

# Perimeter of the far arc

Cooperation with the countries of the far arc has become one of the priorities of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus at the present stage. Belarus, which inherited a powerful and science-intensive economy from the Soviet Union, today actively operates in different parts of our planet in order to sell all its products. Belarus initially builds interaction and relations with the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America on the modern paradigm of the multipolar world. The Belarusian model of working with African, Asian and Latin American partners implies fair, equal, mutually beneficial, mutually respectful relations, training in technologies and recognition of the diversity of ways of development. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus notes that in 2023 a whole series of planned quite significant international events of bilateral nature with the countries of the far arc will be organized. So, the schedule in this area is going to be quite intensive. This series opens with a state visit of the Belarusian delegation to Zimbabwe. What steps in these directions are being taken in the Republic of Belarus and on other countries is discussed in the proposed study.



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THOR US

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*The Potential of Sustainable Partnerships in Addressing multi-vector interaction*

**Boris Zalesskij**

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Addressing multi-vector interaction**

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## Prospects for effective cooperation

In June 2021, the Belarusian-Asian Forum was held, which was attended by representatives of the embassies of those **Asian** states in Russia and Belarus that do not have their diplomatic missions in Minsk and where there are no Belarusian diplomatic missions abroad. Specifically, the participants included heads of diplomatic missions and other diplomats from Indonesia, Yemen, Cambodia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand, Afghanistan, Laos, and the Philippines. The attention of the Belarusian side to the Asian region is quite understandable. After all, "there are no political problems on the bilateral agenda here and the approaches to major international issues are quite similar. This creates a good basis for the development of trade and economic cooperation as the main area for bilateral engagement"<sup>1</sup> .

Suffice it to say that in 2020, Belarusian exports to the countries of this continent totaled about two billion dollars. And this, of course, is not the limit. "Obviously, the Asian market still remains underutilized by Belarusian exporters in terms of the promotion there of many of their products, including those manufactured by mechanical engineering, electronic and petrochemical industries"<sup>2</sup> . The experience of this engagement in recent years shows that there are still many opportunities to promote Belarusian trade and economic interests in the Asian direction. In order to use them successfully, it is necessary to continue systematic and consistent work, developing mutual interest and initiating new forms of contacts, as it is actually happening in the development of partnership ties with a number of Asian countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Cooperation with the countries of the Asian region has been and remains one of the priorities of Belarus's foreign policy - Barysievich [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/sotrudnichestvo-so-stranami-aziatskogo-regiona-bylo-i-ostaetsja-odnim-iz-prioritetov-vneshnej-politiki-445159-2021/>

<sup>2</sup> Zalesky, B. Belarus - Asia: vector of partnership. Chronicle of mutually beneficial cooperation / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. - C. 5.

In particular, the Republic of Belarus has already achieved a strategic partnership with **the People's Republic of China**. In the language of numbers, it looks as follows. In 2020, the volume of Belarusian-Chinese trade will show a significant increase of more than 10 per cent. Even higher growth in this partnership is characteristic of the year 2021. "From January to April this year, total imports and exports of goods between the countries amounted to \$1.25 billion, an increase of 58 percent compared to the same period last year. China has become Belarus' second largest trading partner."<sup>3</sup>

A number of projects that have already been successfully implemented and are still being implemented by the Belarusian side can also be seen in some other Asian countries. For example, in early June 2021, Minsk Tractor Works and the Indian company Erisha Agritech Private Limited signed a cooperation agreement, which stipulates that "the Indian partner will purchase at least 200 BELARUS tractors by the end of 2021. In addition, the parties intend to organise the localisation and assembly of tractors under the joint DARSH BELARUS brand in **India**"<sup>4</sup>, so that they can then supply them to other countries of the continent - Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Another interesting Asian country in this context is **Mongolia**. In June 2021, it became known that the Belarusian Development Bank will finance the export of Belarus tractors and agricultural machinery produced by Minsk Tractor Works JSC for four and a half million euros - to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia. And this will be the third individual credit line under the general Belarusian-Mongolian intergovernmental export credit agreement concluded in April 2019, aimed

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<sup>3</sup> Political interaction between Belarus and China is steadily strengthening - Xie Xiaoyun [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/politicheskoe-vzaimodoverie-belarusi-i-kitaja-nepreryvno-ukrepljaetsja-se-sjaojun-446045-2021/>.

<sup>4</sup> MTZ has signed an agreement to supply and assemble tractors in India [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-podpisal-soglashenie-o-sotrudnicestve-s-indijskoj-kompaniej-44577-2021/>



at expanding the geography of Belarusian export supplies and strengthening foreign economic and trade relations between specific enterprises. It should be reminded that under this agreement, the Development Bank has already "financed supplies of fire-fighting equipment produced by Pozhsnab to the National Emergency Management Agency of Mongolia, as well as machinery sold by MAZ, the managing company of BELAVTOMAZ Holding, to the Road and Transport Development Centre under the Ministry of Road and Transport Development of Mongolia"<sup>5</sup>. These facts show that Belarusian industrial enterprises today consider the Asian region as one of the key regions for increasing their export supplies. And they see huge potential in it, "because its member countries are showing very good economic growth"<sup>6</sup>, which makes Belarusian products in demand in that market. And exporters such as BelAZ, BMZ, MAZ, MTZ, Amkodor and Integral have good opportunities to expand their supplies here.

