

Results-oriented

The results of 2021 showed that the residents of six free economic zones (FEZ) operating in Belarus were able to generate up to 70 percent of investment, up to half of exports and a third of industrial production in their regions. And this despite the fact that at the beginning of 2022, 432 economic entities were registered in free economic zones, implemented projects with investments from more than 30 countries for a total of about seven and a half billion dollars of declared investment. During 2021 25 new residents with total declared investments more than 400 mln. dollars were added to the composition of FEZ in Belarus, one third of them - with foreign capital. In December 2021 the Republic of Belarus approved amendments to the law "On Free Economic Zones", which provided for the transfer of authority to change the boundaries of these preferential areas of land from the head of state to the government. The purpose of these innovations is to reduce the time from the idea to the start of new investment projects in the territories, which are considered to be points of growth in the regions. How is this task solved in practice? This is discussed in the materials of the proposed study.



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The realization of opportunities for international economic ties

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From modernisation to maximum localisation of production and import substitution

As early as the Programme of Activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for 2018-2020 outlined the task to create conditions for the implementation of a policy of rational import substitution and development of import-substituting industries, including by using the potential of small and medium companies to improve the trade balance of the country in order to eventually reach "an annual increase in the import substitution production of at least USD 600 million"¹. Note that in Belarus the main objective of import substitution, which is understood as a state policy aimed at rationalization of imports of goods and services through stimulation of domestic producers, including with participation of foreign capital to organize the production of products that were previously imported, is formulated as "not mechanical substitution of imported goods, but development of competitive national production"². The Belarusian Ministry of Economy estimates that the share of import-substituting products in the country has already approached 40 per cent, or \$20 billion in monetary terms. At the same time, "the share of export sales of import-substituting products has increased to 50%. This suggests that it is not only competitive in the domestic market, but also in demand abroad"³.

1 Programme of Activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for 2018-2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/upload/docs/file253cf6b5b538838e.PDF>

2 Ideas for import substitution [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: http://www.economy.gov.by/ru/idei_importozames-ru/

3 The share of import-substituting products in Belarusian industry is approaching 40% [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dolja-importozameschajuschej-produksii-v-promyshlennosti-belarusi-priblizhaetsja-k-40-379006-2020/>

Among the economic entities of Belarus that have been quite successful in solving import substitution issues in recent years are enterprises of the Bellesbumprom Concern. In 2019, they increased the output of such products by almost 10 percent and produced more than \$530 million worth of them. More specifically, import-substituting products were produced by 26 enterprises in 38 commodity items, including pulp, fibreboard and chipboard, plywood, uncoated paper and cardboard, corrugated and uncoated cardboard, paper sacks, newsprint paper and hygienic paper. In particular, "in 2019 Svetlogorsk CKK produced 145,000 tonnes of pulp, 5.6 times more than in 2018"⁴. Another interesting example in this context is JSC Rechitsadrev. A few years ago, a synthetic resin plant started operating in Rechitsa. One of the uses of this resin is the production of decorative film from ordinary paper used in the manufacture of laminated wood boards. The result: while furniture makers previously had to buy synthetic resin abroad, they have now started exporting the surplus themselves. And in 2019 alone, this generated around three million euros for the company. Overall, "the production of their own resin saved them around €10 million over the entire period"⁵.

The secret of the success of the Group's companies is the modernisation of the basic wood processing plants, which has enabled the range of products to be significantly expanded and their high quality to be ensured. The result: over the past five years, when

4 Enterprises of Bellesbumprom increased production of import-substituting products by 9.3% in 2019 [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-2019-godu-uvlichili-proizvodstvo-importozameschajuschej-produktsii-na-379049-2020/>

5 Kapba, E. In the objective - "OJSC Rechitsadrev". Successful import substitution / E. Kapba // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://dneprovec.by/companynews/2020/02/14/25898>

new plants started operating, the volume of import-substituting products has more than doubled. Continuing to develop this topical priority of activity, the Bellesbumprom Concern sees such promising directions as expanding the range and increasing the output of various types of paper packaging as an alternative to polyethylene packaging, as well as producing high-quality coated cardboard, which is used in significant quantities in the printing, food, pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries. As a result, "in 2020, the Concern's enterprises plan to increase the output of import-substituting products by 30 million dollars to 560 million"⁶ .

Interesting experience in the development of import substitution has also been accumulated at the Energokomplekt production association in Vitebsk, where in 2019 "86% of the total volume worth \$112 million was exported. The Vitebsk enterprise accounts for 70% of all cable products manufactured in Belarus"⁷ . It is pertinent to add that the association, founded in 1992 and now a resident of the free economic zone Vitebsk, employs 650 people, providing innovative products to both domestic and foreign consumers.

A number of examples of successful implementation of the import substitution policy can also be observed at enterprises of the Gomel region. In particular, "one of them is the activity of the Turov Dairy Plant to produce traditional Italian cheeses for sale in the

6 Igor Lyashenko guides Bellesbumprom to more active production of import-substituting products [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9267>

7 Bogacheva, O. Import substitution issues should be paid more attention - Anfimov / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/voprosam-importozameschenija-neobhodimo-udeljat-bolshe-vnimaniya-anfimov-378866-2020/>

national Belarusian market"⁸ . All these examples show that import substitution policy in Belarus, although developing, still has a huge potential, which many market players have to master, focusing on the best practices already available in the country.

This is why the Programme of Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025, adopted in mid-2021, envisaged the strengthening of the policy of rational import substitution, taking into account the production of new high-tech and export-oriented goods, including within the Eurasian Economic Union. This document states that production of import-substituting products in the country will "increase to USD 22.3 billion by the end of the five-year period, with a total output increase of USD 4 billion"⁹ .

In December 2021, the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, while considering the problems of uninterrupted supply of necessary components and materials faced by domestic manufacturers, set a goal to maximize the localization of Belarusian production, including through cooperation with Russia and other countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, given the positive trends observed in the work on import substitution. Indeed, over a five-year period - from 2016 to 2020 - the output of import-substituting products in Belarus increased by about a third, from \$13.6 billion to \$18 billion. Over the same period, its share in total industrial output rose from 34.2 percent to 38 percent. And now

8 Shumel K.V. Development of import-substituting industries in the context of the concept of innovative development of the Republic of Belarus / K.V. Shumel // Women Scientists of Belarus and Kazakhstan : Proceedings of the International Scientific and Practical Conference, Minsk, 1-2 March 2018 / ed. I.V. Kazakova [et al]. - Minsk : RIVSH, 2018. - C. 553.

9 Programme of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025. - Minsk. 2021. - C. 28.

"more than 53 per cent of import-substituting products are not only used within the country, but are also exported. The foreign trade balance in goods under the approved import substitution scheme has improved by \$412 million over the past five years"¹⁰ .

Among the measures to encourage businesses to substitute imports at the meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers were: increasing localisation, developing technological chains, processing local raw materials, attracting small and medium-sized businesses. And "some 170 import-substituting projects worth a total of nearly Br13 billion investments have already been proposed"¹¹ . The Ministry of Economy has chosen 47 most significant projects with investments worth about eight billion Belarusian rubles, which will make it possible to produce import-substituting products worth over nine billion Belarusian rubles.

A busy action plan for the development of import-substituting production for 2022 is again formed in Concern Bellesbumprom, which "defines a target for the production and sale of import-substituting products worth \$876.1 million (which is 31% higher than the national target plan)"¹² . The concern intends to accomplish this task based on the development of new production facilities in the woodworking and pulp-and-paper industries. Today 26 enterprises in Bellesbumprom manufacture products for 50 product lines, "which include cellulose, chipboard, fibreboard (MDF),

10 In the context of sanctions, it is necessary to increase the localisation of production [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10092>

11 Cherviakov: Import substitution takes on particular importance as a tool to counter sanctions [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-importozameschenie-priobretat-osoboe-znachenie-kak-instrument-protivodejstvija-sanktsijam-473567-2021/>

12 Import substitution and cost reduction: chairman of Bellesbumprom on tasks for the year [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/naraschivanie-importozameschenija-i-snizhenie-zatrat-predsedatel-bellesbumproma-o-zadachah-na-god-485290-2022/>

plywood, uncoated paper and cardboard, corrugated cardboard and boxes made of it, paper sacks, uncoated cardboard, newsprint and sanitary paper, articles thereof. In 2021 the growth rate of import-substituting products in the concern is 163% by 2020"¹³ .

Interesting import substitution measures were also implemented in 2021 at Krichevcementoshifer OJSC, one of the largest Belarusian enterprises for the production of building materials. In particular, sandy cement was actively used there for this purpose. In January-October 2021, the supplies of sandy cement increased four times, to 270 thousand tons, compared to 2020. Instead of foreign slag, local "river sand with high silica content was added to this cement. Cement grade and quality remain at the same level, but the prime cost of the product drops substantially"¹⁴ . In other words, at the same capacity, the company has increased the profitability of each ton of cement at the expense of cheap domestic sand.

Another interesting example in this context is the opening at the end of December 2021 at Medplast OJSC in Gomel of a site for the production of vacuum tubes for venous blood sampling. This product "is an import substitute - it has not been produced in the country so far, and the needs of medical institutions were met by import supplies. State-of-the-art equipment has been installed at the station. The plant will manufacture 121 different types of tubes of various sizes and volumes, in compliance with all sanitary

13 Enterprises of Bellesbumprom increased exports by 48.2% in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-2021-godu-uvelichili-eksport-na-482-485259-2022/>

14 Evmenkova, Y. Krichevcementnoshifer exported almost 40% of production for 10 months / Y. Evmenkova // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krichevtsementnoshifer-eksportiroval-za-10-mesjatsev-pochti-40-produktsii-470044-2021/>

standards.¹⁵ . An important detail: Belarus is the fourth country in the world after the USA, China, and Turkey to have full-scale production of such medical products.

The enterprises of the Belarusian Ministry of Industry are now facing particularly demanding tasks in this area as well. In 2022 they will have to produce import-substituting products worth four and a half billion dollars, which is almost 20% more than in 2021. "The solution to this task requires a significant increase in exports - up to 70 percent of the output of goods (\$3.19 billion). Organizations of the Ministry of Industry must master the production of almost 400 new products"¹⁶ . It should be noted that in the current economic situation many enterprises not only acknowledge the emerging problems, but also see them as relevant impulses for technological advancement to open new directions and master new niches of development.

For example, Mogilevliftmash produced the first batch of gearless winches at the electric motor production site in March 2022. "Previously, the company purchased such winches in Spain, but because of sanctions restrictions there are interruptions with the import of winches"¹⁷ . Now the company plans to increase the output of these components and completely abandon imported purchases, as well as to start selling them to other companies. Zenit is also actively

15 Production of vacuum tubes for venous blood collection opened in Gomel [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvodstvo-vakuumnyh-probirok-dlja-zabora-venoznoj-krovi-otkryli-v-gomele-477229-2021/>

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

17 "Mogilevliftmash has mastered the production of new components and intends to completely abandon import purchases [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mogilevliftmash-osvoil-vypusk-novyh-komplektujuschih-i-nameren-polnostju-ujti-ot-importnyh-zakupok-494830-2022/>

working on import substitution, where it is developing high-tech electronic components and control stations, which will make it possible to create high-quality import-substituting components that will find their consumers not only in Belarus, but also in other post-Soviet countries.

