Russian regions**. Thus, in April 2020 another batch of 180-tonne dump trucks BELAZ-75180 was shipped to the **Murmansk region** to the Kirov branch of JSC "Apatit" according to the agreement signed in September 2019. In February 2020, three 130-ton vehicles have already arrived in this Russian region. In total, in the next three years there will go at least 50 mine dump trucks, which will be involved in the development of apatite-nepheline deposits in Khibiny. It is expected that 180-ton dump trucks "will be later modified into intelligent and will acquire new technical characteristics. The additionally installed equipment will allow controlling them at a long distance. It is planned to

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<sup>76</sup> Speech by Kochanova at the opening of the second session of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus of the seventh convocation [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/vystuplenie-kochanovoj-na-otkrytii-vtoroj-sessii-soveta-respubliki-natsionalnogo-sobranija-belarusi-385692-2020/>.

<sup>77</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Export Culture and Mass Consciousness / B.L. Zalessky // Zhurnalistika-2016: mill, problems and prospects: material of the 18th Mizhnar. sci. - prakty. konf., prysveschanai 95-godzhu BDU, 10-11 leaf. 2016, Minsk / Radkal.: S.V. Dubovik (Adc. red.) [and others]. - Edition. 18. - Minsk : Paligrafkambinat AAT Name Ya. Kolasa", 2016. - - C. 234.

create an experimental site for operation of mining equipment in unmanned mode in the Nyorpakhscoe opencast mine of the Eastern mine<sup>78</sup>.

In the same April 2020 six more dump trucks of the Belarusian manufacturer started to work in **Krasnoyarsk region** at Achinsk alumina refinery, which is part of JSC "Rusal Achinsk". Upgrading the fleet of mining transportation equipment at the Mazulsky mine will increase productivity and reduce the cost of technological process of raw material extraction. Typical detail: in 2020, the company "Rusal" - one of the world's largest aluminum producers - plans to purchase several dozen of Belarusian machines, as "this technique has high performance characteristics, it is more economical in terms of fuel and lubricants. The driver's cabs have improved visibility and control system, are equipped with comfortable seats and climate systems"<sup>79</sup>.

Another Russian region, where the second 130-tonne mining dump truck BELAZ-75131 has been shipped since the beginning of 2020, is the **Sverdlovsk Region**, where the Uralasbest mining and processing enterprise already operates eleven 130-tonne Belarusian trucks, each of which transports up to one and a half thousand tons of rock per shift. How important it is for the Russian side, such figures say. BELAZ trucks operate "on the basis of the Bazhenovsky deposit, whose explored reserves will last for more than 150 years. The deposit is being developed using the open pit method. The open pit is 8 km long, 2.5 km wide and 350 m deep"<sup>80</sup>.

The second vector is the countries of the **Eurasian Economic Union**. In particular, **Armenia**, where three 90-ton dump trucks BELAZ-75585 were sent in spring 2020. They replenished the machinery park of the Sotq mine, a gold mine, the largest in Armenia in terms of pure gold production, whose reserves are estimated at more than 120 tons. It should be noted that 130-ton Belarusian machines are already working here with high efficiency. The new dump trucks were equipped with diesel engines with the capacity up to 1200 horsepower. "New

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<sup>78</sup> BELAZ has supplied another batch of dump trucks to the Russian Apatity [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavil-ocherednuju-partiju-samosvalov-rossijskomu-apatitu-386828-2020/>.

<sup>79</sup> Nemankova, Yu. Career dump trucks BELAZ have started to work in Krasnoyarsk region / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/karjerye-samosvaly-belaz-pristupili-k-rabote-v-krasnojarskom-krae-386202-2020/>.

<sup>80</sup> Nemankova, Yu. Another 130-ton dump truck BELAZ will start working at Russian "Uralasbest" / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ocherednoj-130-tonnyj-samosval-belaz-nachnet-rabotu-na-rossijskom-uralasbeste-385689-2020/>.

high-strength steels were used to improve reliability of the main bearing elements of the dump truck, and cast elements were used in the most stressed places"<sup>81</sup>.

The third vector is the **far arc** countries, the share of which in the export of the Belarusian Automobile Plant has increased almost one and a half times since the beginning of 2020 and made up 40 percent. Thus, in April, eight 130-ton dump trucks BELAZ-75131 began to work on the coal mine, located on the island of Kalimantan in **Indonesia**. All the wishes of Indonesian partners and climatic conditions of operation were taken into account in their set. And these are such tropical options as "appropriate rubber, air conditioning, special cooling system"<sup>82</sup>. The Belarusian Automobile Plant is actively working to increase its presence on the African continent in **Algeria**, where in spring 2020 it shipped another batch of five BELAZ-78221 frontal loaders. The Company's plans include "participation in specialized exhibitions and direct negotiations with interested consumers of mining equipment in the region"<sup>83</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup> Nemankova, Y. BELAZ sent to Armenia dump trucks / Y. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-otpravil-v-armeniju-karjerye-samosvaly-385547-2020/>.

<sup>82</sup> Eight mining dump trucks BELAZ started to work in Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vosem-karjernih-samosvalov-belaz-pristupili-k-rabote-v-indonezii-387074-2020/>.

<sup>83</sup> Nemankova, Yu. Party of BELAZ loaders is shipped to Algeria / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/partija-pogruzchikov-belaz-otgruzhena-v-alzhir-385911-2020/>.

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## Belarus: goal - stable increase in exports

Export growth, including to new markets, in the current difficult epidemiological situation in the world is one of the main conditions for sustainable economic growth of the Republic of Belarus and "ensuring stable socio-economic development of the country for the medium term"<sup>84</sup>. **Gomselmash Holding**, a producer of grain and forage harvesters, cobblers and potato harvesters, mowers and other agricultural equipment, which is already operating in the fields of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Chile, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Argentina, China, South Korea, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, is one of the Belarusian enterprises actively operating in foreign markets even in such difficult conditions as we see today. In the first quarter of 2020, the holding companies shipped more than 400 units of machinery to their customers. "At the same time, 278 self-propelled combines and machine sets were delivered outside Belarus. The list of countries where the machines were shipped includes Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Moldova. <...> In total, shipments by the same period of 2019 increased by 373%" .

**Minsk Tractor Works** is another enterprise that is actively promoting its products on foreign markets. Thus, since the beginning of 2020, more than 250 tractors have been shipped to Pakistan alone. This is an eloquent testimony to the fact that "even in spite of the crisis in many Asian countries and the restrictive measures imposed due to the difficult epidemiological situation, supplies remain at the planned level"<sup>85</sup>. In total, since 1955, Minsk tractor builders have shipped to this country of South Asia more than 120 thousand of their machines. The company does not forget about other export directions as well. In particular, in the first quarter of this year, about five hundred vehicles and tractor sets were shipped to European markets. The following fact speaks for itself: "Export of "MTW" OJSC products to African countries in the first quarter of 2020 grew by 70%"<sup>86</sup>. For one of the countries of this continent - Sudan - in April of this year there was formed another "batch of more than 100 tractors <...>. This is the second shipment

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<sup>84</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Anti-crisis component - export / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XVI Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Europejska nauka XXI wieku - 2020", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - - C. 22.

<sup>85</sup> Since the beginning of the year, MTW has supplied more than 250 tractors to Pakistan [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-s-nachala-goda-postavil-v-pakistan-bolee-250-tractorov-388294-2020/>.

<sup>86</sup> Nemankova, Yu. Export of MTZ products to African countries increased by 70% / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-produktsii-mtz-v-strany-afriki-vyros-na-70-386540-2020/>.

in 2020"<sup>87</sup>. These figures complement this picture very convincingly. "Since the beginning of the year, the company has increased supplies to Russian regions by 20%. The export of Belarusian agricultural machinery to Uzbekistan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia has also increased"<sup>88</sup>. Supplies to Tajikistan, where more than a hundred tractors and tractor kits were shipped in the first three months of this year, have doubled. To a large extent, such dynamics is explained by the fact that "since January 2020, spare parts and components imported to Tajikistan for further assembly of agricultural machinery are not subject to VAT and customs duties"<sup>89</sup>. In the first quarter of this year, the products of Minsk Tractor Works were shipped to more than thirty countries, including 22 foreign countries.

In the first quarter of 2020, **Minsk Automobile Plant** also increased its deliveries to non-CIS countries almost two and a half times. An important component in achieving this indicator was the fact that at the beginning of this year, the enterprise, together with Borisov "Pojsnab" LLC, signed a contract for the supply of 73 units of fire and rescue equipment to the Mongolian Agency for Emergency Situations. And MAZ has already "started the execution of the contract for the supply of chassis and is assembling passenger vehicles for export to Mongolia. The joint project will be implemented during this year"<sup>90</sup>.

In spring 2020, **Amkodor-DOMZ**, a unitary enterprise located in Dzerzhinsk, Minsk region, seriously updated its export plans by shipping the first batch of its products to the Russian region, the Republic of Karelia, in April. There, these seven bridge cranes with lifting capacity from 3.2 to 16 tons will be used to implement an investment project to which the Government of Karelia attaches great importance - "to create on the area of the former Onega Tractor Plant high-tech import-substituting full cycle production of logging equipment: harvesters and forwarders of middle and heavy class"<sup>91</sup>. Characteristic detail: the

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<sup>87</sup> Nemankova, Yu. MTZ will deliver the second batch of equipment to Sudan / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-postavit-vtoruju-partiju-tehniki-v-sudan-386164-2020/>.

<sup>88</sup> MTW has good export performance: supplies to Russia increased by 20%, supplies to Africa increased by 70% [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://ont.by/news/u-mtz-horoshie-pokazateli-pok-eksportu-na-20-vyrosli-postavki-v-rossiyu-na-70-v-afriku>

<sup>89</sup> MTW increased production export to Tajikistan in 2 times [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-uvlichil-eksport-produktsii-v-tadzhikistan-v-2-raza-387386-2020/>.