Today, the Asian region looks even more promising for Belarusian food exports, which have increased 13(!) times in the last five years. In 2020, it amounted to \$356 million. During the four months of 2021 Belarus exported USD 167 million worth of foodstuffs to 37 Asian countries, "which is 60% more than last year. A wide range of dairy and meat products, sugar, flax fiber, rapeseed oil..."<sup>7</sup>. It is obvious that both the geography and assortment of these supplies will only expand, as evidenced by the interest of the participants of the Belarusian-Asian Forum in the proposals of

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<sup>5</sup> The Development Bank will provide an export loan to supply Belarusian agricultural machinery to Mongolia [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bank-razvitija-predostavit-eksportnyj-kredit-na-postavku-belorusskoj-selhoztehniky-v-mongoliju-445880-2021/>

<sup>6</sup> Pivovar, E. The Ministry of Industry of Belarus considers the Asian region as one of the key regions for product supplies / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-belarusi-rassmatrivaet-aziatskij-region-kak-odin-iz-kljuчевyh-dlja-postavok-produktsii-445212-2021/>

<sup>7</sup> Pivovar, E. Deliveries of Belarusian food products to Asian countries for 5 years increased 13 times / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/postavki-belorusskogo-prodovolstvija-v-strany-azii-za-5-let-vyrosli-v-13-raz-445207-2021/>

Belarusian manufacturers voiced in their presentations at the event. In addition, the engagement of the Belarusian side with a number of other Asian countries - Iran, Pakistan, South Korea, and Oman - became much more active in 2021.

As for **Iran**, in April 2021, it became known that the Belarusian Gomel Region intends to resume and develop cooperation with the Iranian province of Mazandaran, the document on trade, economic, scientific, technological, and cultural cooperation with which was signed back in 2009, but it has not been possible to implement the plans outlined in it. Back then, when signing the memorandum on cooperation, the parties mentioned good prospects in organizing exports of agricultural products, metal and agricultural machinery from the Belarusian region. And Iranian exporters planned to establish permanent supplies of citrus and other southern fruits to the Homiel market. "In addition, there are large deposits of solid fuels in Mazandaran province, which could be developed by economic entities of the Gomel region"<sup>8</sup>.

Among the projects that the Belarusian region and the Iranian province intend to return to now are "production of copper rod in Rechitsa district, development of a chalk deposit in Vetka district, mining of rocks in Lelchitsa district"<sup>9</sup>. Besides, Belarus offered to supply machine tools, timber, cardboard, cellulose, confectionary products, as well as gas-engine harvesters to the Iranian market. Noting the great potential in the interaction between the two regions, the Iranian side complemented the possible areas of partnership with such spheres as oil extraction, chemical industry and

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<sup>8</sup> Sidorchik, V. Gomel region and Iranian Mazandaran province will sign the memorandum of cooperation / V. Sidorchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2009. - URL: <http://cenadm.gov.by/ru/region/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-iranskaja-provintsija-mazandaran-podpishut-memorandum-o-sotrudnicestve-1957/>

<sup>9</sup> Gomel Region and Iran's Mazandaran Province to resume trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-iranskaja-provintsija-mazandaran-vozobnovjat-torgovo-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnicestvo-439208-2021/>

manufacturing. Concrete steps to implement all these proposals will be discussed at a webinar to be held in the near future.

The mere fact that the partnership ties between the Gomel region and Mazandaran province have been updated shows that Belarus and Iran, having survived the coronavirus pandemic, are starting to bring bilateral mutually beneficial cooperation back to a growth trajectory after all. As a reminder, the 14th meeting of the Joint Belarusian-Iranian Commission on Economic Cooperation was held in January 2018, which resulted in the signing of the Roadmap for the Development of Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Iran for 2018-2020. It talked about the development of bilateral cooperation "in various fields of politics, investment, trade, industry, transport, agriculture, healthcare, education, science, technology and energy"<sup>10</sup>, and contained the intention to increase Belarusian-Iranian trade turnover to \$500 million. However, the U.S. sanctions, which blocked bilateral engagement between Minsk and Tehran in a number of important areas, became a serious obstacle to the development of economic cooperation between Belarus and Iran. But "despite the restrictions, the trade turnover between Belarus and Iran amounted to \$24.7 million in 2020"<sup>11</sup>. Tyres, wood products, newsprint, and bearings made up the bulk of Belarusian export to the Iranian market.