There are such enterprises in the Belneftekhim Concern as well. In particular, the framework agreement on further modernization of the enterprise, signed in November 2021 in the framework of the investment forum "Success Mill" held in Mogilev, is intended to update the work on import substitution in OJSC Mogilevkhimvolokno. The fact is that "a company with Turkish capital, BelEmsa, operates in Mogilev. In its production it uses spunlace, which is produced from "Mogilevkhimvolokna" yarns, but in the Rostov region. Then this raw material goes back to Mogilev"¹⁸. As a result of the agreement reached with BelEmsa, the spunlace will now be moved from one end of Mogilev to the other.

The multifaceted efforts to replace imported supplies are also characteristic of the Belarusian energy sector, where there are great opportunities for organisations of the peat industry. Let us remind you that about two million tonnes of peat are extracted in Belarus annually. The priority here is given to the production of peat fuel, which makes it possible to replace the use of imported natural gas and hard coal. At the same time "a special attention is paid to increasing the supplies of these products to the organisations of the cement industry and the housing and communal services. For example, over the past five years, consumption of cut peat in boiler

¹⁸ About 600 jobs will appear in the Mogilev region thanks to new investment projects [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/blagodarja-novym-investproektam-v-mogilevskoj-oblasti-pojavitsja-okolo-600-rabochih-mest-468164-2021/>

houses in the housing and utilities sector has increased 2.5 times: from 25.9 thousand tonnes in 2016 to 75.3 thousand tonnes in 2021¹⁹. By the end of 2025, these volumes are expected to increase to 160 thousand tons. And the use of peat in the cement industry after the implementation of the peat drying combustion project has increased its consumption from 80 thousand tonnes in 2015 to 358 thousand tonnes in 2021. Production of peat products for non-fuel purposes is also growing. In particular, the Brest Oblast is now working on the issue of creating a new type of it - cover material for the cultivation of mushrooms. "The total volume of the domestic market of this product in the country is estimated at about 50,000 tonnes a year. Most of this volume was previously imported. Given the availability of our own raw material base, there are opportunities to substitute for these imports"²⁰.

The Brest Oblast is also working on the development of other areas to replace imported products with domestic ones. In particular, an appeal has been sent to the Academy of Sciences on the need to finalize technologies for beneficiation of refractory clay for OJSC Berezastroymaterialy and quartz sands in the Stolín district. Another interesting example concerns small and medium-sized businesses ready to produce import-substituting products. For instance, a private investor plans to produce raw materials "from granitoids at RUP "Granit" in exchange for Ukrainian basalt raw materials for the Gomel enterprise, which produces mineral wool. Domestic producer of polymer products Riona LLC is ready to expand production of polypropylene disposable tableware. To this end, meat and dairy

19 Karankevich, V. Organizations of the Ministry of Energy strengthened work on import substitution in the conditions of sanctions / V. Karankevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/organizatsii-minenergo-usilili-rabotu-po-importozamescheniju-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-8135>

20 Ibid.

companies are attracting €3 million in investments from the Development Bank"²¹ .

Note that the appeal to the private sector in this context is very relevant. Suffice it to say that in 2021, "637 small and medium businesses [were] involved in the implementation of import-substitution projects in the republic. They produced \$2.5 billion worth of products, or almost 36% of the country's import-substituting output."²² . So the potential here lies quite significant. In 2022, this interaction between the public sector and small- and medium-sized enterprises will be significantly expanded, so that entrepreneurs will be able to organically integrate into cooperative technological chains to replace foreign suppliers who have left the market. Work is being carried out on several fronts at once.

In particular, Belarus has already launched a 24/7 operational contact centre on the basis of the National Agency of Investment and Privatisation. In addition, the Belarusian Fund for Financial Support to Entrepreneurs has created a nationwide contracting information resource to facilitate the search for organisations interested in cooperative cooperation as much as possible. Finally, another important element of all this work, according to the Belarusian Ministry of Economy, is to make "every producer, even the smallest one, aware of this area of cooperation. <...> It is necessary to painstakingly 'manually' promote this idea to every entrepreneur, explaining the benefits and advantages of participation in

21 Shuleika told the deputies of the Brest Regional Council about the main directions of import substitution [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/shulejko-rasskazal-deputatam-brestskogo-oblssoveta-ob-osnovnyh-napravlenijah-importozameschenija-492478-2022/>

22 Rusinovich, O. On the development of import substitution and production cooperation under sanctions / O. Rusinovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/o-razvitii-importozameschenija-i-proizvodstvennoj-kooperatsii-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-8115/>

cooperative chains"²³ . And such work is already underway in Belarus.

For example, in March 2022, Minsk Automobile Plant, for which import substitution is an important factor of "strategic security that contributes to the rhythmic operation of the plants of the entire Belavtomaz holding and dozens of other Belarusian enterprises"²⁴ , held an exhibition and seminar for small and medium businesses. The event was attended by over a hundred representatives from 63 organisations which might be involved in cooperative interaction with the flagship of the Belarusian automotive industry. The company is confident that mastering new positions by entrepreneurs will certainly require both time and investment, but the import substitution products resulting from this interaction will be in demand not only at the Minsk Automobile Plant, but also by other participants of the automotive market both in Belarus and Russia, and in other countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

All these examples show that in 2022 import substitution should become the most important task for every enterprise dealing with imports, in order to be ahead of the curve. That is why all regions of Belarus are now being given hard tasks in this regard, which cannot be missed.

23 Ibid.

24 Kravchenko: sanctions restrictions intensify work on import substitution of components for MAZ [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kravchenko-sanktsionnye-ogranichenija-aktivizirujut-rabotu-po-importozamesheniju-komplektujuschih-492137-2022/>

Optimisation as an impetus for regional growth points

The results of 2021 show that residents of six free economic zones (FEZs) operating in Belarus were able to generate up to 70 percent of investments, up to half of exports of goods and a third of industrial production of their regions. This is despite the fact that "at the beginning of 2022, 432 economic entities were registered in free economic zones, projects with investments from over 30 countries were implemented with a total declared investment of about \$7.5 billion. During 2021, 25 new residents were added to FEZs with a total declared investment of \$441 million, one third of them - with foreign capital (\$401 million)"²⁵. In December 2021 Belarus approved amendments to the law "On Free Economic Zones" (FEZ) that provided for the transfer of authority to change the boundaries of these preferential land plots from the head of state to the government. The purpose of these innovations is to "shorten the time from the idea to the start of new investment projects in areas that are considered to be growth points in the regions"²⁶.

Based on this decision, the Belarusian government in April 2022 adjusted the territory of **FEZ Grodnoinvest**, adding areas that represent areas of high demand for investors and excluding areas that are not promising. As a reminder, this FEZ has already changed its contours in 2018. At that time, Svisloch territories were included in its boundaries for the first time, and industrial parks in Smorgon and Grodno district were expanded. This allowed attracting over one

25 FEZ residents in 2021 generated a fifth of the republic's key indicators [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-sez-v-2021-godu-sformirovali-pjatuju-chast-osnovnyh-respublikanski-pokazatelej-485111-2022/>

26 Zalessky, B. Time for concrete solutions. Chronicle of international cooperation / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 141.

billion dollars of foreign investment into the FEZ since then. This time adjustments have been made to the sites located in Grodno, Svisloch and Smorgon districts as well as in the cities of Lida, Novogrudok, Smorgon, Slonim and Grodno, which should "improve conditions for attracting investment to the regions, engage new industrial sites with an investment capacity of up to \$60 million, provide an opportunity for further effective implementation of investment projects of existing FEZ residents worth over \$120 million"²⁷ .

It should be noted that in 2021 the residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest have already seriously increased both industrial production and export deliveries to near and far abroad countries, as well as attracted a record volume of foreign direct investments. In numbers, it looks like this: the residents' foreign trade turnover has increased by more than 40 percent and exceeded two billion dollars. "The driver of the growth was the export of Belarusian products. Its volume amounted to \$1.4 billion with a growth rate of 146% compared to 2020. The foreign trade surplus amounted to \$721 million, an increase of \$283 million compared to 2020"²⁸ . The geography of supplies is 63 countries. Exports to Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Italy, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and the United States increased significantly. Russia, Poland and Ukraine remained the key markets. Wood and paper products, furniture, foodstuffs, and agricultural products accounted for the lion's share in the volume of products shipped - more than 70 percent. Producers of

²⁷ The government adjusted the boundaries of FEZ Grodnoinvest [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pravitelstvo-skorrektirovalo-granitsy-sez-grodnoinvest-496079-2022/>

²⁸ Exports of FEZ Grodnoinvest grew by 1.5 times in the past year [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-sez-grodnoinvest-za-proshlyj-god-vyros-v-15-raza-494540-2022/>

optical apparatus, chemical products and metal ware also increased their exports. Underpinning these successful performance of FEZ residents is, of course, their proactive investment policy. In 2021, they were able to attract \$160 million in foreign investment. The key investors were Austria, Cyprus, Poland and the Netherlands. In total, the investment vectors of FEZs are already 15 countries. Most of the investments were made in production facilities located in the industrial parks in Smorgon, Svisloch and Grodno.

It is also important that four companies engaged in the chemical, metalworking and logistics industries became new residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest in 2021. Thus, the company Portela with Portuguese investment is implementing a project to build a transport and logistics centre in Grodno district. One more resident, Unis Trade, is busy organizing the production of metal structures in Grodno, where "a manufacturing and warehouse complex will be built and modern equipment for manufacturing various metal structures will be purchased. Production is planned to start by the end of 2022"²⁹. The company OV-PlastSnab is also planning to produce a wide range of synthetic polymer products at the Aulsa site. Finally, in December 2021, LLC "ServicePromPack Group" was registered with an investment project to establish a high-tech enterprise for the production of a wide range of polyolefin packaging for export and other residents of the FEZ to be implemented in the Grandičiai district. "Production of the first batch

²⁹ Logistics, Chemistry and Metalworking: FEZ Grodnoinvest will add 4 new residents in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/logistika-himija-i-metalloobrabotka-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2021-godu-popolnili-4-novyh-rezidenta-481367-2022/>

of products is planned for the second quarter of 2022. It is planned that 45 jobs will be created."³⁰ .