<sup>90</sup> Nemankova, Yu. MAZ in the first quarter increased exports to non-CIS countries almost 2.4 times / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-v-i-kvartale-uvlichil-eksport-v-dalnee-zarubezhje-pochti-v-24-raza-387079-2020/>.

<sup>91</sup> "Amkodor-Honey in Karelia received the first batch of bridge cranes [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amkodor-onego-v-karelii-poluchil-pervuju-partiju-mostovyh-kranov-388008-2020/>.

bridge cranes sent to Karelia are new generation equipment, which is controlled from the floor by radio signal, which provides high safety standards for staff. It is also important that this spring a second batch of equipment is planned to be sent to Karelia from Belarusian Dzerzhinsk.

Another Belarusian company, which significantly strengthened its position on the Russian market in the first quarter of 2020, is **SZAO BELGI**. In the first three months of this year 5059 cars were assembled here, and 5230 cars were sold in total. At the same time "supplies to the Russian market increased 2.5 times, 2705 cars were exported there in the first quarter"<sup>92</sup>. In 2020 the Company plans to sell 28 thousand cars in total, 18 thousand of which will be sent to Russia.

All these facts testify to the main thing: who does not give up in the most difficult conditions, he eventually wins, helping to overcome the consequences of the unfavorable epidemiological situation in the world.

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<sup>92</sup> "In the first quarter BELGIUM increased its export to Russia by 2.5 times / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beldzhi-v-i-kvartale-uvlichil-eksport-v-rossiju-v-25-raza-386430-2020/>.



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## Belarus: a factor of tourist services development - participation in exhibitions

In the "National Program of export support and development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020" one of the main directions of optimization of the national system of export support and development is named "using the potential of exhibition, fair and congress activities"<sup>93</sup>. Especially active this tool to promote the Belarusian interests in foreign markets are used by representatives of the tourism industry, which allows them to achieve good results in the development of exports of tourist services, "which in 2019 increased by almost 15 percent and exceeded 250 million dollars"<sup>94</sup>. In 2020, the tourism potential of Belarus will be demonstrated at 17 international tourism exhibitions, where our country will be represented by a single national stand.

Thus, in mid-January 2020, the Belarusian side has already taken part in the largest tourism exhibition of Northern Europe Matka 2020 in the Finnish capital, which annually gathers about 20 thousand professionals of the tourism industry, as well as about 50 thousand visitors. This time in Helsinki were presented more than 350 companies from 70 countries. At the stand of the Belarusian National Agency for Tourism their proposals to potential foreign partners were demonstrated by "Minsk tour operators" BelAgroTravel ", " Vneshinturist ", " Prime Tour ", as well as " Studio" from Grodno "<sup>95</sup>.

In the last decade of January 2020 the possibilities of sanatorium-resort treatment in Belarus, as well as business, medical, sports tourism were presented at the Belarusian national stand in the framework of one of the largest specialized international tourist events in the United States of America - The New York Times Travel Show 2020. The presentation of the tourist potential of Belarus over the ocean was attended by "the Department of Sports and Tourism of the Novogrudok

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<sup>93</sup> National Export Support and Development Program of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020 [Electronic resource]. - - 2016. - URL: <http://www.government.by/upload/docs/fileaff83a3fc04eb9c0.PDF>.

<sup>94</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Export of services: among priorities - tourism / B.L. Zalessky // Materialy XVI Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Veda a technologie: krok do budoucnosti - 2020". Volume 4: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - - C. 23.

<sup>95</sup> Grishkevich, A. Belarusian stand presented at the largest tour exhibition of Northern Europe in Helsinki / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskij-stend-predstavlen-na-krupnejshej-turvystavke-severnoj-evropy-v-helsinki-376158-2020/>

District Executive Committee in cooperation with the Novogrudok Museum of Local History, the travel company "Prime Tour" <sup>96</sup>.

At the end of January 2020, the exposition under the single brand name Belarus was opened at the 27th International Travel Trade Fair Balttour-2020 in Riga. It "focuses on inbound medical tourism". <sup>97</sup>Therefore, leading Belarusian sanatoriums and health resorts, hotels and hotels, castle complex "Mir", as well as the information portal of medical services were presented at the stand. In February 2020, the tourist potential of Belarus was widely presented at the 29th International Tourism Exhibition Tourest-2020 in the Estonian capital. Participants of this Belarusian stand were the National Agency for Tourism, the Department of Sports and Tourism of Gomel, Grodno and Minsk regional executive committees, the Center for Olympic Reserve Zhlobin, tourist companies - PCC "Center-Court", "BelAgroTravel", "Ditrib", "Vetliva" portal, sanatoriums - "Mashinostroitel", "Raduga", "Pearl", "Krinitsa", "Pines", "Belorusochka", "Narachanka", "Narochansky Bereg". Attention visitors to the Belarusian exposition showed "a high interest of citizens and tourism industry entities of Estonia to health tourism in Belarus, as well as opportunities for visa-free entry to Belarus through the National Airport "Minsk-2" and the visa-free territory "Brest-Grodno"<sup>98</sup>.

Such an inbound tourism destination as hunting and fishing also has great export potential. Opportunities of this tourist destination, actively developing in Belarus, were widely presented in late January - early February 2020 at one of the world's largest exhibitions in the field of hunting and fishing tourism JACD & HUND 2020 in the German city of Dortmund. Among more than six hundred exhibitors from different countries demonstrated their capabilities and organizations of the Belarusian Ministry of Forestry - unitary enterprise "Belgosohot", Vitebsk, Grodno and Mogilev GPLHO, as well as Pruzhany, Telekhany and Kopyl farms. Promoting their hunting and tourist product in Dortmund for the first time, the Belarusian participants of the exhibition informed foreign hunters about the services and types of hunting taking into account their

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<sup>96</sup> Belarus is represented at the tourist exhibition in New York [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavlena-na-turisticheskoy-vystavke-v-nju-jorke-377104-2020/>.

<sup>97</sup> Nemankova, Y. Tourism potential of Belarus was presented at Balttour-2020 in Riga / Y. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/turisticheskij-potentsial-belarusi-prezentovan-na-vystavke-balttour-2020-v-rige-377966-2020/>.

<sup>98</sup> About the 29th International tourist exhibition "Tourest-2020" [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <http://estonia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c3677b38082f08c4.html>.

interests: "The most attractive for citizens of the European Union is hunting for the wood grouse, bison, wolf, male elk and noble deer<sup>99</sup>.

As we can see, the beginning of 2020 was very busy for the international segment of the Belarusian tourism industry. The continuation will be no less intense, as the single national stand of Belarus will still be presented at international tourism exhibitions in Berlin and Moscow, Beijing, Baku and Dubai, Guangzhou, Nur-Sultan and London. And "will end the year of tourist exhibitions forum in Barcelona<sup>100</sup>. It should be assumed that each of these exhibitions will not only be an additional impetus in terms of increasing the number of foreign tourists coming to Belarus, but will also contribute to further increase the level of the Belarusian tourism industry to the best world examples.

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<sup>99</sup> Opportunities for hunting and fishing tourism in Belarus presented at the exhibition in Germany [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vozmozhnosti-ohotnichje-rybolovnogo-turizma-belarusi-predstavleny-na-vystavke-v-germanii-377905-2020/>.

<sup>100</sup> The tourist potential of Belarus in 2020 will be presented in New York, Dubai and London [Electronic Resource]. -- 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/turisticheskij-potencial-belarusi-v-2020-godu-predstavjat-v-nju-jorke-dubae-i-londone-374521-2019/>.

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## Belarus: the future is for electric cars

In March 2020, Belarus adopted a decree of President A. Lukashenko "On Stimulating the Use of Electric Vehicles," which provides for measures designed to stimulate the demand in the country for this environmentally friendly equipment, as well as the creation of appropriate charging and service infrastructure in the regions. This document appeared due to a number of circumstances. Firstly, let us recall that "at the 24th United Nations World Conference on Climate Change, held in December 2018 in the Polish city of Katowice, the Belarusian side stated that it considers the green economy and low-carbon sustainable development as a strategic vector<sup>101</sup>.

Secondly, the existing forecasts of experts show that "by 2030 every fifth car in the world will be electric. This process spurs government policy in a number of countries, where they are going to impose restrictions on cars with internal combustion engines<sup>102</sup>. Thirdly, the increase in the number of electric cars will help reduce air pollution in Belarus. Fourth, "the use of electric transport is one of the directions for a competent increase in electricity consumption".<sup>103</sup> which becomes especially important today in the light of the expected commissioning of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. Fifth, the transition to electric cars means that the general public is turning to new technologies corresponding to the best international practices so that by 2025 about 40 percent of the available cars with an internal combustion engine in Belarus could be replaced by electric transport.

Turning to the decree, we note some of the measures contained therein. Thus, this document exempts the owners of electric cars from paying the duty for the issuance of a permit to participate in road traffic. Individuals will not have to pay value-added tax when importing electric cars for personal use in our country.

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<sup>101</sup> Zalessky, B. Points of growth. Peculiarities of Sustainable Development under the Global Challenges / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. - - C. 57.

<sup>102</sup> The measures taken will contribute to the establishment of the production of electric cars in Belarus - the Ministry of Economy [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/prinimaemye-mery-budut-sposobstvovvat-sozdaniyu-v-belarusi-proizvodstva-elektromobilej-minekonomiki-383056-2020/>.

<sup>103</sup> Ecology and competent consumption of electric energy - what benefits the growth of electric cars in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ekologija-i-gramotnoe-potreblenie-elektroenergii-chem-vygoden-rost-chisla-elektromobilej-v-belarusi-383046-2020>.

In addition, "owners of electric vehicles are exempt until April 1, 2026 from parking fees in specially equipped places in public parking lots"<sup>104</sup>.