Currently, the two sides are preparing for the 15th meeting of the joint commission, where they intend to develop a roadmap for trade and economic cooperation in order to give an additional impetus to the relationship. The high interest of the parties in such partnership development can be judged by the composition of the participants in the Belarusian-Iranian business forum, which was held in Minsk in July 2019 under the auspices of the Belarusian

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<sup>10</sup> Belarus and Iran have developed a roadmap for cooperation for 2018-2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-iran-razrabotali-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-na-2018-2020-gody-285761-2018/>

<sup>11</sup> Trade and Economic Relations [Electronic Resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://iran.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/economic/](https://iran.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/economic/)

Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture. At that time, talks with the Belarusian business community were attended by Iranian companies interested in cooperating "in the areas of banking activities, production of medical and pharmaceutical products, gas equipment, parts and equipment for refrigerators, agricultural machinery, construction materials and construction equipment, petrochemical and oil refining industry, production and supply of food and spices, textile industry (supply of Persian carpets)"<sup>12</sup>

Cooperation between the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) and the Iranian Commodity Exchange (ITB) may also become one of the promising areas for economic cooperation between the two countries. The two sides agreed to update the partnership back in October 2019, as "the use of the exchange mechanism will reduce commercial risks and simplify the search for business partners for Belarusian and Iranian business entities."<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Iranian businessmen are interested in using the BUTB platform to promote ferrous and non-ferrous metal products, textiles, nuts and dried fruits to Belarus. Belarusian companies are interested in the exchange platform for the export of lumber, timber boards, and petrochemical products to Iran.

Another promising resource for expanding Belarusian-Iranian trade and economic cooperation is the Interim Agreement leading to the establishment of a free trade zone between the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and Iran, which entered into force in October 2019. This document established a list of goods for which exporters of EAEU countries, including

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<sup>12</sup> Belarusian-Iranian business forum to be held in Minsk on 24 July [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusko-iranskij-biznes-forum-projdet-24-ijulja-v-minske-355013-2019/>

<sup>13</sup> BUTB and the Iranian Commodity Exchange intend to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-iranskaja-tovarnaja-birzha-namereny-aktivizirovat-sotrudnichestvo-364553-2019/>

Belarus, were given preferential treatment in the Iranian market. It "includes meat and oil products, certain types of confectionery and chocolate, electronic and mechanical equipment, as well as metals and cosmetics"<sup>14</sup> . So, the sides have a lot of opportunities to achieve their objectives in fostering trade and economic relations. We should use them.

**The Islamic Republic of Pakistan** is one of the states in South Asia, in relations with which the Republic of Belarus has created the necessary legal and infrastructure framework over the past five years to strengthen and develop bilateral engagement aimed at the full-scale implementation of the existing partnership potential. It should be recalled that in 2015, the Islamabad Declaration of Belarus-Pakistan Cooperation was adopted at the highest level, "in which the parties consolidated the basic principles of the political dialogue"<sup>15</sup> . At the same time, a Bilateral Cooperation Roadmap 2015-2020 was signed to make a gradual transition from simple trade to more advanced forms of cooperative interaction. Joint efforts to create a legal and contractual framework for Belarus-Pakistan cooperation resulted in 77 memorandums of understanding and agreements signed by the beginning of 2021. At the moment, many agreements are in the drafting stage"<sup>16</sup> . For example, an amended intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the field of industrial, scientific and technical cooperation.

Also in 2015, Minsk and Islamabad established the basic institutional mechanism for bilateral trade and economic relations - the joint Belarus-Pakistan commission for trade and economic cooperation, having organized five meetings to date. Within the framework of the Joint Commission, working groups in various fields, such as industry and agriculture, focus their

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<sup>14</sup> Zalesky, B. The potential for multi-vectorism. Chronicle of international cooperation / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2020. - C. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Zalesky, B. Belarus - Asia: vector of partnership. Chronicle of mutually beneficial cooperation / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2018. - C. 86.

<sup>16</sup> Sajjad, H.H. How the pandemic affected relations between Belarus and Pakistan / H.H. Sajjad // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/kak-pandemija-povlijala-na-otnoshenija-belarusi-i-pakistan-7589/>

attention on specific issues of bilateral cooperation. And in December 2020, the first meeting of the Belarusian-Pakistani working group for cooperation in healthcare and pharmaceuticals "identified possible areas for mutual cooperation in the export of medical and educational services"<sup>17</sup> and outlined the prospects of further collaboration.

As for partnerships between the business communities of the two countries, they are structured within the framework of the Belarusian-Pakistani Joint Business Council, whose first three meetings were held in August 2015, in March 2016 and 2017. In April 2021, the parties held the fourth meeting of this council, which was attended by representatives of over a hundred Belarusian and Pakistani companies. They discussed not only the development of bilateral trade, but also opportunities to boost investment cooperation, industrial cooperation, and the establishment of joint companies and productions, pointing to industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, as well as education, information technology, and logistics as priority areas for cooperation. In addition, they reviewed "the opportunities for Pakistani enterprises to do business within the framework of the Great Stone Industrial Park, the main directions of the new automotive development policy in Pakistan and the existing preferences for foreign companies in this regard, the prospects for urban electric transport development in Pakistan, as well as the main areas of work of Chambers of Commerce and Industry to promote business contacts"<sup>18</sup>.

The potential for the expansion of Belarusian-Pakistani relations is evidenced by the figures. "In 2020, trade turnover between the countries was

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<sup>17</sup> International cooperation. Meeting of the Joint Belarus-Pakistan Working Group on Cooperation in Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://belmapo.by/mezhdunarodnaya-sotrudnichestvo.-zasedanie-sovmestnoj-belorusko-pakistanskoj-rabochej-gruppyi-po-sotrudnichestvu-v-sfere-zdravooxraneniya-i-farmaczevtiki.html>

<sup>18</sup> Online meeting of the Belarus-Pakistan Business Council [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://grotpp.by/onlayn-zasedanie-belorusko-pakista-2/>.