The positive trend of exports and foreign investments continues here in 2022. In particular, in January-March this year, "more than 70% of products sold from here were exported, an increase of 4 percentage points compared to the 1st quarter of 2021. The geography of exports exceeded 60 countries"³¹ . As for foreign investment, in the first quarter of 2022, almost \$135 million was received from 12 countries, including the Netherlands, Cyprus, Austria, the UK, Poland and the United Arab Emirates. "The main volume of investments came from companies in the industrial park of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" in Smorgon district, where global manufacturers successfully operate. More than \$16 million has been attracted by the FEZ residents located in Grodno"³² . Speaking of new residents, it should be said that Unionway has already registered here in 2022, which is implementing a project to build a container terminal near the Svisloch railway freight station. This terminal will "specialise in transshipment of containers from 1520 mm gauge to 1435 mm gauge and vice versa depending on the direction of transportation. The modern equipment will make it possible to organize transfer of containers onto road transport and storage of

30 High-tech chemical production will be created by a new resident of FEZ Grodnoinvest [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vysokotehnologichnoe-himproizvodstvo-sozdast-novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-477539-2021/>

31 Residents of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" paid over Br61 mln of taxes and other dues in January-March [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-za-janvar-mart-uplatili-svyshe-br61-mln-nalogov-i-inyh-sborov-501549-2022/>

32 In January-March the FEZ "Grodnoinvest" received over \$134 mln of foreign investments [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-sez-grodnoinvest-za-janvar-mart-postupilo-bolee-134-mln-inostrannyh-investitsij-501557-2022/>

containers both in the open air and inside the warehouses."³³ . Investments in the project will amount to more than 23 million US dollars. It will create 70 new jobs. Construction of the first phase of the project will begin as early as 2022, and the terminal will start providing services in 2025. A memorandum of intent has also been signed with the Arab company BRIKOIL TRANS-F.Z.E. to develop a transport and logistics terminal in the Grodno Region, worth about a hundred million dollars.

The Polish vector of interaction also remains relevant for FEZs. This is evidenced by the fact that "in 2021, trade turnover between FEZ residents and Polish companies amounted to more than \$266 million, a 147% increase compared to 2020. Since the period when the FEZ has been operating since 2002, it has attracted \$140 million in investments from Poland"³⁴ . Companies with Polish capital are successfully operating here in the building materials industry, wood processing and chemical production. And in April 2022, the FEZ administration signed a cooperation agreement with the Polish company i4-Mobile Sp. z o.o., which will contribute to effective cooperation between the parties.

In April 2022, the borders of sectors in **the FEZ "Vitebsk"** were also optimized, reducing its area by approximately 500 hectares by excluding inefficient and unclaimed areas - floodplains, swamps, non-demarcated land, residential development. At the same time the preferential territory included new promising land plots for implementation of significant investment projects that would create

33 A new FEZ resident, Grodnoinvest, will build a container terminal in Svisloch [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-poastroit-v-svislochi-kontejnernyj-terminal-492911-2022/>

34 FEZ Grodnoinvest expands cooperation with Polish companies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-grodnoinvest-rasshirjaet-sotrudnichesvto-s-polskimi-kompanijami-497707-2022/>

at least 470 jobs. In particular, 14 hectares of land in Vitebsk was added for a project worth over \$94 million to develop the manufacture of cable and wire products that will create at least 320 jobs. Two more FEZ sites appeared in Orsha and Dokshitsky district. In the first case a local investor plans to develop production of concrete mixes and create about 20 working places. In the second one "it is planned to locate an enterprise for processing low-grade wood and producing wood-fuel pellets. The cost of the project is estimated at about \$30 million, and the investor has calculated the possibility of creating about 50 jobs"³⁵ .

Two more sites are included in the free economic zone in the Polotsk district. One of them will house the production of wood pellets, which will cost about \$30 million. The second one is to house innovative production of cross-linked wooden wall and floor slabs for the construction of housing and buildings of various functional purposes, as well as the production of glued laminated timber and fuel pellets with the volume of investments of 60 million dollars. In April 2022, "KimaBel" LLC became a new FEZ resident with a woodworking modernization project, which envisages modernization of production areas and introduction of new technological solutions for innovative export-oriented wood products manufacturing. The new resident, which has been operating in the Polotsk District since 2013 and specializes in the production of beams and boards and the sale of sawdust and chips, "markets of

35 Optimisation of the boundaries of the Vitebsk FEZ sectors will attract more than \$200 million in investments [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/optimizatsija-granits-sektorov-sez-vitebsk-pozvolit-privlech-bolee-200-mln-investitsij-496811-2022/>

the Middle East, East and South-East Asia are being explored as promising export destinations for products"³⁶ .

Speaking about the new residents of the FEZ, it should be recalled that the first one here in 2022 was BRR Arshie Eco Health LLC, an enterprise with Iranian capital for the production of biodegradable tableware and packaging. "Implementation of the project is aimed at gradual reduction in the use of polymer packaging and its substitution with environmentally safe packaging, which is defined as one of the priorities of social and economic development of Belarus"³⁷ . It is expected that by the end of 2022, the new resident will have solved all design issues of the production site in the Zhurzhevo sector on the outskirts of Vitebsk, and in 2023 will already start construction of the facility, where about 25 new jobs are expected to be created.

All in all, by the end of April, there were already 53 resident companies registered in the FEZ "Vitebsk", which are implementing projects with the participation of investors from 14 countries. And they do it very successfully. For instance, the Polotsk Forestry enterprise managed to triple its output in 2021 and the Energokomplekt Production Association, LLC more than tripled its output. Vityaz, OJSC has increased export supplies of its products 2.7 times over the same period. Export of services of the Raw Materials-Bel Ltd grew by almost 10 times. In this connection, it is impossible not to mention Polymerkonstruktsia Ltd., a renowned

36 A new resident of FEZ "Vitebsk" will create production of innovative wood products [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-vitebsk-sozdast-proizvodstvo-innovatsionnyh-izdelij-iz-drevesiny-498382-2022/>

37 The first resident with Iranian capital is registered in FEZ Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervyj-rezident-s-iranskim-kapitalom-zaregistrovan-v-sez-vitebsk-484100-2022/>

manufacturer of water treatment equipment and technologies, which has ensured nearly double growth of production output, the same increase in sales revenue, while the net profit has increased by almost six times. "The enterprise has been active in foreign markets, having more than doubled deliveries to foreign partners"³⁸, and it has also demonstrated high innovative activity, having shipped innovative products worth three million Belarusian rubles to its consumers, which is 23(!) times higher than the same indicator of 2020. All these facts indicate that the FEZ is very serious about achieving high indicators in 2022 as well. This is confirmed by the performance of FEZ residents in the first quarter of this year. Suffice it to say that over these three months the industrial output here has grown by almost a quarter compared to the same period of 2021. Besides, "in January-March the residents attracted about 31 million foreign investments, of which more than \$16 million on a net basis"³⁹.

The active international activity of FEZs should contribute to maintaining competitive advantages and favourable conditions for doing business. An important step in this direction is the signing in April 2022 of a memorandum of cooperation by the administrations of FEZ "Vitebsk" and the pilot zone of regional trade and economic cooperation "China-SCO", in which the parties have outlined promising areas for cooperation. One of them is "promotion of investment opportunities of FEZ "Vitebsk" and the pilot zone "SCO

38 The best residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" according to the results of 2021 are seven enterprises [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/luchshimi-rezidentami-sez-vitebsk-po-itogam-2021-goda-priznany-sem-predpriyatij-487020-2022/>

39 Residents of FEZ Vitebsk increased production by a quarter in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-v-pervom-kvartale-narastili-na-chetvert-proizvodstvo-produktsii-496741-2022/>

China" as promising platforms for international cooperation under the initiative "One Belt, One Road"⁴⁰ . It should be noted that the China-SCO pilot zone in Shandong province, with which the Vitebsk region is linked by a cooperation agreement, appeared in 2018. It is located 40 kilometres from Qingdao city in the coastal part of Jiaozhou city. Thanks to its connection to the land, sea and air routes of this Chinese region, it represents a new platform for the implementation of trade, economic and innovative cooperation projects between the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states and their partners, which includes Belarus, which opens up very attractive prospects for the development of cooperation.

In April 2022, adjustments were also made to the territory of **FEZ Minsk**, where "the unclaimed territories with a total area of 140.01 ha, located in Minsk city and Minsk region, were excluded from the boundaries of this free economic zone. 140.01 hectares located in Minsk and the Minsk region"⁴¹ . Seven new enterprises with investments not only from Belarus, but also from Russia, Italy, Romania and Bulgaria appeared here in 2021. "Foreign direct investment on a net basis amounted to \$58.1 million. More than a thousand jobs were created at the enterprises of the Minsk free economic zone in 2021"⁴² . And exports of goods by FEZ residents to 85 countries grew by almost 40 percent and reached a record \$2 billion. It is noteworthy that registration of new residents will be an

40 FEZ Vitebsk and the China-SCO pilot zone will develop trade and investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-pilotnaja-zona-kitaj-shos-budut-razvivat-torgovo-investitsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-499010-2022/>

41 The boundaries of the Minsk FEZ are adjusted [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/granitsy-sez-minsk-skorrektirovany-496357-2022/>

42 Exports of goods by Minsk FEZ residents reached a record \$2 billion last year [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/eksport-tovarov-rezidentov-sez-minsk-v-proshlom-godu-dostig-rekordnyh-2-mlrd-486329-2022/>

active process in 2022. Thus, in January the first resident registered in the FEZ "Minsk" in 2022 became "3D Paperco" Ltd, a company with Chinese investment, which will implement here the project for the production of environmentally friendly packaging made of cardboard. The new resident will "produce all kinds of disposable cardboard packaging for fast food outlets. The project is oriented both to supply the Belarusian market and to export"⁴³ .

In the **Brest free economic zone** the first resident registered in 2022 is Soyuz Greenhouse Complex LLC, an enterprise with Belarusian-Polish capital, which was allocated a land plot of about 60 hectares near Brest airport in January this year. "In three years there will appear a high-tech greenhouse complex with the capacity of over 30 thousand tons of vegetables a year. Annual production volume will be around €33m."⁴⁴ . The new resident plans to invest €75 million in the project, and create 450 new jobs. Some 80 per cent of vegetable production is expected to be shipped to the Eurasian Economic Union and other foreign markets. The second resident of this free economic zone was registered in March 2022 - LLC "Dalmio", which will implement an investment project related to production of processing equipment, lines and components for the food industry. In this connection, "the enterprise has acquired unused production areas on the territory of the free economic zone. The new resident intends to invest at least Br1.5 million over three years. The project envisages expanding production, increasing the

43 The first resident in 2022 registered in FEZ Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervogo-v-2022-godu-rezidenta-zaregistrovali-v-sez-minsk-480078-2022/>

44 A new resident of Brest FEZ will engage in vegetable production [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyj-rezident-sez-brest-zajmetsja-proizvodstvom-ovoschej-480900-2022/>

number of jobs"⁴⁵ , as well as increasing exports and solving import substitution tasks.

The Gomel-Raton FEZ is also showing good results in the development of the export component in 2022, with 67 residents registered as of 1 April. In the first three months of this year, they increased their exports by almost 30 percent. To be absolutely precise, here "the share of deliveries outside of Belarus amounted to almost 70 percent of the total sales revenues"⁴⁶ .