The decree also contains measures for manufacturers of electric cars and electric charging stations, as well as for their operating organizations. In particular, charging stations, if used in Belarus, are exempt from value added tax. And the Belorusneft production association will be provided with land plots for construction and maintenance of electric charging complexes on lease without holding an auction. Perhaps for this reason Belorusneft plans to open 180 quick-charging stations in 2020.

So far, the situation with electric charging stations (EPS) in Belarus is as follows. Since the beginning of 2020 "the network of filling stations has expanded to 251 such stations (plus 13 facilities)"<sup>105</sup>. And now it can serve up to nine thousand electric cars. The network of filling stations on the Belarusian territory includes two types of stations: first, Mode 3, where the electric car for charging takes from six to eight hours; second, Mode 4, where the battery can be charged in less than an hour. Important detail: in early 2020, the network of filling stations "Belorusneft" has a new brand - Malanka, under which by 2022 should already work 639 charging stations. And by 2030 there should be enough of them to serve up to three hundred thousand electric cars.

Speaking about the production of our own electric cars in our country, we recall that the first Belarusian sample of such equipment based on Geely was presented in August 2017. At the same time it was said that "after testing the first electric car, scientists will begin to develop an improved prototype. It may be ready in the next [2018] year"<sup>106</sup>. Nevertheless, as noted already at a meeting in March 2020 with the President of Belarus and the leadership of the Council of Ministers, until the issue of its own electric car does not receive the proper impetus, although electric transport has a huge potential. "This is an urgent necessity today. <...> Many states are already developing this promising direction.

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<sup>104</sup> Lukashenko signed a decree to encourage the purchase of electric cars [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-podpisa-ukaz-o-stimulirovani-zakupok-elektromobilej-383041-2020>.

<sup>105</sup> "Belorusneft plans to open 180 electric charging stations this year [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusneft-planiruet-otkryt-180-elektrozarjadnyh-stantsij-v-etom-godu-383042-2020>.

<sup>106</sup> Gavrilova, V. Ecological, modern and maneuverable: scientists presented the first Belarusian electric car / V. Gavrilova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/reportazh-ekologichnyj-sovremennyj-i-manevrennyj-uchenye-prezentovali-pervyj-belorusskij-elektromobil-262688-2017>.

Countries such as us, which are export-oriented and do not have huge reserves underground, have long been oriented to electric transport"<sup>107</sup> .

It is quite possible that with the advent of the decree "On Stimulation of the Use of Electric Cars" this case will be taken up by BELGI, which "is ready to consider the production of electric cars in Belarus provided that 5-10 thousand cars are sold per year<sup>108</sup> . So far, the company has received four Chinese electric cars model Geely Geometry A, which will be tested: one - at the factory, three - in dealerships. This version of the electric car attracts by the fact that it has a power reserve of five hundred kilometers, a system of adaptive cruise control and response to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as intelligent automatic parking system. It should be assumed that with the adoption of the presidential decree, the Geely Geometry A models at BELGI will go much faster.

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<sup>107</sup> Meeting with the leadership of the Council of Ministers [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/soveschanie-s-rukovodstvom-soveta-ministrov-23197/](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/soveschanie-s-rukovodstvom-soveta-ministrov-23197/).

<sup>108</sup> "BELGIUM is ready to consider the production of electric cars when selling 5-10 thousand cars per year [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beldzhi-gotov-rassmatrivat-vypusk-elektromobilej-pri-prodazhe-5-10-tys-avto-v-god-382660-2020/>.



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## Free Economic Zone "Grodnoinvest": growth point - export

Close to one billion in 2019, the volume of exports of resident companies of the free economic zone (FEZ) "Grodnoinvest", having increased by almost ten percent compared to 2018. This allowed to increase the share of FEZ in the total exports of industrial goods of Grodno region up to 42%. In general, the turnover of FEZ residents exceeded one and a half billion dollars with a surplus of more than 380 million dollars. There are two main vectors in the geography of these exports: post-Soviet - Russia, Ukraine; European - Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia. At the same time, the basis of supplies outside Belarus "was formed by companies from the sectors of woodworking and furniture production (30% of total exports), food production (27%), mechanical engineering and metalworking<sup>109</sup>. Companies from the chemical and textile industries, as well as manufacturers of vehicles and equipment, rubber and plastic products, should be noted in the same row. The prospects for development in FEZs are seen in attracting new residents, who could further increase the volume of exports of goods and services by their activities.

Founded in 2002, FEZ "Grodnoinvest" today consists of 12 territories not only in Grodno, but also in such cities of Grodno region as Mosty, Novogrudok, Slonim, Shchuchin, Smorgon, Svisloch. By mid-January 2020, 75 companies with capital from 41 countries were operating in the FEZ. In 2019, four companies from Belarus, Austria and Poland became residents of the FEZ, where potential investors are offered land plots and production areas with engineering and transport infrastructure, tax, customs and other preferences that allow to significantly reduce project costs and improve the competitiveness of products, engaged in wood processing and production of non-metallic mineral products with a total volume of declared investments of more than 190 million dollars, including in fixed assets - from They intend to build highly efficient factories in Grodno and Svisloch, creating over 560 new jobs there. At the same time, "most of the production will be supplied to the European Union countries"<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>109</sup>Exports of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents in 2019 came close to \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2019-godu-priblizilsja-k-1mlrd-379958-2020>.

<sup>110</sup>In 2019 four companies with \$190 million worth of investment projects [Electronic resource] became residents of Grodnoinvest FEZ. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidentami-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2019-godu-stali-4-kompanii-s-investproektami-na-190-mln-375887-2020/>.

In this context, the year 2020 started very productively for the BMS. In particular, in February the company "EUEcoPAC" was registered here as a resident, which intends to invest more than one million dollars in the creation of production facilities for the production of disposable paper packaging and canteen products. This topic is undoubtedly very topical for Belarus, where measures are now being taken at the legislative level to encourage companies to use environmentally friendly packaging, including paper. The new FEZ resident intends to produce paper Kraft bags with and without handle, lunchbox cardboard packaging, paper cocktail tubes and glasses for cold and hot drinks. It is expected that these products "will be sold mainly in foreign markets. The share of export deliveries will exceed 85%. The main markets will be the European Union countries"<sup>111</sup>. In addition, 25 new jobs will be created here.

In the same February 2020 the company "ZOV-MARKET" became a resident of FEZ, which on the basis of the unfinished construction object in Grodno will create a modern enterprise for the production of dry trimming board, bar, furniture blanks. It is characteristic that "70% of production will be exported to the European Union countries"<sup>112</sup>. One of the new FEZ residents in the near future may become a logistics company Berango from France, which is interested in the implementation of the investment project "to create a multimodal logistics terminal for the processing and cleaning of containers and tanks"<sup>113</sup> in FEZ Grodnoinvest. Negotiations on this particular issue were held with the administration of the FEZ in Grodno in February 2020.

Export-oriented products are being actively expanded, as are already existing FEZ residents. Thus, in February 2020 Terrazit Plus Ltd. demonstrated a new innovative control knob VPC ALPHA Grip of Constellation series within the framework of the innovative project Virpil Controls on creation of devices for virtual control of planes, helicopters, prototypes of spacecrafts. It is important in this connection that this "product is in demand at the market of Western Europe, almost all production is for export".<sup>114</sup> and the project involves pilots, designers,

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<sup>111</sup> Production of paper packaging will be created by a new resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvodstvo-bumazhnoj-upakovki-sozdast-novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-379035-2020/>.

<sup>112</sup> ZOV-MARKET LLC is registered as a resident of FEZ Grodnoinvest [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/ooo-zov-market-zaregistrovano-v-kachestve-rezidenta-sez-grodnoinvest/>.

<sup>113</sup> The French company is considering the possibility of creating a terminal in FEZ "Grodnoinvest" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kompanija-iz-frantsii-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-sozdaniya-terminala-v-sez-grodnoinvest-379266-2020/>.

<sup>114</sup> The resident of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" LLC "Terrazit Plus" presented new innovative products [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-ooo-terrazit-plyus-predstavil-novuyu-innovacionnuyu-produkciyu/>

designers and software developers. In 2019, Belabedding LLP, which has been a Boxspringbett resident since 2006, started to produce new products - continental beds. And now "more than 80% of the company's products are exported to Western Europe"<sup>115</sup>. It should be assumed that the measures taken in the FEZ will bring even more significant results in terms of increasing exports of products by residents of the free economic zone "Grodnoinvest" in 2020.

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<sup>115</sup> FEZ Grodnoinvest resident Belabedding IOO launched production of new products [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-iooo-belabedding-zapustila-vypusk-novoj-produkcii/>.

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## Free Economic Zone "Grodnoinvest": foreign investments as a factor of export development

One of the necessary conditions to ensure sustainable growth of the Belarusian economy in the current difficult situation of global instability is "improvement of the investment climate, increasing the inflow of foreign direct investment into the country's economy, development of infrastructure, including through the mechanism of public-private partnership, increasing the efficiency of investment activity"<sup>116</sup>. The figures show how these tasks are being addressed in Belarus in 2020. In the first quarter of this year, foreign investors invested almost three billion dollars in the real sector of the country's economy. "The main investors of Belarusian companies were economic entities in Russia (35.7% of all investments), Cyprus (15%) and Austria (8.4%). Receipt of direct foreign investments made up \$2.1 billion, or 75.1% of all incoming foreign investments"<sup>117</sup>. The time that has elapsed since the beginning of this year shows that Belarus has many examples of successful investment tasks that contribute to the socio-economic development of the country as a whole.

Among those who are now particularly active in the investment direction, we should mention the free economic zone "Grodnoinvest", the residents of which for the first three months of this year have attracted a record volume of foreign direct investment on a net basis - 59.8 million dollars - of the total volume of 157 million dollars of foreign capital. "The main investor countries were Russia (over \$45 million), Austria (\$39 million) and the Netherlands (\$34 million). Investments came from 15 countries including UAE, Germany, USA and Great Britain"<sup>118</sup>. In total for 18 years of its existence FEZ "Grodnoinvest" attracted more than \$ 900 million of foreign investments from forty countries of the world, including Japan, Cyprus, Turkey, Canada, Poland.