\$52.2 million, up 4% from 2019"<sup>19</sup> . At the same time, the surplus for the Belarusian side exceeded \$20 million. This was facilitated by deliveries from Belarus to Pakistan of such export items as "tractors and spare parts, trucks, potash fertilizers, synthetic filament harnesses and synthetic fibers, tyres, machine tools, polycarboxylic acids (phthalic anhydride), newsprint, baby food (dry blends)"<sup>20</sup> .

In 2021, the Belarusian side plans to only increase its exports to the Pakistani market, using a variety of tools to promote products from Belarus to Pakistan. One of them is participation in international exhibitions organized in that South Asian country. Specifically, "in October [2021], Belarusian companies are scheduled to take part in the industrial exhibition in Karachi"<sup>21</sup> . It should be noted that a year and a half ago, in September 2019, the national exposition of Belarus was organized at the largest exhibition event of the South Asian region - the International Engineering & Machinery Asia Exhibition (IEMA) in Lahore, Pakistan, where "such leading Belarusian companies as BelAZ, MAZ, MTZ, the Mogilev Metallurgical Plant, the Belneftkhim Concern organizations (Belshina, Naftan, Polotsk-Steklovloknno) presented their products"<sup>22</sup> . At that time, numerous visitors of this business forum were also able to get acquainted with the best Belarusian higher education institutions and advanced scientific developments of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. The

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<sup>19</sup> Belarus is interested in developing mutually beneficial cooperation with Pakistan - Karankevich [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-razviti-i-vzaimovyygodnogo-sotrudnichestva-s-pakistanom-karankevich-436781-2021/>

<sup>20</sup> Trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade\\_and\\_economic\\_bilateral\\_relations/](https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade_and_economic_bilateral_relations/)

<sup>21</sup> Ulakhovich: there are many opportunities to strengthen cooperation between Belarus and Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ulakhovich-dlja-ukreplenija-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-belarusju-i-pakistanom-est-mnogo-vozmozhnostej-429292-2021/>

<sup>22</sup> A national exposition of Belarus opened at the IEMA exhibition in Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-otkrylas-na-vystavke-iema-v-pakistan-363543-2019/>

Belarusian State University alone demonstrated in Lahore "over 20 scientific and technological developments in the field of instrumentation, new materials, metal optics, tribophatics"<sup>23</sup> , while signing a protocol of intent to develop academic, scientific and technological cooperation with the Ali Power company from Islamabad. This was not a bad experience.

Speaking about the development of cooperation with **South Korea**, it should be recalled that in July 2021, the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Korea International Trade Association established a business cooperation council, putting into practice the agreements reached in December 2020, when the parties signed a cooperation agreement. Participants of this new platform for discussing business issues and strengthening economic, investment and scientific and technical cooperation are expected to include Belarusian and Korean companies that have a successful track record of cooperation, which "contribute to the expansion of bilateral business and economic relations, as well as enterprises interested in implementing joint projects in the most promising areas"<sup>24</sup> . Judging by the composition of the inaugural session of the Belarus-Korea Business Cooperation Council, these include the Belarusian High Tech Park, the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone, and over twenty other leading companies in electronics, machine tools, automotive industry, pharmaceuticals, and IT.

As a reminder, the year 2022 will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Today, Minsk and Seoul seek to take concrete steps to step up bilateral engagement, as well as to "practically fill up cooperation within the framework of the

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<sup>23</sup> Results of BSU's participation in the International Engineering & Machinery Asia Exhibition (IEMA) (Lahore, Islamic Republic of Pakistan) [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://research.bsu.by/2019/10/08/bsu-results-in-the-international-exhibition-international-engineering-machinery-asia-exhibition-iema/>

<sup>24</sup> Belarus and the Republic of Korea set up a business cooperation council [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-respublika-koreja-sozdali-sovet-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-449731-2021/>



'New Northern Policy'<sup>25</sup> , which is understood as a set of measures to step up economic cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the states and integration associations of the Eurasian region, including the Eurasian Economic Union. Following this policy, Korea divides the entire northern space into three main regions: the eastern region - Siberia and the Far East, Mongolia, the three northeastern provinces of China; the central region - the five Central Asian countries; and the western region - western Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. It is the western region that Seoul considers to be the most industrialised and innovative. For this reason, it is considered "a kind of centre of innovative industry in the northern direction of economic cooperation, important also for the creation of new composite materials and the development of information technologies"<sup>26</sup> .

The Belarusian side is also generally interested in relations with its Korean partners, primarily in expanding industrial cooperation and establishing joint production facilities in a variety of areas. Not only in the machine tool industry, automotive industry, production of automotive components, electronics and household appliances, but also in the production of tyres, medical equipment and agricultural machinery, as well as "in the financing and implementation of infrastructure projects in innovation, information and communication technologies, industry, and science and technology"<sup>27</sup> . In this regard, one of the topical areas of interaction with Korean partners is as follows.