All these facts prove once again that even in the current difficult conditions FEZs continue to be an effective tool for accelerated development of Belarusian regions, "where today one can build a successful business"⁴⁷ and efficiently solve urgent issues of the Belarusian economy. This is the task that every FEZ faces now. After all, "it is in the preferential zones that the investment, innovation, production and export potential of the country gets concentrated expression in the form of promising business projects"⁴⁸ , which, in turn, contribute to the sustainable and dynamic development of the Belarusian state.

45 New resident registered in FEZ Brest [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogo-rezidenta-zaregistrovali-v-sez-brest-490538-2022/>

46 The residents of FEZ Gomel-Raton increased exports by almost a third in the first quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-pochti-na-tret-velichili-eksport-v-i-kvartale-495702-2022/>

47 Zalesky, B.L. Amendments to the law as an incentive for investors / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XVIII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2022", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 7.

48 Cherviakov: it is necessary to preserve competitive advantages and a favourable business climate in FEZs [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-nuzhno-sohranit-konkurentnye-preimuschestva-i-blagoprijatnyj-biznes-klimat-v-sez-495990-2022/>

The goal is a qualitatively new level of cooperation

In April 2022, a Belarusian government delegation paid a visit to Uzbekistan, which resulted in the signing of contracts worth more than USD 25 million. An equally important outcome was that Minsk and Tashkent stated that new points of growth in cooperation had been found. And "the task now is to fill it with new content"⁴⁹ to bring the annual volume of mutual trade up to half a billion dollars.

The beginning of 2022 showed that the two sides are confidently approaching their goal. While in 2021 the trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan increased by nearly 8% and exceeded \$300 million, with a surplus for the Belarusian side of nearly \$190 million, "in January-February 2022 the trade turnover totaled \$53.5 million and increased by 9.9% compared to the same period in 2021.⁵⁰ . Trade and investments are expected to increase further, primarily through the implementation of joint cooperation projects.

It should be noted that 103 organizations with Belarusian investments have already been registered in Uzbekistan, as well as representative offices of Avtopromsnabspedition LLC, Softclub LLC, AmantisMed LLC, and Belvitunifarm LLC. One assembly plant of Belarusian equipment with participation of Belarusian capital - JV LLC AMKODOR-AGROTEXMASH was set up there. In particular, "production of loaders has been established at the

49 Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Uzbekistan can increase trade and investment, growth points found [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10260>

50 Belarus and Uzbekistan intensify the implementation of production and cooperation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-aktivizirujut-realizatsiju-proizvodstvenno-koooperatsionnyh-proektov-495026-2022/>

Tashkent Tractor Plant, which demonstrates the demand for these products in the local and regional market"⁵¹ . In addition, cooperation between MAZ and KRANTAS GROUP, MTZ and Uzavtosanoat in the production of motor vehicles and tractors continues. And the Marko company is implementing a joint footwear production project in Uzbekistan. Svetlogorsk plant of welding electrodes is implementing an investment project in this country to produce welding electrodes. For this purpose in Tashkent is created IE LLC "MONOLITH ASIA"⁵² . And these ties continue to be actively strengthened.

Thus, in April 2022, the official distributor of the Minsk Automobile Plant in this Central Asian country - MAZ-TASHKENT LLC - set up industrial assembly of MAZ vehicles from SKD kits. "The first model was the chassis MAZ-5337. The localization of the assembly plant in Uzbekistan will allow Minsk Automobile Plant to expand its presence in the market of the Central Asian countries and Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan in the future"⁵³ . And during the Uzbek-Belarusian business forum held in April in Tashkent, the MAZ distributor "signed a contract with the PE OLIY TEXNIK to purchase 41 MAZ trucks. <...> The contract amount exceeded \$3 million"⁵⁴ .

51 Machinery, equipment, scientific and technical developments. What Belarus will present at the exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/tehnika-oborudovanie-nauchno-tehnicheskije-razrabotki-chto-belarus-prezentuet-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-8158/>.

52 Roman Golovchenko: Belarus-Uzbekistan trade turnover needs to increase to at least \$500 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10257>

53 . Minsk Automobile Plant has set up machinery assembly in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtozavod-naladil-sborku-tehniki-v-uzbekistane-496181-2022/>

54 "MAZ-Tashkent has signed a major contract with an Uzbek company to supply 41 vehicles [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

The Minsk Tractor Plant is also actively increasing its presence in the Uzbek market, having increased its machinery supplies by almost a quarter in the first quarter of 2022. "In total, more than \$10 million worth of machinery was shipped"⁵⁵. It is interesting that during the entire year of 2021, \$31 million worth of Belarusian tractors were shipped to the Uzbek partners. And in late April and early May, a sales and service centre for Belarusian agricultural machinery was opened in Tashkent, which combines "a showroom and sales centre, a service centre and production facilities"⁵⁶. The bank's branch is also located here and focuses on providing lending and leasing services. It is noteworthy that the Belarusian side plans to open similar centres in other Uzbek regions.

Belarus-Uzbekistan cooperation in the implementation of joint projects in medicine is also very promising. One of them is Belfarm, a joint venture to produce antibiotics, which has already invested over USD 8 million. In addition, the Belarusian side has offered its partners to set up a joint venture for blood processing. An important detail: "Today the organizations of the Belfarmprom holding have 166 registration certificates for medicines in Uzbekistan. Members of the holding have signed 12 contracts with Uzbek partners for supplies of pharmaceutical products. By the end of 2021 the export

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-tashkent-podpisal-krupnyj-kontrakt-s-uzbekskej-kompaniej-na-postavku-41-avtomobilja-498224-2022/>

55 MTZ increased its machinery deliveries to Uzbekistan by more than 23% in Q1 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-v-i-kvartale-narastil-postavki-tehniki-v-uzbekistan-bolee-chem-na-23-499321-2022/>

56 A sales and service centre for Belarusian agricultural machinery has opened in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tsentr-prodazh-i-servisnogo-obluzhivanija-beloruskoj-selhoztehniki-otkrylsja-v-tashkente-499290-2022/>

of products of the Belfarmprom holding companies to Uzbekistan amounted to \$14 million, in January-February 2022 - \$3 million"⁵⁷ .

If we talk about other prospects for cooperation, there are several other areas. One of them concerns electric transport. The fact is that "Tashkent is considering resuming the tram service. The Belarusian side is ready to provide comprehensive solutions with the necessary infrastructure, planning and supply of rolling stock"⁵⁸ . If the decision on this matter is made, then the creation of a joint production facility on the Uzbek land will become realistic. The issue of supplying wooden houses from Belarus to Uzbekistan, where "it is a very fashionable trend now <...>, there is very great demand"⁵⁹ . There may be good prospects for the Belarusian newsprint factory, which has an assembly line production of such houses.

In the same context, it should be recalled that at the end of April 2022, the parties considered "the possibility of organising supplies of Belarusian peat substrates to the forestry industries of Uzbekistan for further use as a basis for the cultivation of plantation seedlings"⁶⁰ . Given the considerable experience of Belarusian peat companies in this area, and the export of the peat industry of Beltogaz increased by more than a quarter in 2021, it can be

57 Belarus and Uzbekistan discuss deepening cooperation in the pharmaceutical industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-obsuzhdajut-uglublenie-sotrudnichestva-v-farmotrasli-498163-2022/>

58 Roman Golovchenko: Belarus-Uzbekistan trade turnover needs to increase to at least \$500 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10257>

59 Golovchenko: Belarus is working on supplying wooden houses to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-prorabatyvaet-postavki-v-uzbekistan-derevjannyh-domov-498185-2022/>

60 Belarus interested in supplying peat substrates to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-torfjanyh-substratov-v-uzbekistan-499019-2022/>

predicted that Uzbekistan will become the 25th country to supply Belarusian peat as early as this year.

Belarusian light industry enterprises, which produce worsted, linen, synthetic and artificial fabrics with various properties, pile fabrics, corsetry and hosiery, see their prospects for increasing supplies of demanded products to the Uzbek market. These are Orsha flax mill, Mogotex and Kamvol, which became participants of the 4th international textile and fashion industry exhibition UzTextileExpo Spring 2022 held in April 2022 in Tashkent. They were joined by another five Belarusian chemical and petrochemical enterprises, which demonstrated to the numerous visitors of the business forum "man-made and chemical fibers for textile production, technical textiles for construction, polymer products, chemicals and fertilizers for agriculture, glass fiber"⁶¹. In short, everything that arouses increased interest among the partners from Uzbekistan and could become the basis for new contracts.

Speaking about the participation of Belarusian exporters in foreign exhibitions, it should be noted that in 2021, when participating in exhibitions and forums organized by Belinterexpo, an exhibition company of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, they signed 86 agreements and contracts worth over \$80 million. At the same time, "agreements and contracts worth \$15 million were signed as part of the national expositions"⁶². It is important to note that the national expositions organized as part of

61 Belarusian light industry enterprises present their potential in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-legkoj-promyshlennosti-prezentujut-svoj-potencial-v-uzbekistane-498369-2022/>

62 Domestic enterprises signed contracts worth \$80 million at Belinterexpo forums and exhibitions [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-forumah-i-vystavkah-belinterexpo-otechestvennye-predpriyatija-podpisali-kontrakty-na-80-mln-476100-2021/>

the Uzbekistan exhibitions - "INNOPROM. The largest industrial week and UzProdExpo/UzAgroExpo.

Speaking about the first of these, it should be noted that the "Great Industrial Week in Uzbekistan", held in April 2021 in Tashkent, was the largest event in this Central Asian country after a break caused by the pandemic. The exhibition then brought together "over 200 companies working in the fields of mechanical engineering, metallurgy, energy, pharmaceuticals, chemical industry and medicine from Armenia, Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and the EAEC countries and Central Asia"⁶³. The Belarusian pavilion included 65 companies and organizations exhibiting engineering, metallurgy, chemical, pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, scientific developments and consumer goods. One of the concrete results of their participation in this exhibition was "signing of a letter of intent by a subsidiary of Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan, MAZ-Tashkent LLC, to supply chassis and vehicle assembly kits to the Uzbek market for \$10 million. Also a contract was concluded with a private Uzbek company to supply 50 MAZ vehicles for the total amount of \$3 million"⁶⁴. It is interesting that in April 2022 the Uzbek exhibition was held under a new name, "INNOPROM. Central Asia, and included six thematic sections: mechanical engineering, metallurgy, energy, chemicals, industrial automation, pharmaceuticals and medicine. There was also a plenary session entitled "Central Asia.