The growing investment attractiveness of this production site, of course, could not appear in an empty place. To a great extent it is explained by attention of FEZ administration to the issues of free economic zone infrastructure

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<sup>116</sup> Zalesky, B. Points of growth. Peculiarities of Sustainable Development under the Global Challenges / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2020. - – 132 c.

<sup>117</sup> Foreign investors have invested \$2.8 billion [Electronic resource] in the economy of Belarus in the first quarter. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/inostranye-investory-vlozhili-v-i-kvartale-v-ekonomiku-belarusi-28-mlrd-390601-2020/>.

<sup>118</sup> Residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest attracted a record volume of FDI on a net basis in Q1 [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-v-i-kvartale-privlekli-rekordnyj-objem-pii-na-chistoj-osnove-389251-2020/>.

development. Such statistics are quite eloquent: starting from 2015, about nine million Belarusian rubles was invested in their infrastructure from the Fund for the Development of Free Economic Zones. For example, a transformer substation was built on the site of the Grodno FEZ near Novaya Gozha, which provided power to new residents' production facilities and created the necessary reserve for potential investors. In Lida, at the industrial site in the area of "Severnoy", the water supply, sewerage, communication and power supply networks were laid.

In Smorgon, at the expense of the same Fund for the Development of FEZ in 2019 began a large-scale project to reconstruct Industrial Avenue, which connects the city with the industrial site of the FEZ, where the production of such residents as the Kronospan Group, Smorgon Aggregate Plant, "Europlastics Invest", "Shinaka Furniture Bel". The project should result in a 4-lane highway with stop pavilions and small architectural forms, outdoor lighting, electricity and water supply, rainwater drainage and outdoor communication systems. All this is done for one purpose: "The new infrastructure will make the site more attractive for potential investors and participants of the Furniture Cluster in FEZ "Grodnoinvest"<sup>119</sup>.

It should be explained here that today "an effective furniture cluster has been formed in Grodno region, which includes more than 20 enterprises producing packaging of wood products, wood boards, furniture and much more"<sup>120</sup>. It should be noted, however, that wood processing accounts for about half of all investments in the FEZ. Therefore, should we be surprised by the fact that in 2019 the residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" attracted 436 million dollars of investment, which was one fourth of all free economic zones in Belarus. And as a result, this one of the youngest Belarusian FEZs has become a leader in terms of attracted investments from foreign investors.

In turn, implemented investment projects contributed to the fact that residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" in 2019 increased exports of their products by eight percent and brought its volume to \$ 940 million. Most of these supplies in the post-Soviet space were to Russia and Ukraine, and in the European Union - to Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia. "This allowed to increase the share of FEZ in the total export volume of industrial goods of Grodno region up to 42%.

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<sup>119</sup> FEZ "Grodnoinvest" has invested about Br9 million [Electronic resource] in infrastructure development for five years. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-grodnoinvest-zapjat-let-investirovala-v-razvitiie-infrastruktury-okolo-br9-mln-387801-2020/>.

<sup>120</sup> In 2019 the residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" attracted \$436 million of investments [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2019-godu-privlekli-436-mln-investitsij-385388-2020/>.

In general, the turnover of FEZ residents exceeded one and a half billion dollars with a surplus of over 380 million dollars"<sup>121</sup>.

This is the path to success: from attracting foreign investment to increasing export supplies.

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<sup>121</sup> Zalesky, B. L. Free economic zone "Grodnoinvest": point of growth - export / B. L. Zalesky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Modern scientific potential - 2020", February 28 - March 7, 2020. History. Law. Economic sciences. Public administration. : Sheffield. Science and education LTD. -- C. 28–30.



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## Free Economic Zone "Vitebsk": the pace of development is dictated by investments

High growth dynamics of attraction of direct foreign investments was demonstrated in 2019 by the residents of the free economic zone "Vitebsk" - three and a half times at once, reaching the level of 16.5 million dollars. As a result, "the share of FEZ "Vitebsk" in the investment portfolio of the Vitebsk region in 2019 was almost 39% and increased by 10 percentage points compared to 2018<sup>122</sup>. Among the FEZ residents who have shown the greatest investment activity - JLLC "Natriks", LLC "Chess-Bell", LLC "Akitama", IUE "VIC animal health". In total, 50 residents are currently implementing their projects in the FEZ, of which almost half are with foreign capital. It should be noted that in 2019 "the resident status of FEZ "Vitebsk" was granted to eight organizations established with the participation of investors from Lithuania, Sweden, Spain, Russia and Belarus. The total volume of investments in new projects exceeds \$52 million and it is planned to create at least 270 jobs"<sup>123</sup>. Apparently, these figures will only grow in the near future.

Thus, the first resident registered in FEZ in 2020 was BelBank LLC, established with the participation of an investor from Russia. The investment project of this company supposes reconstruction and modernization of industrial premises on the outskirts of Vitebsk and on the site of JSC "Vityaz", and also installation of two lines on production of tin cans for industrial food preservation. It is planned to start production activity here already in 2021. Raw materials - white tin - will be supplied by Miorsky Metal Rolling Plant, located in Vitebsk region, which is scheduled for commissioning in the second quarter of 2021. As a result, first LLC "BelBank" will produce solid cans, whose bottom and side surface are a single whole, rolls only the lid. In the second stage, the company will produce prefabricated products consisting of three parts (bottom, body and lid)<sup>124</sup>. An important detail: with the output of the new enterprise at full capacity,

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<sup>122</sup> Residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" increased the volume of direct foreign investments by 3.5 times [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-uvelichili-objem-prjamyh-inostrannyh-investitsij-v-35-raza-379775-2020/>.

<sup>123</sup> Investors from 4 countries plan to start implementing projects in FEZ Vitebsk [Electronic resource] this year. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investory-iz-4-stran-planirujut-v-etom-godu-nachat-realizatsiju-proektov-v-sez-vitebsk-379788-2020/>.

<sup>124</sup> In FEZ "Vitebsk" with the participation of a Russian investor will establish a tin can production [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-sez-vitebsk-s-uchastiem-rossijskogo-investora-sozdadut-proizvodstvo-zhestjanyh-banok-377712-2020/>.

the volume of products manufactured here will double. And all it will be shipped to foreign markets.

The investment picture of 2020 in FEZ "Vitebsk" is very significantly complemented by the fact that it is already planned to register at least six companies established with the participation of investors from Canada, China, Azerbaijan and Russia as residents. At the same time, the total volume of investments in these projects will exceed one hundred million dollars, and the number of jobs created will be at least three hundred. In particular, in Polotsk the company from Azerbaijan will organize in several stages of high-tech production of low-tonnage chemistry with the initial volume of investments about 600 thousand dollars. In the future the volume of investment investments is expected to be increased by several times. In the same Polotsk, the Belarusian investor intends to set up production of stainless steel containers with organization of about twenty workplaces. The Belarusian-Russian JLLC Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Metal Structures is considering a project with investments of about ten million dollars in hot dip galvanizing in the village of Farinovo, Polotsk District. The Chinese company intends to invest about 28 million dollars in the woodworking complex on the outskirts of Vitebsk. And Belmatch LLC will specialize in the production of match straw, which is being created with the participation of an investor from Canada. In Orsha, the Belarusian company will try to establish the production of fuel pellets, and OAO "Plant PAK" initiates a project to organize the production of components for dump trucks.

In 2020, another significant investment event will take place in FEZ "Vitebsk" due to the fact that Lithuanian holding "VMG Group" decided to expand financing of the investment project already being implemented in FEZ from 100 to 200 million euros. For this purpose, the investor is ready to additionally organize the production of solid wood furniture for the vertically integrated woodworking complex being created. As a result, the number of jobs created by the holding's projects will increase to 1 thousand<sup>125</sup>. This is done in order to start production of new products - tables and chairs - at the new furniture factory in 2021, the main buyer of which will be the IKEA concern, which is now assisting in financing this project.

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<sup>125</sup> Lithuanian holding "VMG Group" will increase the volume of investments on projects in FEZ "Vitebsk" to 200 million euros [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/litovskij-holding-vmg-grupp-uvlechit-objem-investitsij-po-proektam-v-sez-vitebsk-do-200-mln-evro-379950-2020/>.

It should be noted that only in 2019 in the economy of Vitebsk region was attracted more than one billion dollars of investment. Thanks to an active investment policy in the region was put into operation the first plant in Belarus to produce steel seamless cylinders. New enterprises and timber processing facilities were opened in Rosson, Sharkovshchinsky, Beshenkovich, Gorodok and Polotsk districts. "The grain drying complex of the Vitebsk broiler poultry factory in the urban settlement of Surazh and the soybean processing shop of the "Ekomol-Agro" enterprise were put into operation<sup>126</sup>. In addition, the construction of the largest in Belarus dairy complex "Kupalinka" for more than two thousand heads is being completed in the agricultural combine "Yubileiny". In the first half of 2020, two more innovative objects of the agricultural enterprise "Ustie" will be put into operation - a grain drying complex for preparation of agricultural seeds for 10 thousand tons and a dairy complex with milking system "robotic carousel". And this is by no means a complete list. This is the pace set today by the investments attracted to the development of only one of the Belarusian regions.

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<sup>126</sup> Bogacheva, O. More than \$1 billion of investments were attracted to the economy of Vitebsk region in 2019 / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bolee-1-mlrd-investitsij-privlecheno-v-ekonomiku-vitebskoj-oblasti-za-2019-god-378810-2020/>.