Since 2019, the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus has been implementing a series of international cooperation projects with regard

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<sup>25</sup> Belarus and the Republic of Korea discuss practical steps to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-respublika-koreja-obsudili-prakticheskie-shagi-po-aktivizatsii-sotrudnichestva-436200-2021/>

<sup>26</sup> Pak, C.H. Programmatic approach / C.H. Pak // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [https://export.by/programme\\_approach](https://export.by/programme_approach)

<sup>27</sup> Belarus is interested in expanding investment cooperation with the Republic of Korea [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-investitsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-s-respublikoj-koreja-436524-2021/>

to the creation of infrastructure to support and develop smart industry in our country. First, a set of works was carried out to assess the readiness of the digital transformation of the national economy, including its real sector. The project resulted in recommendations that provide for the development of a strategy aimed at cooperation between large manufacturing companies and small and medium-sized enterprises. New instruments of state support for the digital transformation of organisations in the real sector of the economy were also introduced. So, this work was carried out with the support of the knowledge exchange programme with the Republic of Korea. More specifically, "from 2020, this programme will provide consulting support for the implementation of a pilot project for the digital transformation of a machine-building enterprise. It is planned that the results and recommendations obtained will be used to organise the digital transformation of mechanical engineering enterprises throughout our country"<sup>28</sup>. The seriousness of this interaction with the Korean partners is evidenced by the fact that in March 2021, Minsk hosted a national seminar-conference on "Studying the experience of the Republic of Korea in digital transformation of the industrial sector of economy (mechanical engineering)," which was attended by over 160 representatives of government agencies and organizations, the business community of Belarus, free economic zones, science and technology parks, scientific and educational sphere. Importantly, with the help of experts from the Republic of Korea, they considered the specific experience of the backbone Korean manufacturing companies - LG and Hyundai - in deploying the process of digital transformation in the mechanical engineering sector of industry. After that, the Belarusian Ministry of Economy expressed confidence that "the

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<sup>28</sup> A pilot demonstration centre in Brest Technopark is planned to be commissioned in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/opytno-demonstratsionnyj-tsentr-v-brestskom-tehnoparke-planirujetsja-vvesti-v-ekspluatatsiju-v-2022-godu-448204-2021/>

results of the discussion of the Korean experience will become a solid basis for the deployment of projects in the field of digital development of organizations of the country's industrial complex and involvement of the SME sector involved in the manufacturing sector in this process.<sup>29</sup> . It should be assumed that the Belarusian-Korean Council for Business Cooperation will now make its contribution to the solution of all these issues. After all, it has a very broad field of activity.

Another Asian state with which interaction intensified in 2021 was **Oman**. In August 2021, the Belarus-Oman Business Forum was held online. The attention of the Belarusian side to the intensification of business engagement with this Middle Eastern country can be explained by several reasons. First, it exports oil, oil products and gas. And it always considers buying food and engineering products from its foreign partners. Second, Oman is interesting to Belarus because of its geographical location. Its port infrastructure allows Belarus to seriously consider exports to the entire Arabian Peninsula region. All of this makes Oman one of Belarus's promising trade, economic and investment partners in the Middle East.

However, in 2020, the trade turnover between the two countries was only USD 1.15 million, with the share of Belarusian exports amounting to USD 850 thousand, which "was based on potash fertilizers and food products"<sup>30</sup> . It is considerably inferior to the indicators that were observed in the Belarusian-Omanian trade almost ten years ago. We should remind that "the highest level of the trade turnover between Belarus and Oman was registered in 2012 - \$12 million"<sup>31</sup> . That is why the task of returning the

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<sup>29</sup> The Republic of Korea presented its experience in digital transformation of machine building in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/respublika-koreja-predstavila-v-minske-svoj-opyt-tsifrovoj-transformatsii-mashinostroeniija-432451-2021/>

<sup>30</sup> Cooperation in the trade and economic sphere [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://egypt.mfa.gov.by/ru/blr\\_oman/economical/](https://egypt.mfa.gov.by/ru/blr_oman/economical/)

<sup>31</sup> Ogneva, Y. Koltovitch: visit of business delegation from Oman will contribute to increase of trade turnover / Y. Ogneva // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/koltovich-vizit-biznes-delegatsii-iz-omana-posposobstvuet-uvlicheniju-tovarooborota-211012-2016/>

volumes of trade and economic cooperation to the growth trajectory was among the main ones for the participants of the business seminar, during which they discussed both the current state and prospects of the development of bilateral partnerships in industrial production, agriculture and food, potential for investment cooperation and implementation of joint projects in the two countries, "as well as possibilities for holding a meeting of the Belarus-Oman Business Council"<sup>32</sup>.