63 More than 20 Belarusian enterprises took part in a major industrial exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-20-belorusskih-predpriyatij-prinjali-uchastie-v-krupnoj-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-436286-2021/>

64 Zalesky, B. The key task is development. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 40-41.

The Space of Technological Breakthrough" and specialized sessions on infrastructure projects, logistics, financial instruments, and education. Belarusian participation in this business forum was no less representative due to the fact that "Belarusian exports to Uzbekistan have grown sixfold in five years. Machinery from Belarus (tractors and tractor units, trucks), chemical products, foodstuffs, ferrous and nonferrous metals, energy resources, and oil products are in the highest demand. In total, Belarus supplies 360 commodity items of all industries to Uzbekistan"⁶⁵ .

As for the UzAgroExpo and UzProdExpo agricultural and food exhibitions, held in Tashkent in November 2021, they are the largest industry business forums in Uzbekistan, which this time brought together 120 companies from 18 countries. The national pavilion of Belarus, where 17 companies exhibited, demonstrated the export capabilities of domestic enterprises in three main areas: food industry; agricultural machinery; and science. The first one included beef in lingonberry sauce, soft cheese made according to the Italian technology from ricotta whey, high-quality coffee produced according to its own patented technology, peanut paste with sea salt, fruit bars made from a mixture of dried prunes, dried apples, oat flakes and syrup; protein milk chocolate with increased protein content; and "Belarusian whisky, an alcoholic blended drink made from artesian water on the basis of national cereals - rye, wheat, barley malt"⁶⁶ . Scientific developments in agro-industrial

65 The Belarusian national pavilion will be represented at the INNOPROM' exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskij-natsionalnyj-paviljon-budet-predstavlen-na-vystavke-innoprom-v-uzbekistane-480872-2022/>

66 National Pavilion of Belarus presented at exhibitions in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyj-paviljon-belarusi-predstavlen-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-471340-2021/>

and food spheres, including technologies for rehabilitation of damaged soils, methods of production of innovative fermented milk drinks, cosmetics, have been demonstrated to numerous visitors of the exhibitions by Belarusian State University, Belarusian National Technical University, Belarusian-Russian University and Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies. Minsk Automobile Plant and Lidselmash also brought innovative equipment to the Uzbek capital - a specially designed dump truck MAZ-65012K for the Uzbek market, "with a metal body, which tilts using a hydraulic mechanism, and is designed for transportation of loose materials, including agricultural purposes"⁶⁷ , and new modifications of a cultivator for cotton cultivation - the most popular crop in this Central Asian country. A concrete result of the work at these exhibitions was "an agreement between the official distributor of the Minsk automobile plant in Uzbekistan the company MAZ-Tashkent and the enterprise Nurafshon Maxsus Texnika on the delivery of machinery products to the amount of \$1 million"⁶⁸ . At the Uzbekistan-Belarus agrarian forum, agreements were reached on construction and reconstruction of a dairy complex using Belarusian technologies on Uzbek soil.

Another important area of interaction between the two countries is the intensification of partnership Belarusian-Uzbek regional ties, which are becoming one of the most important areas for the development of cooperation in the current environment. The

67 Minsk Automobile Plant presented a new gas-powered dump truck at an exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. -2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtozavod-predstavil-novyj-gazovyj-samosval-na-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-471501-2021/>

68 MAZ has signed a \$1 million contract to supply machinery to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-podpisal-kontrakt-na-postavku-tehniki-v-uzbekistan-na-1-mln-471344-2021/>

first Belarus-Uzbekistan Regions Forum, which was held in Minsk in July 2019 and opened up new opportunities for partnership in such areas as industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex and food industry, and brought together "over two hundred representatives of such regions as Andijan, Bukhara, Djizak, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana and Tashkent regions" from the Uzbek side alone.⁶⁹

On the Belarusian side, one of the active participants in this forum was the Vitebsk Region, whose positive dynamics of trade and economic cooperation with its Uzbek partners has been observed over the past few years. Suffice it to say that in 2019, Uzbekistan joined the list of Vitebsk Region's key partners among the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Then the foreign trade turnover between the parties increased by more than a quarter and exceeded nine million dollars. Exports from the Belarusian region "grew by half to \$6.7 million. Food exports amounted to \$0.9 million, or 13.4% of the total. <...> Cheese and dairy products from the Postavy Dairy Plant, Verkhnedvinsk Butter and Cheese Plant, Polotsk Dairy Plant, as well as meat products from the Vitebsk meat processing plant are already familiar to Uzbek consumers and are in good demand with them.⁷⁰ . In addition, baby food, a wide range of vaccines to combat pet diseases and pharmaceuticals were successfully supplied to the Uzbek market from the Vitebsk Region at that time.

69 Zalessky, B. Sustainability as a growth formula. Features of international cooperation based on the innovation component / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 37.

70 Tikhonov, A. Belarus-Uzbekistan Agrarian Forum: afterword / A. Tikhonov // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://produkt.by/story/belorusско-uzbekskiy-agrarnyy-forum-posleslovie>

In 2021, Belarus' trade with Central Asia exceeded USD 12.5 million, with Vitebsk's export reaching almost USD 10 million, including medicines, cattle meat, dried milk and whey, butter, cheese, as well as polyethylene, plastic and fiberglass products, and fiber optic cables. In addition, a joint venture of the Marko leather and footwear holding company has been launched on Uzbek soil. Other manufacturing cooperation projects are on the horizon. In particular, since 2020 the Vitebsk Oblast has been holding talks on opening a joint venture with BelVitunifarm in Uzbekistan, which will initially sell drugs and later will start manufacturing them. A representative office of the Belarusian manufacturer of veterinary drugs was opened in Tashkent in December 2021. And already "financing issues of the project are being worked out in order to reach the sales of drugs in the amount of \$2 million per year"⁷¹ .

Other promising areas of cooperation between enterprises of the region and its Uzbek partners in March 2022 included deliveries of fruit and vegetable and meat and dairy products, as well as cooperation in such segments of the industrial sector as mechanical engineering, energy, chemical and gas industries. An important role here should be played by the activation of partnership relations between the Vitebsk Oblast and a number of Uzbek regions, especially Namangan Oblast. The fact is that Vitebsk and Namangan regions signed an agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural areas in July 2019 within the framework of the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, which has already been mentioned above. This document should

71 Pushnyakova, A. Uzbekistan can become a springboard for Vitebsk Oblast enterprises to supply Asia / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-mozhet-stat-dlja-predpriyatij-vitebskoj-oblasti-tramplinom-dlja-postavok-v-aziju-491940-2022/>

help build mutually beneficial trade and economic ties between enterprises and organizations of the regions, provide "comprehensive support to business structures in the conclusion of mutually acceptable contracts for the supply of goods and services. It also deals with joint business seminars, exhibitions and fairs with the participation of representatives of entrepreneurial and business circles"⁷² .

The agreement on cooperation between the administrations of free economic zones (FEZ) Vitebsk and Cosonsoy-Pharm, signed at the same time, is also intended to expand possible areas of trade, economic and investment cooperation between the Belarusian and Uzbek regions, which not only creates a basis for sharing experience and promoting partnerships between FEZ residents, but also forms the basis for the parties to pool their capacities in conducting joint activities. Note that Cosonsoy-Pharm was among seven pharmaceutical FEZs established in May 2017 in six Uzbek regions. In addition to it, "Nukus-Pharm appeared then in Karakalpakstan, Zomin-Pharm in Jizzak oblast, <...> Sirdaryo-Pharm in Syrdarya, Boisun-Pharm in Surkhandarya and Bustonlik-Pharm and Parkent-Pharm in Tashkent oblast"⁷³ . They are subject to special tax, customs and currency regimes. They all specialise in the development of companies in the pharmaceutical field. Several FEZ "Vitebsk" residents are also engaged in this sphere. That is why "attraction of investments into projects on creation of production of medicines, medical products is one of the most promising directions

72 Namangan region will cooperate with Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: https://nampravda.uz/ekonomika/namanganskaya_oblast_budet_sotrudnichat_s_vitebskom.html

73 Seven pharmaceutical FEZs are being established in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2017/05/05/pharm/>

of cooperation between the administrations of the two FEZs⁷⁴. And there is every reason to believe that this interaction between the Belarusian and Uzbek free economic zones will further strengthen the emerging partnership between the Vitebsk and Namangan regions.

The documents that were signed in April 2022 during the visit of the Belarusian governmental delegation to Tashkent can also be used to identify other areas of Belarus-Uzbekistan cooperation that will be stepped up in the very near future. Thus, the Ministry of Innovation Development of Uzbekistan signed a memorandum on cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the executive program of scientific, technical and innovation cooperation for 2022-2023 with the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus. Two significant documents have also been signed by the Belarusian Ministry of Agriculture and Food: a memorandum of understanding with the State Committee for Veterinary and Livestock Development of Uzbekistan; a road map for further development of cooperation in agricultural science, education and innovation development for 2022-2023 with the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan, which, in turn, also signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on further development of science and technology. Finally, an agreement on cooperation in the field of livestock breeding was signed by Belplemzhivodobstvo and the Uzbekchorvanasl agency.

74 FEZ Vitebsk and Uzbek Cosonsoy-Pharm will develop investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-uzbekskaia-kosonsoj-farm-budut-razvivat-investitsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-352766-2019/>

Back in the autumn of 2018, Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an intergovernmental agreement on social and economic cooperation for 2019-2023, which "reflects key agreements at the highest level to develop Belarusian-Uzbek relations and bring them to a qualitatively new level"⁷⁵. As we can see, the parties are fulfilling the tasks set forth in this document very actively and successfully.

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⁷⁵ Zalesky, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. A view from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 228.

Growth points produce results

In 2021, the countries of Asia retained their role as points of growth in Belarus's foreign policy and foreign trade activities. The implementation of the course towards the reorientation of Belarus' trade and economic cooperation with the countries of the far arc "enabled Belarus to increase its exports to this region to USD 2.4 billion in 2021 (114.3% up from USD 2.1 billion in 2020"⁷⁶ . Meanwhile, active engagement with many countries of the Asian continent is also observed in 2022. These include Vietnam, India and Syria.

The year 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and **Vietnam**. This South-East Asian country is among those with which the Belarusian side is developing large-scale engagement in all areas of bilateral cooperation, and "diversification of trade and deepening of economic cooperation with them is an important prerequisite for the growth of the export-oriented Belarusian economy"⁷⁷ . This is evidenced, in particular, by the fact that in 2021, in order to expand its diplomatic presence in the financial and industrial centres of the Asian continent, the Belarusian government decided to open a consulate general in the Vietnamese city of Ho Chi Minh City.