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## Vitebsk region: European vector of cooperation

During his recent working trip to Vitebsk region, the President of the Belarusian state A. Lukashenko noted positive changes in economic activity in the northern region of Belarus, emphasizing that "this is just the beginning"<sup>127</sup>. Active policy of international economic cooperation, which helps "to attract investments in the creation of export-oriented and import-substituting industries", should be mentioned among the directions of development of Vitebsk region that are being updated today<sup>128</sup>. The region's industrial potential is open and oriented to foreign markets. As a result, "for the majority of products, exports account for more than 50% of the output. <...> Russia accounts for 47%, other CIS countries - 5%, non-CIS countries - 48% of the sold production". The range of cooperation with foreign partners is quite wide: transport and logistics, energy, construction and production of building materials, agriculture, food production, trade, pharmaceuticals. In 2020, it seems that the European vector of partnership relations in Vitebsk region will receive new impulses of development.

In particular, the **Netherlands** is going to stake on strengthening cooperation with Vitebsk region this year. This European country already has experience of cooperation with this region of Belarus. Suffice it to say that last year the trade turnover between the parties amounted to \$ 92.4 million. It was based on supplies to the Dutch market of oil products, linen fabrics, rapeseed oil, glass fabrics, woodworking products, as well as imports of Dutch fruits and vegetables, flowers, vegetable seeds, medicines. The following facts are also important: "In 2019, the volume of foreign direct investment from the Netherlands amounted to almost \$1 million. Two enterprises with capital from this country are operating in Vitebsk"<sup>129</sup>.

Another European country, whose business representatives in 2020 are interested in working in Vitebsk region, is **Sweden**. This interest arose not in an empty place. In 2019, the trade turnover of the northern Belarusian region with this Scandinavian country increased by 65 percent and exceeded \$ 16 million. The

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<sup>127</sup> [Working visit to Vitebsk district \[Electronic resource\]. - - 2020. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/rabochaja-poezdka-v-vitebskij-rajon-23609/.](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/rabochaja-poezdka-v-vitebskij-rajon-23609/)

<sup>128</sup> Zalesky, B.L. FEZ "Vitebsk": course - on international cooperation / B.L. Zalesky // Materials for the XV International Scientific Conference, Present Research and Development - 2019, 15 - 22 Januari 2019: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG. -- C. 30.

<sup>129</sup> Shcherbitsky, A. The Netherlands will bet on strengthening ties with the Vitebsk region - diplomat / A. Shcherbitsky // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/niderlandy-sdelajut-stavku-na-ukreplenie-svjazej-s-vitebskoj-oblastju-diplomat-382019-2020>.

key positions of export to the Swedish market were lumber, fuel wood and furniture. Linen products, plastic goods and tree seeds were also sold there. As for investment cooperation, two enterprises with Swedish capital were already registered in Vitebsk region, and the volume of direct Swedish investments into the economy of Vitebsk region amounted to almost 19 million dollars. In particular, the well-known IKEA concern has been cooperating with the region for quite a long time, which in 2020 is implementing a strategic program to build up production capacities here. It is explained by the fact that by 2021, the concern intends to increase the supply of goods produced in Belarus to 300 million euros. At the same time, "IKEA specialists develop the design of products themselves, and then join efforts with suppliers of raw materials and manufacturers of goods. Furniture, textiles and accessories made to order in Belarus are sold in IKEA stores around the world<sup>130</sup>. And that is not all. According to K. Johannesson, head of the Swedish diplomatic mission in Belarus, "now two Swedish companies are holding specific negotiations to enter the market of the region<sup>131</sup>. And in general, according to the parties, the limit of bilateral cooperation is far from being reached. After all, apart from woodworking, there are many other areas of cooperation for joint work.

In March 2020, J. Perkins, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Republic of Belarus, stated that there was a great potential for cooperation between Great Britain and Vitebsk region. At the same time, she referred to the economy and trade as the main areas of such cooperation. It should be noted that in 2019 the foreign trade turnover of Vitebsk Oblast enterprises with British partners exceeded seven million dollars. According to the parties, this figure may be significantly increased in the near future due to diversification of supplies from both sides. So far, the basis of Belarusian exports have been lubricating oil additives, linen fabrics and glass fiber. It is also worth mentioning that seven organizations with British capital already work in the region. Culture is another area of cooperation that may get interesting development in cooperation with British partners. More specifically, we are talking about the intention to create a

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<sup>130</sup> IKEA wants to increase in 2 years the purchase of goods in Belarus from 150 to 300 million euros [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://ncpn.by/ikea-%D1%85%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%82-%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%B8%D1%82%D1%8C-%D0%B7%D0%B0-2-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%83%D0%BF%D0%BA%D1%83-%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0/>

<sup>131</sup> Shcherbitsky, A. Swedish Business is interested in Vitebsk region - Ambassador / A. Shcherbitsky // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/shvedskij-biznes-projavljaet-interes-k-vitebskoj-oblasti-posol-381082-2020/>

platform for cooperation between European architects, artists of Vitebsk and the Museum of History of the Vitebsk People's Art School. And in this regard, we are discussing "the idea of a project that can be implemented in 2020-2021 in the city [Vitebsk] - a 10-day plenary-air symposium"<sup>132</sup>.

All these facts show that Vitebsk region really has a lot of potential for cooperation with European countries. And 2020 can give this cooperation a serious acceleration, as the parties have a mutual desire to implement a variety of joint projects.

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<sup>132</sup> Shcherbitsky, A. Vitebsk region and Great Britain have great potential for cooperation - Perkins / A. Shcherbitsky // [Electronic resource]. - – 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskaja-oblast-i-velikobritanija-imejut-bolshoj-potentsial-dlja-sotrudnichestva-perkins-383129-2020/>.



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## Gomel region: online format as an effective tool for international cooperation of regions

The Gomel region in Belarus has accumulated considerable experience of working at the international level with foreign partners over the past decade and a half or two years. At the same time it uses various forms of partnership development. For example, it is the Gomel Economic Forum, which for 15 years has "proved to be a new format of work with foreign investors at the regional level and an effective tool for the development of international inter-regional relations"<sup>133</sup>. Secondly, it is the international exhibition "Spring in Gomel", which for 20 years of its existence has become a kind of business card of the Gomel region. Suffice it to say that here "in 2019 on an area of more than 5 thousand square meters. m products of 300 Belarusian and foreign companies were presented".<sup>134</sup> And then foreign delegations from 32 countries visited the exhibition.

In 2020, responding to the challenges associated with the Coronavirus pandemic and the closure of most countries' borders, and following the principle that "in the new realities it is necessary to do everything possible to further socio-economic strengthening of the region and the welfare of its inhabitants".<sup>135</sup> In the south-eastern part of Belarus, they decided not to cancel the XXI International Exhibition "Spring in Gomel", but to hold it in a new online format. At the same time, the reasoning here is as follows: on the one hand, although the companies-participants will not be able to hold a virtual exhibition dialogue in the usual format, but on the other hand, they will receive some cost savings associated with the organization of a visit to Gomel, flights. And as a result "touch points can be

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<sup>133</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Economic Forum as a tool for the development of international relations in the region / B.L. Zalesky // Materials for the XV International Scientific Practical Conference, Ninovite insights into the European science - 2019, 15 - 22 juni 2019. Public Administration. Public administration. : Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG. - - C. 11.

<sup>134</sup> Business contacts, holiday craft and gastrofest online - opened the exhibition "Spring in Gomel" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/delovye-kontakty-prazdnik-remesla-i-gastrofest-onlajn-otkrylas-vystavka-vesna-v-gomele-392199-2020/>.

<sup>135</sup> The new format "Spring in Gomel" will allow to explore the potential of the region from anywhere in the world - Nightingale [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-format-vesny-v-gomele-pozvolit-iz-ljuboj-tochki-mira-izuchit-potentsial-regiona-solovej-392149-2020/>.

found in the video conference mode. When the borders open, all markets will return to an active live dialogue"<sup>136</sup>.

The exhibition, which opened at the end of May 2020, gathered more than 250 companies from 13 countries on its electronic platform, which presented their products in eleven different areas, including food industry, mechanical engineering, wood and metalworking, construction, engineering, chemical and petrochemical, light industry, banking, legal and insurance services. The project was also joined by 13 chambers of commerce and industry, six free economic zones of Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Serbia, as well as the Indian Chamber of International Business and the Croatian Chamber of Economy. At the same time, the virtual version of the exhibition included three main sites.

The first one - "Business Spring" - offered webinars, presentations of products and services of enterprises and companies, online negotiations. In particular, there was a "round table" with representatives of chambers of commerce and industry and business unions of six countries and five webinars on topical business topics, attended by more than 70 Belarusian and foreign enterprises and organizations. In addition, the first international online forum R2R (Region-to-Region), organized by Samara Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was held in parallel with these events. Over 50 representatives of exporting companies and chambers of commerce and industry from Belarus, Russia and other countries participated in the forum. An important detail of this event is that "during the negotiations it was decided to participate in the summer sessions of the forum with representatives of the regions of France, the Netherlands and Iran in July this year"<sup>137</sup>. The second site - "Gomel Spring" - became a place of creativity, where craftsmen demonstrated their works. In total, 74 participants' business cards with contact details and links in social networks were placed here, as well as photos of creative works in ten directions: woodwork, children's toys, clothes, decor, ceramics, natural cosmetics, interior items, accessories, jewelry, farm food and ecological products. The third site - "Delicious Spring" - presented restaurants, cafes, bars and retailers. Their electronic business cards included information and photos of the interior and dishes, the demonstration of which

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<sup>136</sup> Online projects stimulate enterprises to strengthen their positions on the Internet sites - Filonova [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/onlajn-proekty-stimulirujut-predpriyatija-ukrepljat-pozitsii-na-internet-platformah-filonova-392234-2020/>.

<sup>137</sup> More than 250 companies from 13 countries participate in the exhibition "Spring in Gomel" [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bolee-250-kompanij-iz-13-stran-uchastvujut-v-virtualnoj-vystavke-vesna-v-gomele-393173-2020>.

allowed to convey the atmosphere of each of the ten participants in this online gastrofest.