The attention of the parties to the activities of the business council is explained by the fact that it is one of the most actively used tools for the development of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. Belarus and Oman signed the agreement on its establishment back in 2010, but the first meeting of the Business Council did not take place until August 2015 in Minsk. The Omani side saw its task in coming to the Belarusian capital at that time as determining the most promising areas for expanding trade and economic cooperation. "If we talk about Oman's investments in Belarus, the prospects are seen primarily in such areas as the heavy industry and the petrochemical complex"<sup>33</sup>. A few months later, the Omani partners were interested in investing in the development of Belarusian agriculture, the real estate sector and eco-tourism, and agreed with the Belarusian side to "jointly develop scientific and innovative projects, work out proposals and establish Belarusian assembly facilities in Oman"<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> There is considerable potential for cooperation between Belarus and Oman in various areas - Ulahovich [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/mezhdubelarusiju-i-omanom-est-znachitelnyj-potentsial-sotrudnichestva-v-razlichnyh-oblastjah-ulahovich-455263-2021/>

<sup>33</sup> Ogneva, Y. Oman will study the possibility of participation in the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park / Y. Ogneva // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/oman-izuchit-vozmozhnosti-uchastija-v-kitajsko-belorusskom-industrialnom-parke-160157-2015/>

<sup>34</sup> Omani business shows interest in investing in Belarus' agribusiness, real estate and eco-tourism sectors [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/biznes-omana-projavljaet-interes-k-investirovaniju-v-apk-belarusi-sektor-nedvizhimosti-ekologicheskogo-166686-2015/>

In September 2016, for the first time, a representative delegation of more than 40 major businessmen from Oman came to Minsk from Oman to participate in the second meeting of the Belarusian-Omani Business Council, whose scope of activities and interests included "investment, banking, construction, food and agriculture, industrial production, mining, insurance, financial consulting, transportation services, retail trade, hotel business and tourism"<sup>35</sup>. One of the main topics of this forum was "Investment in agricultural production in Belarus in order to increase production here and supply both the Gulf and the Eurasian Economic Union markets"<sup>36</sup>. There was also talk about the possibility of setting up a joint venture in Oman for sales, assembly and after-sales service of Amkodor machinery.

In October 2017, Belarus took part for the first time in Oman's largest food and hospitality trade fair, Food and Hospitality. Interest in it was fuelled by the fact that food production remains a problem in that country, as elsewhere in the Middle East. Up to half of Oman's imports come from consumer goods and foodstuffs. "At present, Oman is particularly interested in supplying poultry, chicken eggs and dairy products: skim and whole milk powder, animal butter, milk whey powder and cheese"<sup>37</sup>. Finally, the third meeting of the Belarus-Oman Business Council was held in Minsk in April 2019. At it, participants considered opportunities for bilateral business interaction and prospects for implementing investment projects "in the areas of logistics, oil and gas industry, development of security and safety systems, tourism, organisation of exhibitions and fairs, business events..."<sup>38</sup>. In

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<sup>35</sup> More than 40 big businessmen from Oman will visit Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-40-krupnyh-biznesmenov-omana-posetjat-belarus-210359-2016/>

<sup>36</sup> Omani businessmen plan to invest in agricultural production in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/omanskie-biznesmeny-planirujut-investirovat-v-proizvodstvo-selhozproduktov-v-belarusi-210859-2016/>

<sup>37</sup> Belarusian products to be presented at international exhibition in Oman [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-produkty-budut-predstavleny-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-v-omane-266188-2017/>

<sup>38</sup> A meeting of the Belarus-Oman Business Cooperation Council will be held in Minsk on 10 April [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/zasedanie->

addition, an "enterprise that is interested in the development of innovative technologies and the IT-sphere" has appeared as part of the Omani delegation<sup>39</sup>.

All this shows that the two sides have considerable potential for developing business cooperation, which now needs to be capitalised into concrete projects. This will probably be the focus of the fourth meeting of the Business Council, which the two sides plan to hold in 2021.

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[belorusko-omanskogo-soveta-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-projdet-v-minske-10-aprelja-342835-2019/](https://www.belarus.by/economics/view/belarusko-omanskogo-soveta-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-projdet-v-minske-10-aprelja-342835-2019/)

<sup>39</sup> Lisatovich, T. Belarus is interested in Oman business coming to the country - Koltovich / T. Lisatovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainterosovana-v-prihode-v-stranu-biznesa-omana-koltovich-343395-2019/>

## **Opportunities for engagement are there, we need to seize them**

**Asia** is now the most important area for the Republic of Belarus to develop its trade and economic cooperation. For example, in 2020 alone, Belarusian exports to the countries of that continent amounted to about two billion dollars. Nevertheless, there are still many opportunities to promote Belarusian economic interests in this area. "In order to use them successfully, it is necessary to continue systematic and consistent work, developing mutual interest and initiating new formats of contacts, as is actually happening in the development of partnerships with a number of Asian countries,"<sup>40</sup>, including **Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia**.

In this context, we would like to recall that in October 2021, the fifth meeting of the Belarus-Pakistan Business Council was held, which was attended by representatives of over 60 companies from that South Asian country, representing such sectors of the economy as the chemical industry, pharmaceuticals, textiles, food production, construction, transport, logistics and tourism. On the Belarusian side the meeting was attended by representatives of almost a hundred enterprises and companies. Such composition of the business council participants eloquently demonstrated that "the relations between Belarus and Pakistan are currently at a high level, especially in trade, investment and industry"<sup>41</sup>. This is largely facilitated by the very extensive legal and contractual framework, which already includes more than 80 agreements. Another "around 20 agreements/memoranda of

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<sup>40</sup> Zalessky, B. The goal is sustainable growth. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 66.