It should also be recalled that in 2021 the trade turnover between the two countries exceeded 200 million dollars. "Belarus exported potash fertilizers, livestock products, instrumentation

76 Review of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Belarus and the Activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/c0b615e3c82db7a8.html>

77 Zaleski, B. Regional community journalism. Theory and practice / B. Zaleski. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2013. - C. 99-100.

products, medicines and cosmetics"⁷⁸ . And in terms of development of industrial cooperation in the province of Hung Yen "key Belarusian-Vietnamese projects are being implemented, including the assembly of MAZ trucks (JV Maz-Asia LLC) and production of dairy products from Belarusian raw materials (Au Viet Milk)"⁷⁹ . The entry into force in 2021 of "an additional protocol to the industrial assembly agreement with Vietnam, which creates favorable conditions for localization and development of the assembly production of MAZ"⁸⁰ was important in this connection. And the supply of Belarusian tractors to work in Vietnam's rice fields and quarry machinery of the Belarusian Automobile Plant is under development. In addition, Vietnam is interested in organizing the production of fire-fighting equipment and protective clothing for firefighters using Belarusian technologies. Specifically, in April 2022, the two sides already discussed "practical steps for cooperation in the organization of joint production of Belarusian special-purpose machinery in Vietnam, as well as the manufacture of outfits for Vietnamese firefighting services"⁸¹ .

Another area of Belarusian-Vietnamese engagement that is likely to become significantly more active in 2022 is food supplies from Belarus. Back in 2020, after all the stages of approval and

78 Vietnamese ambassador sees potential for doubling trade turnover with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/posol-vjetnama-vidit-potencial-dlja-udvoenija-tovarooborota-s-belarusju-493021-2022/>.

79 Belarus and Vietnam discuss prospects for the development of joint ventures [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-vjetnam-obsudili-perspektivy-razvitiya-sovmestnyh-predpriyatij-478965-2022/>.

80 Review of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Belarus and the Activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/c0b615e3c82db7a8.html>

81 Belarus and Vietnam are working on the possibility of joint production of equipment for fire services [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-vjetnam-prorabatyvajut-vozmozhnost-sovmestnogo-proizvodstva-ekipirovki-dlja-pozharnyh-sluzhb-494398-2022/>

certification, Belarus started fully-fledged work on supplies of Belarusian dairy products to Vietnam. Similar efforts are now underway to certify Belarusian meat products - pork and beef - in the Vietnamese market. And there is every reason to believe that 2022 will be a kind of "growth point" in the development of this type of Belarusian supplies.

The collective stand of the Belgospisheprom concern at the 31st international exhibition Vietnam Expo, one of the largest in this region of the Asian continent, held in April 2022 and attended by over 350 companies from 16 countries, including Russia, China, the United States, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Cuba, will give an idea of what exports from Belarus to this Southeastern Asian country will be in the near future. The following 13 enterprises of the Concern "presented their products in Hanoi: Krinitsa, Belsolod, Spartak, Minskkristall, Minsk Sparkling Wine Factory, Slodych, Kommunarka, Krasny Pospelik, Mashpischeprod, Lidapischkontsy, Malorit cannery, Minsk Margarine Factory and Pinsk Winery"⁸². And not just presented. For example, Belsolod OJSC even signed a contract to supply light malt with the Trust & Future Viet Nam Joint Stock Company.

An important detail: the Belarusian national exposition received the "Special Guest" status at this exhibition, which "implies central placement in the exhibition hall, active advertising and information support and large-scale congress events, including the Belarusian-Vietnamese business forum"⁸³ aimed at finding business

82 Belgospisheprom's enterprises presented their products at an exhibition in Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-belgospisheproma-predstavili-produktsiju-na-vystavke-vo-vjetname-495887-2022/>

83 A national exposition of Belarus will be presented at the Vietnam Expo in April [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

partners and concluding export contracts. This status was very convenient for the scientific and technical section of the Belarusian exposition, where over a hundred innovations in hi-tech equipment were exhibited. The Belarusian State University accounted for about 30 of them - food additives, pharmaceuticals, and technological equipment. Among them are "Cisplacel", "Prospidelong", "Temodex" anti-tumour drugs to counteract malignant tumours of the head, neck and stomach cancers, and "Ptich-M" medical unit for general hyperthermia to treat oncological diseases of internal organs⁸⁴. An innovative series of biopreparations for the treatment and prevention of diseases in farm animals also attracted the attention of visitors to the exhibition. Finally, another exhibition novelty of BSU specialists is Smart Windows. This invention, which has no analogues in the former Soviet Union, protects the room from sunlight, the penetration of ultraviolet radiation and partially blocks the infrared, which allows you to do without curtains and blinds. So, the Belarusian side has something to offer to its Vietnamese partners in the field of scientific and technical and innovative developments, which, no doubt, will be reflected in new contracts.

Speaking about **India, first of all**, it should be recalled that April 2022 also marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and that South Asian country. Minsk views the development of cooperation with India as "one of the priorities of Belarus's foreign policy in Asia. Today, India is a powerful modern state with a developed economy, big market and

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-budet-predstavlena-na-vietnam-expo-v-aprele-485336-2022/>

84 About 30 S&T developments will be presented by BSU at the International Exhibition VietnamExpo-2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/okolo-30-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-razrabotok-predstavit-bgu-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-vietnamexpo-2022-495450-2022/>

serious scientific and industrial potential,⁸⁵ . And the existing experience of diplomatic relations in both multilateral and bilateral formats shows that "India is among those partner countries of Belarus in Asia, large-scale engagement with which is developing in all areas of cooperation"⁸⁶ .

By developing interaction on the principles of equality, trust and respect, the parties have been able to achieve an annual turnover of more than half a billion dollars in 2019-2021. But "as in any relationship, there are areas that are not fully developed. This is especially true of trade and economic relations"⁸⁷ . Therefore, the year 2022 can be called the time for identifying new areas of development in cooperation between Belarus and India. And Belarusian regions are now very active in this process.

For example, **the Grodno region** plans to significantly strengthen cooperation with India in pharmaceuticals, high-tech and education. In this regard, the project to build a pharmaceutical plant in Skidel with Indian capital has great potential. The facility has been built. Now <...> it is important to jointly bring it to a sustainable operation, ensure the expansion of the product range and realise its export potential⁸⁸ . As far as cooperation in education is concerned, 150 Indians are studying at Grodno State Medical

85 Andreichenko: Belarus-India relations are developing on the principles of equality, trust and respect [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/andreichenko-otnosheniya-belarusi-i-indii-razvivajutsja-na-printsipah-ravenstva-doverija-i-uvazhenija-479047-2022/>

86 Zalesky, B. International relations and media. A View from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2014. - C. 452.

87 Kochanova: India is a long-standing friend and reliable partner for Belarus in Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kochanova-indija-dlja-belarusi-davnij-drug-i-nadezhnyj-partner-v-azii-482540-2022/>

88 Pharmaceuticals, IT and Education: Grodno Region Increases Cooperation with India [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/farmatsevtika-it-sfera-i-obrazovanie-grodnenskaja-oblast-naraschivaet-sotrudnichestvo-s-indiej-485022-2022/>

University this academic year alone. There are also them at the Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno. And their number is likely to increase further. New joint projects in pharmaceuticals, chemical industry, agricultural machinery and food production, including dairy products, will not go unnoticed in the near future.

In the Gomel Region, the main points of growth in cooperation with India should be innovative technologies, the IT sector and medicine. Experience shows that cooperation between the Belarusian southeast region and Indian partners has been growing in recent years. "Since 2018, the growth rate of trade turnover has more than doubled. In 2021, the figure stood at 508.4%. Such products of Gomel region's industrial sector as pulpwood, timber, electric current control apparatus, stone products are in demand in India"⁸⁹. In 2022, the parties put into practice the issue of resuming the production of Gomel harvesters for Indian agriculture. A separate topic is the partnership in the field of education, which already has a history of its own. The fact is that the first Indian graduate graduated from the Gomel State Medical University (GSMU) in 2005. Since then only 178 Indians have graduated from the university. In 2022 another 51 graduates will join them. A total of 290 students from South Asia are currently enrolled at the SMMU. In the near future, the Gomel State University named after Francysk Skaryna plans to engage more actively in this cooperation.

The Mogilev Region also plans to expand the areas of cooperation with India in the near future. Promising areas here include agriculture, education, the textile industry and innovative

89 Innovative technologies, IT and medicine: India and the Gomel region are ready to develop new areas [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/innovatsionnye-tehnologii-it-i-meditsina-indija-i-gomelskaja-oblast-gotovy-razvivat-novye-sfery-492016-2022>

technologies. In 2021 the trade turnover between the two sides amounted to almost six million dollars. The Belarusian supplies consisted mainly of carbon black, newsprint and timber, while Indian supplies included synthetic filaments, medicines, footwear parts, and parts for internal combustion engines. And there is every reason to believe that this list of mutual supplies will only expand. In particular, Technolit CPRC successfully cooperates with the Indian market producing parts and spare parts for various equipment. The company receives "Indian blanks", which are processed at a very high precision equipment and then exported to other countries. More than 30 countries can be exported <...>. Besides, discussions have already started about supplying Technolit's finished products to the Indian market"⁹⁰. Another interesting example of cooperation in the field of innovative technologies is Energitechgrin LLC operating in Mogilev with Indian capital, registered in August 2021. "The main area of activity is environmentally friendly innovations. It deals with the recovery (regeneration) of all types of batteries used in road, rail and river transport, special machinery, industry and communications, wind turbines and solar batteries"⁹¹. The FEZ Mogilev, which signed agreements with two companies from India at the World Expo 2020 in Dubai in March 2022 on the implementation of investment projects in the FEZ, is also significantly intensifying cooperation with the Indian side.

90 Strakhar: Mogilev's Tekhnolit shows its efficiency under difficult conditions [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/strahar-mogilevskij-tehnolit-v-neprotyh-uslovijah-pokazyvaet-svoju-effektivnost-493160-2022>

91 Agriculture, Textiles: Indian Ambassador on the need for greater cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/regions/view/selskoe-hozjajstvo-tekstilnaja-promyshlennost-posol-indii-o-neobhodimosti-rasshirenija-sotrudnichestva-492918-2022>

All these facts testify to the fact that the Indian area of cooperation is becoming increasingly popular for Belarusian regions. And there are significant prospects for foreign economic activity there.

Syria will mark 30 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and Syria in August 2023. All this time, political engagement with that country has been characterized by a high level and regularity of interstate contacts, convergence in the approaches of Minsk and Damascus to most international problems, and mutual support in international organizations. In the economic sphere, cooperation between the two countries has been developing along its sustainable path, which was reflected in the supplies of hundreds of Belarusian trucks to the Syrian market and a thorough study of the project for the assembly of Belarusian automotive equipment. Due to the complication of the domestic situation in Syria in 2011, these plans had to be put on hold. However, even at the most difficult time for Damascus, the Belarusian side expressed its confidence in the successful resolution of the crisis in Syria and its interest in further development and strengthening of bilateral relations in all areas.