In addition, as part of the online exhibition Gomel region presented dozens of investment projects so that potential investors anywhere in the world could easily get acquainted with the tempting proposals of the Belarusian region in the fields of industry, energy, construction, agriculture, chemical industry, woodworking and tourism. "The proposed projects include the establishment of an enterprise for processing wild products in Pripyatskoe Polesie, as well as the shock freezing of fruits and vegetables, the construction of a workshop for processing pond fish, the opening of facilities for bottling drinking and mineral water, mushroom and oyster mushroom cultivation, and the production of potato flakes<sup>138</sup>. Other proposals may arouse interest of foreign investors: construction of a gypsum plant on the basis of "Brinevskoye" deposit in Petrikovsky Raion; creation of a mixed type grape snail farm and an enterprise for assembly of wind power plants in Gomelsky Raion; implementation of a project on generation of electric energy from biogas in Svetlogorsky Raion; organization of production of fuel pellets from peat in Lelchitsky Raion, where 44 peat deposits with total reserves of about 170 million tons are concentrated.

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<sup>138</sup> From robots to motor homes: dozens of investment projects offer online Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ot-robotov-do-doma-na-kolesah-desjatki-investproektov-predlagaet-onlajn-gomelskaja-oblast-392685-2020/>.

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## **Free Economic Zone "Brest": prospects inspire optimism**

In 2021 the free economic zone (FEZ) "Brest" will celebrate its 25th anniversary. Today it is located on more than ten thousand hectares. Its borders include land plots located not only in Brest and Brest district, but also in cities such as Baranovichi, Pinsk, Kobrin, Gantsevichi. As of mid-February 2020, over 70 residents from two dozen countries were registered here, including 47 - with the participation of foreign capital, which already employs more than 21 thousand people. In 2019, the FEZ attracted 107 million dollars of investment, and the volume of exports of its residents in 75 countries has reached almost 730 million dollars. These positive trends continue in 2020, in the first quarter of which FEZ attracted foreign direct investment on a net basis of almost 50 million dollars, which is four times more than the task. The dynamics of the FEZ development today is such that all the performance indicators of the previous year in 2020 here are only going to surpass. There are prerequisites for that. So, if in 2018 by opening new businesses residents in the FEZ created 721 jobs, and in 2019 - 890, in 2020 they plan to open at least one thousand. With this potential for development, five new residents with Polish and German capital come here at once, whose areas of activity are focused on light industry, woodworking, cosmetics, the production of metal products, parts and assemblies for the automotive industry.

It should be noted that at the end of April 2020 two more land plots with the total area of more than one hundred hectares, located in Ivatsevichi and Ivatsevichi district and intended for implementation of investment projects with foreign capital, were included into FEZ "Brest". Already in June 2020 a new FEZ resident was registered here - LLC "Polipol Mebel Bel", which is part of the well-known on the European market holding Polipol Produktions Verwalfund GmbH, which has been producing upholstered furniture for 30 years. Its ten factories, which employ over seven thousand people, are located not only in Germany but also in other European countries. At the industrial site in Ivatsevichi, the new resident intends to build a workshop for the production of upholstered furniture and a number of other related facilities. "The project will be implemented for six years. During this time, the company intends to invest over 25 million euros in furniture production and create more than 1 thousand jobs. At that 90% of the

production will be exported"<sup>139</sup>. Important detail: "Polipol Furniture Bel" LLC has become the seventh company in FEZ with German capital. And on the whole German entrepreneurs take the first place here by the level of investments, as their share is more than a third in the total investment portfolio of FEZ.

Other new residents come here with interesting projects. Thus, half a million euros is planning to invest in the organization of production of lumber - boards, timber, various building structures - an enterprise with the Belarusian capital Savantdrev LLC, registered as a FEZ resident in May 2020. At the production site near Krasnogvardeyskaya Street in Brest it is planned to produce fuel pellets or pellets from wood waste, which are very popular in the European Union countries. That is why "up to 85% of Savantdrev's production is expected to be supplied to the foreign market"<sup>140</sup>. The full-scale production cycle here will start in 2021. The new enterprise will create at least 15 jobs.

In the same May 2020, Lady X LLC was registered in FEZ, which plans to locate its production facilities on the unused areas of Baranovichi Automatic Lines Plant. The Belarusian company plans to "invest about 2 million euros in the project for the production of collectible clothing. <...> When reaching the designed capacity in 2024, the number of employees of the company will reach 260 people". In addition, previously registered residents should start working in FEZ. In particular, "BTV-Agro" Ltd. has built the first mushroom growing complex for JLC "Bonchet", which is engaged in the production of champignons. Jobs will also be created there. The issue of organizing the production of car wiring and camper in the LEZ territory is being worked out"<sup>141</sup>.

The Italian industrial district, whose infrastructure is planned to be completed here in 2020, should also contribute to the solution of the problems facing the LEZ. Recall that the idea of creating such a district in the industrial zone "Airport" was voiced about ten years ago, when in June 2011 in Trieste was adopted a Memorandum of Understanding on the development of an industrial district in the Brest region, which provided for "the creation of the most favorable conditions for attracting Italian investors and implementation of projects in

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<sup>139</sup> [The new resident of FEZ "Brest" intends to invest more than 25 million euros in furniture production \[Electronic resource\]. -- 2020. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-brest-nameren-investirovat-v-proizvodstvo-mebeli-bolee-25-mln-evro-394124-2020/.](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-sez-brest-nameren-investirovat-v-proizvodstvo-mebeli-bolee-25-mln-evro-394124-2020/)

<sup>140</sup> [The new resident of FEZ "Brest" will engage in woodworking \[Electronic resource\]. -- 2020. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-brest-zajmetsja-derevoobrabotkoj-392514-2020/.](https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-brest-zajmetsja-derevoobrabotkoj-392514-2020/)

<sup>141</sup> [It is planned to create 1 thousand workplaces \[Electronic resource\] in FEZ "Brest". -- 2020. - URL: https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-sez-brest-planirujut-sozdat-1-tys-rabochih-mest-380116-2020/.](https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-sez-brest-planirujut-sozdat-1-tys-rabochih-mest-380116-2020/)

Belarus<sup>142</sup>. Today not only Italians, but also any investor willing to organize and develop their business here, taking advantage of the free economic zone, can come to the County. Therefore, there are already two companies with investments from Germany, as well as companies with Israeli, British, Polish and Russian capital. "In 2018, a new production facility of the Italian-Belarusian company "Friesa Industrie" for the production of energy-saving elements for commercial refrigeration equipment was launched at the site of the Airport. Today, the joint venture has one of the highest export growth rates among FEZ companies"<sup>143</sup>. All these examples undoubtedly inspire optimism when assessing the prospects of FEZ "Brest".

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<sup>142</sup> Zalesky, B. Belarus - Europe: partnership potential. Policy of multi-vectorality in the context of global challenges / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2016. -- C. 43.

<sup>143</sup> \_FEZ "Brest" is completing this year the creation of infrastructure in the Italian industrial district [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/regions/view/sez-brest-zavershaet-v-etom-godu-sozdanie-infrastruktury-v-italjjanskom-promyshlennom-okruga-380751-2020/>.



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## **Great Stone Industrial Park: globalization, industrialization, digitalization, ecologization**

In 2020, the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" in accordance with the decisions of the 12th meeting of the Working Group on its activities, held in October 2019 in Beijing, should unfold a new stage of development of this large-scale project, related not only to the creation of an international industrial park, but also an environmentally friendly industrial city, as well as the issues of "attracting anchor investors with high-tech projects, expanding international activities"<sup>144</sup>. At the same time, four basic principles of development are guided here: "First, it is globalization, since the industrial park is not Chinese or Belarusian, but international. Secondly, industrialization. The main task is to attract international industry clusters. Third, it is digitalization, which should give great advantages to the park development. <...> Fourthly, ecologization. Environmental protection and compliance with environmental requirements is the key to sustainable development"<sup>145</sup>.

Let us remind you that at the beginning of 2020, 60 residents from 15 countries were registered at the Great Stone, including those from the Russian Federation: 33 - from the People's Republic of China; 15 - with participation of companies from Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Switzerland, and the United States of America; 12 - were created by Belarusian economic entities. By that time, 32 kilometers of roads had already been built here in less than five years, about 400 kilometers of water and gas pipelines, electric lines, sewage outlets had been laid, 25 buildings with the total area of about 300 thousand square meters had been completed. And the total volume of concluded contracts and investments exceeded one billion dollars from 11 countries of the world. It is expected that by the end of 2020 at least 80 residents will be registered in the "Great Stone" with the volume of declared investments of one and a half billion dollars.

Speaking about the trends observed today in the industrial park, there are several main ones. One of them is the development of the "Great Stone" as a smart

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<sup>144</sup> Zalesky, B. L. "Veliky Kamen": development perspective - sub-parks / B. L. Zalesky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Science and civilization - 2020", 30 January - 07 February, 2020. Economic sciences. : Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - - C. 20.

<sup>145</sup> Zheng, H. "The Great Stone" becomes a strategic platform for Belarusian-Chinese cooperation / H. Zheng // [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/velikij-kamen-stanovitsja-strategicheskoy-platfornoj-dlja-belorussko-kitajskogo-sotrudnichestva-7152/>.

city with an innovative industry and a high quality of life. To achieve this goal, in February 2020 an agreement on the development of 5G technology in the industrial park was signed by the Ministry of Communications and Informatization of the Republic of Belarus, the North-Western Administrative District "Industrial Park Development Company" and the administration of the "Great Stone". It was noted that one of the most promising areas of 5G technology development here is unmanned transport. As a result, the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park should become "the first in Belarus model base for the introduction of 5G technology"<sup>146</sup>.