<sup>41</sup> Pakistan is interested in strengthening economic cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pakistan-zainteresovan-v-ukreplenii-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusju-462939-2021/>

understanding are in the final stages of negotiation"<sup>42</sup>. The established partnership implementation mechanisms in the form of commissions and working groups as well as the existing system of interregional cooperation are also active.

As for the Business Council, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry held its fourth meeting in the online format in April 2021. There the parties "discussed not only the development of bilateral trade, but also possibilities to increase investment cooperation, industrial cooperation, creation of joint companies and productions, mentioning industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, as well as education, information technologies and logistics among the priority directions of cooperation"<sup>43</sup>. At the fifth session of the Council the Belarusian side made the key areas of cooperation with its Pakistani partners more specific and pointed out among them "the increase in mutual sales of traditional products, the establishment of joint productions of Belarusian equipment in Pakistan, and joint productions of surgical instruments and leather goods in Belarus. The creation of joint clusters to produce medicines in demand is promising, and it can take place both in Belarus and Pakistan"<sup>44</sup>. Attraction of Pakistani capital to implement projects aimed at modernization of Belarusian textile companies, development of joint ventures in the agricultural sector and joint projects in science and technology with access to the production cycle are also topical today. The project to establish a University of Applied Technologies in Pakistan is also relevant, in order to use it to reach a new level of professional

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<sup>42</sup> Khan, S.H. About business plans, tractor deliveries and master class on van painting / S.H. Khan // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/posol-pakistana-o-biznes-planah-postavkah-tractorov-i-master-klasse-po-rospisi-furgonov-7887/>

<sup>43</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Key task - realization of cooperation potential / B.L. Zalessky // Materials for XVII International Scientific and Practical Conference, Novinata za nadrednoli nauk - 2021, 17 - 25 May 2021: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 19.

<sup>44</sup> Barysievich: Belarus-Pakistan relations acquire strategic character [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/borisevich-otmoshenija-belarusi-i-pakistana-priobretajut-strategicheskij-harakter-462932-2021/>.



and technical training of Pakistani specialists using Belarusian educational technologies.

If we take agriculture as our priority, we note that in 2020 about three hundred units of Belarusian agricultural equipment - tractors and harvesters - were sold to Pakistan. In 2021, Minsk and Islamabad intend to increase this figure to three thousand units. At the same time, the fifth meeting of the Business Council discussed the idea of setting up an assembly factory of Belarusian tractors on Pakistani soil. "We are talking about assembling 10,000 tractors a year in Pakistan, this project is now in the works and preliminary documents have been signed,"<sup>45</sup> .

Another promising area for Belarusian-Pakistani business engagement is the development of exchange trade, which can give a new impetus to the development of bilateral trade and economic relations. In particular, the Pakistani side sees significant potential here "primarily in such areas as agriculture, woodworking, metallurgy and petrochemistry."<sup>46</sup> . The fact is that, according to both sides, the trade turnover between Belarus and Pakistan is still small - a little over \$50 million in 2020. A significant potential for its growth through the exchange mechanism lies in the fact that "Pakistan is one of the world's largest exporters of rice, wheat and other grains"<sup>47</sup> . The textile industry is also developed there. The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) is ready to save Pakistani companies from most of the problems associated with entering the Belarusian market and to minimize their possible risks. Besides, exporters

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<sup>45</sup> Belarus and Pakistan are considering the possibility of setting up assembly production of Belarusian tractors [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-rassmatrivajut-vozmozhnost-sozdaniya-sborohnogo-proizvodstva-belorusskih-traktorov-462934-2021/>

<sup>46</sup> Pakistan is ready to trade with Belarus through the BUTB platform [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pakistan-gotov-torgovat-s-belarusiju-čerez-ploschadku-butb-462927-2021/>.

<sup>47</sup> BUTB opens broad prospects for the development of mutual trade between Belarus and Pakistan - Ambassador [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-otkryvaet-shirokie-perspektivy-dlja-razvitiya-vzaimnoj-torgovli-belarusi-i-pakistana-posol-453692-2021/>

from Pakistan could use the Belarusian exchange platform to supply their goods to the European Union, where the BUCE has about four thousand accredited members. In turn, Belarusian companies could successfully export chemical and petrochemical products to the Pakistani market, which are traditionally in high demand there.

It should be reminded that in the first eight months of 2021 the trade turnover between Belarus and Pakistan exceeded USD 53 million. At the same time, "export of Belarusian goods totaled \$44.3 million..."<sup>48</sup>, and the trade surplus for the Belarusian side exceeded \$35 million. The dynamics of these indicators demonstrate that the growth potential has not yet been exhausted. The opportunities for the expansion of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries are quite diverse, and the plans for their implementation are concrete and realistic.