The highest level of Belarus-Syria interaction was registered in 2008, when the volume of bilateral trade reached \$85.5 million. Five years later, due to the well-known events in that country, this figure dropped almost tenfold to USD 8.9 million. However, 2014 has already shown the dynamics of starting to overcome the crisis on Syrian soil, which awakened hopes in Minsk to restore the previously existing level of bilateral cooperation. This was immediately reflected in the rapid growth of Belarusian exports to Syria to USD 32.2 million, while the total turnover amounted to

USD 33.8 million. Belarusian semi-finished non-alloy steel products, instrumentation, pharmaceuticals, and liquid crystal devices began to find their niche in the Syrian market. Amid the apparent revival of trade and economic ties in 2015, Minsk and Damascus began to actively seek new areas for engagement in order to "not only restore the previous level of trade turnover in the best years, but also surpass it many times over"⁹². The two countries decided to adhere to the principle of mutual complementarity, whereby Belarus manufactures products that Syrians are interested in, and Syria has a number of goods that Belarusians are interested in.

It should be recalled that when the trend towards stabilisation in the central regions of Syria and around Damascus emerged in 2014-2015, the government of this country immediately expressed interest "in developing trade and investment cooperation, in renewing and expanding cooperative ties with countries that in the most difficult moments of trials <...> have not stopped their political, economic and other support"⁹³. Belarus was one of those countries, which even back then saw significant opportunities for stepping up engagement with its Syrian partners across the full range of bilateral relations, which were based on the contractual and legal framework comprising a dozen and a half documents. These include agreements on trade, economic and technical cooperation; on promotion and mutual protection of investments; on avoidance of

92 Materials of the press conference on the results of the visit of Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej to Syria (9 February 2015, Damascus) [Electronic resource]. - 2015. URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b49e0d253459ccba.html.

93 The project to set up an assembly facility for Belarusian vehicles in Syria is resumed [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/vozobnovlena-prorabotka-proekta-sozdanija-v-sirii-sborochnogo-proizvodstva-beloruskoj-avtotehniki-155561-2015/>

double taxation; on military-technical cooperation; on cooperation in the field of education, science and culture; on air communication; on scientific and technical cooperation; on international road transportation of passengers and cargo. There are also agreements on bank payments, agribusiness, veterinary, quarantine and plant protection.

Today, Minsk is well aware of the tasks facing the Syrian government to restore the country's infrastructure and economy and find the resources that would enable it to finance the most important projects for the state and, therefore, sees two areas for further development of the bilateral Belarusian-Syrian engagement. First, it is necessary to organize framework or umbrella agreements at the level of the governments, to determine the basic schemes for the organization of joint work. The second level is the level of business, which should build mutually beneficial and safe schemes for their implementation on the basis of these agreements"⁹⁴ .

It should be noted that during the first 11 months of 2021, the Belarusian-Syrian trade turnover increased by more than 40 percent, and exports from Belarus increased by almost 45 percent. The bulk of Belarusian supplies consisted of medicines, condensed and dried cream, and whey. The Belarusian side expressed confidence that it could meet most of Syria's needs not only for these commodities, but also for engineering products, passenger, agricultural, freight, construction equipment, as well as "for the construction of high-quality and comfortable housing"⁹⁵ . The fact is that the restoration of industry, agriculture, construction and the services sector is under

94 Roman Golovchenko: Belarus can meet most of Syria's machine-building needs [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10143>

95 Belarus and Syria interested in cooperation in the construction sector [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-sirija-zainteresovany-sotrudnichat-v-stroitelnoj-sfere-481516-2022/>

way in this country. Suffice it to say that 115 projects are being implemented here "to recreate water and electricity supply systems, transport infrastructure, the oil and gas industry, telecommunications. The total cost of the work is estimated at \$540 billion. In this regard, the country needs a wide range of materials, services and technologies"⁹⁶ .

To draw the attention of the wider international community to the above issues, the Rebuild Syria International Industrial Exhibition was organised in Damascus in September 2021, bringing together 190 companies from 25 countries, including Russia, China, India and Cuba. It included ten thematic sections: "Construction technology and building materials"; "Finishing and decorative products"; "Kitchen, bathroom, plumbing, water technology"; "Air-conditioning, heating, lighting, power generation and electrical engineering"; "Oil and gas"; "Environment and infrastructure management"; "Insurance and banking"; "Communication systems"; "Information technology and software"; "Food and beverages".

For the first time at this exhibition, held since 2015, an exposition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus was also organised, with a number of domestic companies presenting their products. For example, Minsk Tractor Works, whose more than two thousand machines are now working in the fields of Syria, demonstrated new tractor models adapted to work in a hot climate. Minsk Engine Plant demonstrated a range of modern diesel engines and spare parts for them, and Minsk Automobile Plant demonstrated the capabilities of its products. Brest Electrotechnical Plant

96 Belarusian companies will take part in the largest industrial exhibition in Syria [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-kompanii-primut-uchastie-v-krupnejšej-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-sirii-458048-2021/>

presented railroad automation, telemechanics and communication equipment, which turned out to fully meet the requirements of the Syrian market, as "Syria's railroad infrastructure was designed according to the Soviet standards. Today, Syria's railway system is 80% destroyed, so rebuilding it has become an important task for the government."⁹⁷ .

Another participant of the Belarusian exposition, the European Agrarian Agency Spetsstroy, aroused considerable interest on the Syrian side by the fact that it specializes in construction of buildings and structures, including multi-storey buildings, performs their dismantling and demolition, sorting and recycling construction waste, and also builds dairy and cattle farms. And Belagro Bel', a group of companies supplying agricultural complexes from various manufacturers, took part in this business forum in a remote format, which did not prevent it from holding business negotiations with potential partners.

In general, representatives of the Belarusian side were able to discuss with representatives of the Syrian business community at this international exhibition forum a wide range of issues on cooperation "in the field of water treatment plants, construction work in Syria, supply of agricultural equipment"⁹⁸ , in the field of breeding in cattle breeding and creation of dairy farms, as well as promising areas to promote export of Belarusian goods and services to the Syrian market. All these facts prove that the participation of

97 Sluka: Syria today needs modern achievements of the Belarusian economy [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sluka-sirija-segodnja-nuzhaetsja-v-sovremennyh-dostizhenijah-belorusskoj-ekonomiki-462466-2021/>

98 Syria will study the experience of building dairy farms in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sirija-izuchit-opyt-stroitelstva-molochno-tovarnyh-ferm-v-belarusi-462158-2021/>

Belarusian business entities in the Rebuild Syria industrial exhibition was another concrete step forward towards the development of the Syrian market both in the field of machine building and tractor construction, and in the field of housing, industrial and road building.

Another important aspect in the context of this topic is information relations between Belarus and Syria, which are based on the provisions of the relevant agreement of 11 March 1998, as well as the Agreement on cooperation between the National State Television and Radio Company of Belarus and the General Organization of Syrian Television and Radio Broadcasting of 12 November 2007 and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Belarusian Telegraph Agency and the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) of 27 November 2008. These documents note "the importance of objective information support for interstate cooperation. At the same time, the role of mass media in fostering mutual understanding between the countries and the peoples is especially emphasised."⁹⁹ . Indeed, the thematic range of Belarusian-Syrian cooperation should be actively expanded today. Those include cooperation in the power sector; resumption of supplies of Belarusian automotive equipment to the Syrian market; setting up assembly facilities of Minsk Automobile Plant in Syria; expansion of regional cooperation; supplies of Belarusian construction machinery for the needs of public works aimed at the restoration of Syria. Finally, cooperation in science and technology, within the framework of which "Belarusian and Syrian scientific institutions

99 Belarus-Syria cooperation in the information sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://mininform.gov.by/special/ru/news-ru/view/sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-sirii-v-informatsionnoj-sfere-275/>

signed seven 'pilot' contracts for joint R&D works"¹⁰⁰ . In this regard, the task of journalists is to comprehensively reflect these trends in the media sphere.

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100 Cooperation in Science, Education, Culture [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: http://syria.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/cooperation/ec5318cc4fb8b9c5.html

The action plan aims to maximise results

In April 2022, the seventh meeting of the Belarus-Indonesia Joint Commission for Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation was held. The two sides discussed topical issues of the bilateral partnership "with a focus on the development of cooperation in the areas of industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, education, tourism, digital economy, and creative industries"¹⁰¹. Recall that the sixth meeting of this commission was held in Jakarta in October 2017. At that time it was agreed "to intensify trade, economic and investment cooperation between the countries, including the prospects for increasing supplies of MAZ, BelAZ and MTZ products to Indonesia"¹⁰².

Many facts show that the Indonesian market is very promising for the Belarusian side. First, more than 270 million people now live here. Secondly, "Indonesia is an industrial and agricultural country, where more than half of the gross domestic product comes from industry, agriculture and fishing, where the main industries are oil and gas processing, metallurgy, machine building, chemical, food and textile industries"¹⁰³. And which is very interested in a significant increase in economic cooperation with Belarus, in increasing the supply of potassium chloride, automotive and tractor machinery, and dairy products from our country. In November 2019, at the Belarusian-Indonesian forum held in Minsk, which was

101 On the Seventh Session of the Belarus-Indonesia Joint Commission on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ee2bb4e24073dbac.html

102 Belarus and Indonesia agree to intensify trade and investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-inezija-dogovorilis-aktivizirovat-torgovoe-i-investitsionoe-vzaimodejstvie-271768-2017/>

103 Zaleski, B. Partnership Journalism. Theory and practice / B. Zaleskiy. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2013. - C. 69.

attended by more than 30 enterprises and organizations from the two countries, it was noted that "the government's goal to reach \$1 billion in mutual trade turnover between Belarus and Indonesia is quite realistic for the near future"¹⁰⁴ .

It is true that in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between the countries was only 181 million dollars, which, according to the parties, was not in line with the partnership's existing potential. But already then 25 new items were supplied to the Indonesian market. In 2021 the trade turnover already reached 232.3 million dollars with the share of Belarusian exports exceeding two hundred million dollars. At the same time there was "a more than twofold increase in non-resource exports to Indonesia, including more than fourfold increase in dairy products"¹⁰⁵ . So a further increase of Belarusian-Indonesian trade turnover remains a priority area for bilateral cooperation that should be filled with new content. This was the main topic of the seventh session of the Joint committee, which reached the following specific results: adoption of the Action plan on development of key areas of cooperation for 2022-2023; decision to create a working group in the field of agriculture, the first meeting of which will be held during the Belagro-2022 international agricultural exhibition; agreement on holding a joint meeting on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Belarusian-Indonesian diplomatic relations in 2023.

It should be noted that the signed memorandums have complemented the contractual legal base of bilateral relations, which

104 BelCCI: Increasing trade turnover with Indonesia to \$1 billion is a realistic task for the near future [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beltpu-uvlichenie-tovarooborota-s-indonezijej-do-1-mlrd-realnaja-zadacha-na-blizhajshuju-perspektivu-368953-2019/>

105 Trade and economic relations with the Republic of Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/be/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/

already consists of over 30 documents, in the area that is extremely relevant for the Belarusian side today. The first memorandum signed by the State Committee for Standardization of the Republic of Belarus (Gosstandart) and Indonesian National Agency for Standardization stipulates not only exchange of information and experience, but also implementation of joint activities and projects. In particular, the Belarusian side is interested in official dissemination of national Indonesian standards in Belarus. The second document signed by Belarus State Standard and Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs concerns cooperation in the field of quality assurance of halal products and readiness of the Belarusian partners "to demonstrate the infrastructure of quality halal products created in Indonesia to their colleagues from Indonesia, to confirm the possibility of implementing Indonesian requirements for halal products and conduct necessary conformity assessment procedures in Belarus"¹⁰⁶. An important detail: the only halal certification body in our country - BelHalal Ltd. - has already submitted the necessary documents for registration in the Indonesian national halal certification system. And the signed memorandum should officially start the process of its accreditation in this country of Southeast Asia.