It should be noted that the priority directions of "Great Stone" development remain engineering, electronics and telecommunications, biotechnologies, pharmaceuticals, new materials, and logistics. At the same time, the emphasis is on the innovative activity of residents. And "at present, about 20 projects are already yielding results"<sup>147</sup>. Among them are the commercial and logistics company China Merchants, which has received a certificate for operation of Belarus' only public bonded warehouse, and the plant MAZ-Veichai, where the production of Euro-5 and Euro-6 diesel engines for trucks, special vehicles and buses is organized. In November 2019 in "Great Stone" took place the opening of the production building of the subsidiary of the Swiss company Garrosserie Hess AG - Hess Great Stone LLC - for the production of electric passenger transport. "This type of transport will be distinguished by the absence of carbon dioxide emissions and quiet operation. Batteries on the roof will be recharged at the final stop in a few minutes"<sup>148</sup>. On a full production cycle this resident of the industrial park plans to go in 2021, when it will already produce up to fifty bus bodies.

The following fact also speaks of a lot in terms of innovative activity of the park residents: in March 2020, the manufacturer of medical products of a wide range of Assomedica Ltd., registered in the Great Stone as a resident in 2017, "mastered a new production of breathing masks and single-use bacterial-virus filters for adults, children and newborns"<sup>149</sup> - products that provide maximum

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<sup>146</sup> Nemankova, Y. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. The pilot project on 5G development is being implemented in "The Great Stone". -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pilotnyj-proekt-po-razvitiyu-5g-realizujut-v-velikom-kamne-381000-2020/>.

<sup>147</sup> Zheng, H. "The Great Stone" becomes a strategic platform for Belarusian-Chinese cooperation / H. Zheng // [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/velikij-kamen-stanovitsja-strategicheskoy-platfornoj-dlja-belorusko-kitajskogo-sotrudnichestva-7152/>

<sup>148</sup> Alexander Turchin: The Belarusian-Swiss cooperation has serious potential [Electronic resource]. - - 2019. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9136>.

<sup>149</sup> The production of breathing masks was opened in the industrial park "Great Stone" [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/proizvodstvo-dyhatelnyh-masok-otkryto-v-industrialnom-parke-velikij-kamen-383799-2020/>.

respiratory protection from microbes and viruses, which can be used within 12-24 hours.

They think in an industrial park and about the future. This is evidenced by the fact that in March 2020, the Chinese company Sinomach was registered as a resident of the "Great Stone" with a project to create a zone for scientific and technological cooperation and innovation development, within which it is planned to build a complex of administrative buildings for scientific research and auxiliary infrastructure. In the first phase, it intends to "implement four research projects related to such developments as optical devices, automotive sensors, semiconductor devices and new materials. The company also plans to implement the second phase of the project<sup>150</sup>.

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<sup>150</sup> [The new resident with Chinese capital is registered in the "Great Stone" \[Electronic Resource\]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-s-kitajskim-kapitalom-zaregistririvan-v-velikom-kamne-384192-2020>.](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-s-kitajskim-kapitalom-zaregistririvan-v-velikom-kamne-384192-2020)

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## Great Stone Industrial Park as a "magnet" for innovations

Among the main directions of trust all-round strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China an important role is played by the scientific and innovative vector. In this segment of bilateral cooperation, three priority components can be identified. "The first is in the field of scientific research, where the parties participate in the implementation of major joint projects. The second is in the area of innovation, where a network of joint innovation centers and research laboratories is being established and developed. The third is in the field of education, where specialists, teachers and students are trained and interned together"<sup>151</sup>. The Sino-Belarusian industrial park Veliky Kamen (Great Stone) is particularly focused on innovation. This makes it possible to create competitive production facilities, sustainable engineering and transport infrastructure, and digital construction to turn the park into a "smart city". At the same time, the pace of innovation movement accelerated significantly in the spring of 2020. Here are just some examples to confirm this observation.

In May 2020, the first stone was laid in the "Great Stone" on the site of future construction by the Chinese corporation Sinomach of the zone of scientific and technological cooperation and development or the project "Torch. Recall that in June 2014, the Belarusian government signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with this corporation, on the basis of which large-scale investment projects are currently being implemented in Belarus. As for the project "Torch", this zone will be "aimed at creating conditions for attracting Chinese and European technologies, their introduction and testing in the park and further export to Europe and China"<sup>152</sup>. It is planned to construct office buildings and premises for scientific research, where "four research and development projects are planned to be implemented - in the field of optical technologies, mechanics, electronics and new materials. It is also planned to erect a laboratory, office coworkings, complex construction of educational institutions and high-tech

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<sup>151</sup> Zalessky, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / B. Zalesskiy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. -- C. 115–116.

<sup>152</sup> On the development of the SINOMACH [Electronic Resource] zone of scientific and technical cooperation and development in the "Great Stone" park. - - 2020. - URL: <http://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/cf39e9ad1f75824a.html>

experimental commercial facilities".<sup>153</sup>[3]. This project will involve not only research institutes and enterprises of Sinomach Corporation, but also enterprises of the Chinese Zhongguancun Technopark and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

Mentioning the Zhongguancun Technopark in this context shows the Chinese side's very serious attitude towards the Torch project in the Great Stone. The fact that this technopark, founded in 1988 in the northwestern part of Beijing, is considered the Chinese analogue of Silicon Valley, is the first in China, one of the largest in the capital and consists of 16 scientific zones. It was here that at one time "the first Chinese vacuum cylinder, the first computer, the first switch, etc., appeared. In total, developed 5000 with more products, which filled the void in the history of Chinese high technology<sup>154</sup>. Now, the research and development offices of many multinational corporations are concentrated here. This technology park in China has high expectations in terms of "fulfilling the ambitious strategy of Made in China 2025, which will make the country technologically independent and will make it a leader in many fields. The Chinese authorities will spend about \$300 billion to implement the program<sup>155</sup>. Speaking about this technopark, one cannot help mentioning such a figure: from January to November 2019, there was a nearly 14 percent increase in revenues. At the same time, "the income of leading high-tech enterprises in the Technopark reached 5.43 trillion yuan (about 779 billion U.S. dollars) during this period<sup>156</sup>.

Returning to the innovation business in the "Great Stone," another landmark event took place here in May 2020, showing that one of the promising facets of the development of the Sino-Belarusian industrial park is digitalization. It is the first place where an unmanned electric bus developed on the basis of the technology of Singaporean scientists was tested. "The maximum speed that a prototype can develop is 40 km/hour. <...> Power reserve is about 180 km. Full charge will take no more than 4 hours"<sup>157</sup>. On the territory of the Great Stone, it

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<sup>153</sup> Sinomach Park "Torch" [Electronic Resource] will be built in the "Great Stone". - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-postrojat-park-sinomach-fakel-390613-2020/>.

<sup>154</sup> Wei, W. Silicon Valley of China / Wei // Models, systems, networks in economics, technology, nature and society. - - 2013. - - C. 18-21.

<sup>155</sup> Krasilnikova, Yu. Peking launches a program to attract foreign IT-specialists / Yu. Krasilnikova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2018. - URL: [https://hightech.fm/2018/02/28/beijing\\_jures\\_talant](https://hightech.fm/2018/02/28/beijing_jures_talant)

<sup>156</sup> In the first 11 months of 2019, Beijing Zhongguancun Technopark registered a 13.8% increase in revenue [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: [http://russian.news.cn/2020-01/07/c\\_138685700.htm?utm\\_source=yxnews&utm\\_medium=desktop&utm\\_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fyandex.by%2Fnews](http://russian.news.cn/2020-01/07/c_138685700.htm?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fyandex.by%2Fnews).

<sup>157</sup> The first unmanned electric bus was tested in the "Great Stone" [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervyj-bespilotnyj-eklektrobus-protestirovali-v-velikom-kamne-390612-2020>.

is planned to test the technology of operation of the novelty, after which, apparently, in the near future, commercial operation of this unmanned vehicle will be possible.

Finally, in the same May 2020 in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park registered a new resident - LLC "Scientific and Technical Company for Wooden Structures Crownhomes", which will create in the "Great Stone" "center for the production of production lines for woodworking industry based on the principles of industry 4.0"<sup>158</sup>. The launch of this production, which is based on innovative technology, is expected in 2022.

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<sup>158</sup> The new resident of Great Stone will produce products for woodworking [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-vypuskat-produktsiju-dlja-derevoobrabotki-390684-2020>.



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## Concern "Bellegprom": export as a development factor

Today Concern Bellegprom unites 72 Belarusian enterprises of textile, garment, knitwear and leather-shoe industries, 43 of them are state-owned. These are all large entities: 43 thousand people out of 62 thousand employed in light industry work at the concern's enterprises<sup>159</sup>. Despite the current difficult economic conditions due to global economic instability, the concern manages to maintain the image of Belarusian goods on the international arena, as evidenced by the facts. In the first quarter of 2020, the concern's enterprises exported almost 60 per cent of its output - for almost 110 million dollars. At the same time, "light industry goods were supplied to 41 countries of the world"<sup>160</sup>. This made it possible to ensure a positive balance of trade in goods in the amount of about 50 million dollars.

The high rate of development of the export component in 2020 is demonstrated by the enterprises of the knitting industry, which are part of the Bellegprom concern. Thus, for the first three months of this year, the volume of their export increased by almost ten percent and amounted to 36.5 million dollars. Good growth was shown by such economic entities as JLLC "Conte Spa", JSC "Brest Stocking Mill", CJSC "Vesnyanka", JSC "BCF", JSC "Kupalinka", JSC "March 8", JSC "Bobruisktriccottage", JSC "Clothing Factory "Junona", JSC "Moteks", JSC "Fashion Center", FE "Romgil-Tex". The increase in these exports is largely due to the expansion of their geography. From January to March 2020, Bellegprom's knitting industry enterprises were shipped to 20 countries. At the same time, positive dynamics was observed in the sales markets of Russia, Germany, Moldova, Poland, Azerbaijan, Lithuania and Latvia. And for a number of countries, export volumes increased several times at once. "Shipments of knitted goods to Kazakhstan increased 2,6 times, to Uzbekistan - 3,2 times <...>.

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<sup>159</sup> Lugina, T. What projects our light industry can be proud of / T. Lugina // [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/svoya-rubashka-blizhe-k-telu11.html>.

<sup>160</sup> Nemankova, Yu. Bellegprom Enterprises exported 58.3% of production in the first quarter / Yu. Nemankova // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellegproma-v-i-kvartale-eksportirovali-583-produktsii-389618-2020/>.

Shipments of sewing products to Uzbekistan increased more than 9 times, Kyrgyzstan - more than 3 times, Great Britain - 2,4 times"<sup>161</sup>.

It should be noted that the concern intends to further develop the export component with even more concentration of efforts, increasing supplies even to those vectors that were previously occupied. This is explained by the fact that "the Asian presence in the EU markets is decreasing, so it is necessary to actively seek new partners, occupying the existing niches"<sup>162</sup>. That is why Belleprom today counts even on the growth of exports to the European Union and neighboring countries. In particular, it is planned to start supplying protective masks to Germany and Russia in the nearest future. At least, appropriate agreements with partners in these countries have already been reached, as well as "contracts with the Baranovich cotton production association and the Fashion Center" have been concluded<sup>163</sup>. At the same time, it is planned to send one million protective articles to Germany alone.

Of course, implementation of a number of investment projects, which will allow to modernize existing production facilities and improve the quality of products, should contribute to all this. In particular, the investment project on organization of production of cloth fabrics is carried out in JSC "Kamvol" - the only one in Belarus and the largest in the post-Soviet space with a complete production cycle, where pure wool and semi wool suit and dress fabrics, pure wool, semi wool, polyacrylonitrile knitted and woven yarn are produced. "In 2019 the enterprise increased its supplies to Russia by 1.3 times, to Ukraine - by 1.5 times, to Uzbekistan - by 3.2 times, to Moldova - by 1.3 times, to Azerbaijan - by 16 times. In total, the company's products are exported to 17 countries"<sup>164</sup>. And in the first quarter of 2020 JSC "Kamvol" began to cooperate with several other major partners - distributors in Russia, Armenia, Uzbekistan. Plans to enter the American and Canadian markets are also being developed here. This is the topic of recent negotiations between specialists of the Belarusian enterprise and representatives of international trading houses Alliance Apparel Group Inc. from

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<sup>161</sup> Export of Belleprom's knitwear enterprises in the first quarter increased by 8.4% [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-trikotazhnyh-predpriyatij-belleproma-v-i-kvartale-vyros-na-84-391971-2020>.

<sup>162</sup> Belleprom textile enterprises are planning to look for new partners and increase exports to the EU [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tekstilnye-predpriyatija-belleproma-planirujut-iskat-novyh-partnerov-i-naraschivat-eksport-v-es-391599-2020>.

<sup>163</sup> "Belleprom plans to export protective masks to Russia and Germany [Electronic resource] in May. - - 20120. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belleprom-planiruet-v-mae-eksportirovat-zaschitnye-maski-v-rossiju-i-germaniju-389972-2020/>

<sup>164</sup> "Kamvol plans to enter the US and Canadian markets [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kamvol-planiruet-vyjti-na-rynki-ssha-i-kanady-389583-2020/>.

the USA and Les Enterprises Presidentielles Inc. from Canada, specializing in the production of clothing made of wool, cotton, linen fabrics, yarn and synthetic fibers.

Solid investments are also being developed at the Orsha flax mill, where work is being done to organize in-depth processing of short flax fiber with the production of sanitary and medical products and increase the processing of this raw material by 30-40 percent. The task has been set to process the entire harvest of flax cakes in the country and sell for export already finished goods made of flax, which, indeed, are popular abroad. Thus, a store of Belarusian flax products has recently opened in the Japanese capital, where the partners of Orsha flax mill joined the main task in their country at the moment - to preserve the health of the population. And "Belarusian linen fabric is used to produce protective masks, which are in demand among residents of Tokyo and other cities. Due to the natural properties of linen, masks made of this fabric are not only convenient, but also more comfortable for everyday wear"<sup>165</sup>. And this is not the only example that shows the tempting prospects of Belarusian exports in the light industry.

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<sup>165</sup> Yesin, R. About Belarusian flax in Japan, search for new goods for export and strengthening of electronic trade (in Russian) / R. Yesin // [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/esin-o-belorusskom-lne-v-japonii-poiske-novyh-tovarov-dlja-eksporta-i-usilenii-elektronnoj-torgovli-7276/>.

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## Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: towards maximum realization of potential

June 2020 marked the fifteenth anniversary of the first trading on the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE), when the Belarusian UE "Bellesexport" and the Polish company International Paper Kwidzyn S.. A. have concluded the first exchange transaction on sale of balance timber in the amount of 189 thousand dollars. All in all, over the past decade and a half "3.2 million deals were made here for a total amount of \$21 billion, and the volume of exports amounted to \$5.8 billion"<sup>166</sup>. These figures show that by today the BUTB has become one of the largest commodity exchanges in Eastern Europe, the main function of which is to assist Belarusian companies to export products and provide assistance to foreign companies to enter the Belarusian market. This fact also says a lot. The market pricing mechanism and the high concentration of supply and demand on this exchange platform allowed Belarusian bidders to earn additional revenue and save \$1.5 billion since 2005. We would like to remind you that today almost 24 thousand companies, including about five thousand non-residents from 63 countries, accredited at the BUTB, participate in electronic trading on five commodity items: 1) metal products; 2) timber products; 3) agricultural products; 4) industrial and consumer goods; 5) perspective exchange commodities. In the domestic Belarusian market, round lumber, ferrous metal products and oilseed meals are in particular demand, while in foreign trade transactions, their participants prefer lumber and dairy products. These tendencies are characteristic for the development of BUTB in 2020 as well.

In particular, since the beginning of this year the amount of export exchange transactions with forest products has reached 90 million euros, and the geography of sales has covered 23 countries. At the same time, only at the exchange trading in May was sold woodworking products for more than seven million euros. Interestingly, its buyers "were companies from the Baltic States and Germany, while wood chips were divided among Polish, Lithuanian and Estonian traders"<sup>167</sup>. Among the new promising markets in 2020, China was also clearly identified,

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<sup>166</sup> Transactions worth \$21 billion have been concluded on BTB over 15 years [Electronic Resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sdelki-na-21-mlrd-zakljucheny-na-butb-za-15-let-393174-2020>.

<sup>167</sup> Woodworking products for more than 7 million euros were sold at the export auction BUTB [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/produktsiju-derevoobrabotki-bolee-chem-na-7-mln-evro-prodali-na-eksportnyh-torgah-butb-391644-2020/>.

where the last three trading sessions resulted in the sale of sawdust products for four million euros.

A similar picture is observed here and for dairy products. Suffice it to say that for the first four months of this year the amount of exchange transactions only with raw cow's milk on the BOOTB is two and a half times higher than in 2019. Such high dynamics, to all appearances, is explained not only by the efficiency of the exchange mechanism itself, but also by the attractive conditions created at the exchange for sellers and buyers of dairy raw materials. Firstly, bidders - milk producers and processors - do not incur any serious costs, as accreditation, training and electronic digital signature on the BOOTB are free, and the exchange fee is only ten kopecks per transaction. Secondly, trading sessions here "are held over the Internet, which, given the current epidemiological situation is a definite plus < ...>. All this attracts new participants to the exchange market"<sup>168</sup> .

Indeed, the coronavirus pandemic, which has already affected the economies of most countries on the planet, requires all market participants to find new forms of working with business partners in order to ultimately achieve success. The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange is no exception in this respect. Thus, literally in May 2020, the first Belarusian-Canadian-British webinar or online seminar Timber: Doing Business in Belarus was held here, the participants of which were more than forty representatives of Canadian and British business circles. It should be noted that 63 companies from the UK and six from Canada have already been accredited to the BTB. The discussion held in the format of a videoconference on the specifics of exchange trade in forest products and the key advantages of the Belarusian exchange platform, including the control over the execution of transactions, transparent pricing, the absence of intermediaries, the possibility of using trade finance instruments, led to the fact that "a number of British and Canadian companies have expressed interest in being accredited to the BTB to participate in exchange trading of lumber and chips"<sup>169</sup>.

It should be noted that the format of the online seminar is used in BUTB today and for training their promising business partners. To this end, again in May 2020 the first training webinar for specialists of the Uzbek Republican

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<sup>168</sup> In January-April through BUTB sold 2.5 times more raw milk than the entire 2019 [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-janvare-aprele-cherez-butb-prodali-v-25-raza-bolshe-syrgo-moloka-chem-za-ves-2019-god-391283-2020/>.

<sup>169</sup> British and Canadian businesses are interested in purchasing Belarusian lumber at exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/britanskij-i-kanadskij-biznes-zainteresovan-v-zakupke-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-na-birzhevnyh-torgah-391809-2020>.

Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange was held here, with which the BTB signed an agreement on strategic cooperation back in September 2018. Thanks to this modern format of interaction Uzbek partners were able to get better acquainted not only with the structure and specifics of the Belarusian system of public procurement, but also with the possibilities of participation of foreign suppliers of goods, works and services in procurement procedures. It should be assumed that the information obtained by the Uzbek side will not only contribute to the intensification of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in the field of electronic procurement, but also "will serve as a guide to action for Uzbek companies planning to operate in the Belarusian market"<sup>170</sup>.

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<sup>170</sup>Belarus and Uzbekistan are developing interaction in the field of electronic procurement [Electronic resource]. -- 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-razvivajut-vzaimodejstvie-v-oblasti-elektronnyh-zakupok-390898-2020/>.



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