Speaking about other areas of the food sector, a number of Belarusian companies have already been accredited as suppliers of dairy products to Indonesia. In particular, "the products of Savushkin Product OJSC, Babushkina krynka OJSC, Verkhnedvinskiy butter and cheese factory OJSC have received the

¹⁰⁶ Belarus and Indonesia sign memorandums on standardisation and quality assurance [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-indonezija-podpisali-memorandumy-v-oblasti-standartizatsii-i-obespechenija-kachestva-497060-2022>

necessary certificates and have already entered the high-capacity Indonesian food market"¹⁰⁷ . And this is immediately reflected in the results of Belarusian-Indonesian bilateral trade in 2021. The company Bellakt OJSC is ready to "work on the issues of product supplies to Indonesia, as well as expand the product range and work on the supply of baby food"¹⁰⁸ , as well as Milkavita OJSC, Glubokoe Dairy Factory OJSC and some other enterprises that participated in the third Belarusian-Indonesian video conference on business and trade, held in December 2020 and dedicated to promoting export of dairy products from Belarus to Indonesia. Halal product exporters from Belarus should now become growth points in this regard, complementing such traditional positions as potash chloride and dump trucks.

Speaking about other areas of Belarusian-Indonesian cooperation, we would like to remind that in February 2021, the National Marketing Center of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry and the Indonesia Trade, Tourism and Investment Club signed a memorandum on cooperation and mutual support in the development of trade and economic relations. The Belarusian side sees its goals in the context of this document as "to activate contracts on a legal basis, exchange information on bilateral export and import supplies, and deepen cooperation between our countries."¹⁰⁹ . The

107 Kolesnik, V. Indonesia and Belarus: from potassium chloride and BELAZes to tourism market revival / V. Kolesnik // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/indonezija-i-belarus-ot-hloristogo-kalija-i-belazov-do-ozhivlenija-turisticheskogo-rynka-473916-2021>

108 The third Belarusian-Indonesian video conference on business and trade is devoted to the dairy sector [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://ncmps.by/news/tretya-belorussko-indoneziyskaya-videokonferentsiya-po-voprosam-biznesa-i-torgovli-posvyashchena-mol/>

109 Belarus and Indonesia sign memorandum on trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-indonezija-podpisali-memorandum-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskom-sotrudnichestve-426979-2021/>

development of partnership relations between the regions of the two countries has great potential in this regard. The more so since "interaction has already been established between the Brest region and West Sumatra province, Mogilev region and South Sumatra province, Minsk region and East Kalimantan and East Java provinces as well as the cities of Minsk and Jakarta"¹¹⁰ . With the help of regional branches of chambers of commerce and industry, interaction with such provinces as Central Java, North Sumatra, West Nusa Tenggara, the special district of Yogyakarta, where they see considerable potential for development of trade and economic cooperation, educational and tourist exchanges with Belarusian partners, is also established.

For example, the Brest Region and the province of West Sumatra announced their intention to establish close contacts back in November 2015. Such areas as "fish farming, processing industry, tourism, healthcare, pharmacy" were named as promising for mutually beneficial cooperation then¹¹¹ . Some other Indonesian provinces have been familiar with Belarusian automobile manufacturer's products for a long time. Thus, since 2012, the Indonesian province of East Kalimantan has been successfully operating a batch of nine Belarusian dump trucks with a payload capacity of 45 tonnes. In 2016-2017, the province of South Sumatra received 40 dump trucks with a payload capacity of 110 tonnes for the needs of PT Bukit Asam, the largest state-owned coal mining

110 Kolesnik, V. Indonesia and Belarus: from potassium chloride and BELAZes to tourism market revival / V. Kolesnik // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/indonezija-i-belarus-ot-hloristogo-kalija-i-belazov-do-ozhivlenija-turisticheskogo-rynka-473916-2021>

111 Vechorko, S. Brest region establishes cooperation with the Indonesian province of West Sumatra / S. Vechorko // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brestskaja-oblast-nalazhivaet-sotrudnichestvo-s-indonezijskoj-provintsiej-zapadnaja-sumatra-59706-2014/>

company. In 2018-2019, seven more 130-tonne dump trucks were shipped to private coal mining company PT Tambang Raya Usaha Tama. And in 2020, "eight more 130-tonne BELAZ-75131 dump trucks started working in a coal mine on Kalimantan"¹¹² , where vehicles from Belarus with payload capacity from 45 to 130 tons were already in operation. The parties plan to actively continue this collaboration.

A logical continuation of cooperation between the Belarusian and Indonesian regions is developing partnerships in the educational sphere, where cooperation is based on signed agreements: on cooperation - between the Brest State Technical University and the Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology; on mutual understanding - between the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy and the Bogor Agricultural Institute; on exchange of students - between the Minsk State Linguistic University and the Minsk State Linguistic University. Over the past few years, the Belarusian State University, the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and the Grodno State Medical University have also found partners in this South-East Asian country.

In particular, in November 2020, a memorandum of understanding was signed by BSU and Airlangga University. The parties agreed to organise academic exchanges, implement joint educational and research projects, and exchange research materials. The first step towards implementing these agreements was "participation of BSU lecturers in DECOTA educational programme. It focuses on attracting renowned scientists to give

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

online lectures to students of Airlangga University"¹¹³ . And BSU students were offered free tuition for the Sura-Bali Community Immersion Program 2020, which involved studying Indonesian culture and tourism activities in the provinces of East Java and Bali. Note that this university is one of the oldest in Indonesia. It was founded in 1954 in Surabaya. There are 14 faculties: from medical and law, to sea, fishery, nursing and veterinary medicine. Nearly forty thousand students have got higher education. On a side note, the BSU has already had experience of cooperation with Indonesian partners. In particular, since 2016, Unitechprom BSU has been fulfilling a contract to supply medical equipment - spirometers - to Global systech medika from Jakarta.

In 2022, a number of other Belarusian universities signed documents on cooperation with Indonesian partners, which indicates further expansion of these relations. Thus, a cooperation agreement was signed in January 2022 by Minsk State Linguistic University (MSLU) and Veteran National Development University in Yogyakarta, outlining in this document the main directions of cooperation development: "opening of Center of Indonesian language and culture on the basis of MSLU; opening of Center of Belarusian culture and Russian language on the basis of UNR "Veteran"; teaching Indonesian language on an elective basis in MSLU; teaching Russian language and lecturing about Belarusian culture in UNR "Veteran"; conducting cultural events on the basis of

113 Memorandum of Understanding signed between BGU and the University of Airlangga [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-podpisan-mezhdu-bgu-i-universitetom-airlangga-414083-2020/>

Center of Indonesian language and culture in MSLU"¹¹⁴ . Here it is appropriate to add that UNR "Veteran" is one of the state universities in Indonesia. It is a patriotically oriented university actively building up its educational base. It has established the Faculties of Mineral Technology, Industrial Engineering, Agriculture, Economics and Business, and Social and Political Science. The educational institution is active in research and broadcasts its civic position.

Also in January 2022, the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy (BSAA) and Indonesia's Tidar University signed a memorandum of cooperation. And already in March, the first lectures on sustainable agriculture were delivered to Indonesian and Belarusian students, a topic of particular relevance in modern conditions, as "progress in the development of agricultural production inevitably leads to such global problems as climate change, development of soil degradation processes, soil salinization <...> and therefore requires close attention from the entire academic and scientific community".¹¹⁵ [14]. In this regard, both sides expressed their desire to make cooperation between the BGSAA and Tidar University as useful as possible in solving both local and global problems related to finding ways to mitigate climate change and providing sufficient food to the residents of Belarus and Indonesia.

The contest of joint Belarusian-Indonesian projects for the years 2021-2022 that was launched by the State Committee on

114 Collaboration with Veteran University in Yogyakarta, Republic of Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.mslu.by/news/sotrudnichestvo-s-universitetom-veteran-v-dzhok-yakarte-respublika-indoneziya>

115 Noskova, S.A. Indonesia - Belarus: mutual interest / S.A. Noskova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: http://baa.by/news/?ELEMENT_ID=5208

Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia together with the Indonesian National Agency of Research and Innovation should play an important role in enhancing scientific and technological ties between the two countries. Priority areas of the competition include: "health and medicine (raw materials, including natural ones, for pharmaceuticals; medical equipment, stem cells); emergency management and nature management; machine technologies for industry (energy optimization, food industry, computer modeling in engineering)"¹¹⁶ .

Additional opportunities for the expansion of cooperation between Belarus and Indonesia are offered by the fact that the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and this Southeast Asian country are actively working towards the conclusion of a free trade agreement. The parties signed a memorandum of cooperation in October 2020, thereby confirming the agreement that "this document will contribute to building an effective infrastructure for the development of trade and economic cooperation."¹¹⁷ . It formed the basis of a working group that focused on issues such as trade facilitation, customs and technical regulations, and the development of financial markets. In mid-April 2022, the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission approved a draft decision on concluding a free trade agreement with Indonesia. The agreement itself is expected to be signed in May 2022 at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council. In this regard, Belarus has considerable

116 Contest of joint Belarusian-Indonesian scientific and technical projects for 2021-2022. [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://science.bsuir.by/ru/konkursy-i-granty/konkurs-belorussko-indonezijskikh-proektov>

117 Zalesky, B. Integration as a factor of development. Features of regional cooperation in the post-Soviet space / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 62.

prospects of supplying cargo, agricultural and special machinery, X-ray equipment, bleached pulp, laminated plywood to Indonesia at reduced customs duties. For reference, traditional commodity items imported into this country are oil and oil products, telephone sets, wheat, computers and computer units, sugar and chemically pure sucrose. New ones are being added to these today, in keeping with the spirit of the times. For this reason, "certain successes can be achieved by producers of urban electric transport, as a programme to renew the public transport fleet is being implemented in major cities in Indonesia, and Belarusian companies have the opportunity to offer competitive and environmentally friendly goods"¹¹⁸ .

All of these facts suggest that in the near future Indonesia may become Belarus' most important partner not only in Southeast Asia, but also in the entire Asia-Pacific region. At least, all necessary prerequisites for this are already in place.

118 National Centre for Marketing on the prospects of promotion of Belarusian goods to Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/natsionalnyj-tsentr-marketinga-o-perspektivah-prodvizhenija-belorusskih-tovarov-v-indoneziju-8163/>

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