As for the **United Arab Emirates** (UAE), trade and economic relations with this state located in the Middle East and Persian Gulf region have been developing particularly intensively in recent years. "Belarus is steadily increasing its supplies of goods and services to the UAE <...>. The main Belarusian exports are petrochemical products, wood processing products, foodstuffs and various types of equipment. In the services sector, computer and transport services are actively exported"<sup>49</sup>. The dynamics of the development of these bilateral ties is eloquently illustrated by the fact that "trade turnover over the last five years has tripled, investments since 2011 have increased more than tenfold"<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> Trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade\\_and\\_economic\\_bilateral\\_relations/](https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade_and_economic_bilateral_relations/)

<sup>49</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus is interested in expanding trade and investment cooperation with the UAE [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-zainteresovana-v-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-s-oae-v-sfere-torgovli-i-investitsij-470873-2021/>

<sup>50</sup> Cherviakov: National Day of Belarus at Expo 2020 will allow to show the capabilities of enterprises [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-natsionalnyj-den-belarusi-na-ekspo-2020-pozvolit-pokazat-vozmozhnosti-predpriyatij-470830-2021/>

A good example of the expansion of bilateral Belarus-Emirati cooperation in the investment sector in recent years is "a major construction and real estate project being implemented in Minsk under the patronage of the founder of the world-renowned Emaar company"<sup>51</sup>. Let us remind you that Minsk City Executive Committee has signed an agreement with the Emirati company Riverside Development Holdings Limited for the construction of the facility "Experimental Multifunctional Complex "North Shore", which will be located within the boundaries of Minsk Ring Road - Pobediteley Avenue - Orlovskaya Street - Tsnianskoe Reservoir. The cost of the project is four billion dollars. This complex will comprise "residential houses with all the necessary engineering and transport infrastructure, social facilities and public amenities with the total area of over 6 million square metres. There are also plans to build the National Exhibition Centre, the Institute of Artificial Intelligence and the Minsk International Trade Centre"<sup>52</sup>.

Among other Belarusian regions successfully developing mutually beneficial ties with partners from the UAE is Brest Region. "Last year [2021] the foreign trade turnover between the Brest region and the UAE increased 1.5 times and exceeded \$5 million. This is a small amount against the \$3 billion of exports in the region as a whole. But the market is promising..."<sup>53</sup>. The interest of Brest Region companies in the Emirati market is reflected in the fact that leaders and leading specialists of ten major companies from the region are expected to come to Dubai in January 2022 to participate in

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<sup>51</sup> Roman Golovchenko: We are working on cooperation with the countries of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf at the Expo [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10068>

<sup>52</sup> Construction of the exhibition centre in the Severny Bereg complex in Minsk is scheduled to start this year [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/stroitelstvo-vystavochnogo-tsentra-v-komplekse-severnyj-bereg-v-minske-planirujut-nachat-v-etom-godu-470841-2021/>

<sup>53</sup> The foreign trade turnover between the Brest region and the UAE has grown by 1.5 times [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vneshnetorgovj-oborot-mezhdu-brestskoj-oblastju-i-oae-vyros-v-15-raza-479871-2022/>

the "World Expo 2020". They include Santa Bremor JV LLC, Barhim OJSC, IAK-GROUP, ST&M Group of Companies, Kobrin Butter and Cheese Plant, Brest Meat Factory, Brestmyasomolprom Concern, Brest Scientific and Technological Park and Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park. As a result they signed contracts worth \$18 million at the world exhibition. Four contracts with UAE residents worth eight million dollars were among them. "In particular, contracts were signed to supply dried milk, dried ice cream <...> to the Arab market. Santa Bremor and the ST&M Group will increase sales of products. "Barkhim has signed an agreement with a Dubai company to promote its products in the UAE market"<sup>54</sup> .

The theme of attracting foreign investments into Brest Region's innovative projects was not left aside at the exhibition in Dubai. Thus, about two dozen Arab companies - logistics, investment, food distributors, trading in raw materials, working in the petrochemical industry - were able to learn in detail about the offers of the Brest Free Economic Zone, including the production of chargers for electric cars and ultrasound machines. Brest Science and Technology Park, which is the largest innovation centre and the main incubator for small businesses in the region, demonstrated the project of SmartBrest smart city at EXPO-2020. The park presented not only advanced technologies and solutions which are already available and work in Brest, but also something that might interest major investors. In particular, they talked about the territory of innovative development, which "might be turned into the current factory quarter, bounded by Moskovskaya, Pionerskaya and Y. Kupala Streets. Kupala Street. The area of the area is about 120 ha. The production buildings on it remain unused"<sup>55</sup> . Potential

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<sup>54</sup> Brest region enterprises signed contracts worth \$18 million at an exhibition in Dubai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kontrakty-na-18-mln-zakljuchili-predpriyatija-brestskoj-oblasti-na-vystavke-v-dubae-481397-2022/>

<sup>55</sup> Brest Technopark to present a smart city project at an exhibition in Dubai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brestskij-tehnopark-prezentuet-proekt-umnogo-goroda-na-vystavke-v-dubae-480835-2022/>

investors are offered to set up enterprises here with clean production in such areas as IT, artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, electronics, and quantum computing. The attention with which this smart city project was greeted by the presentation participants allows us to hope that SmartBrest will be able to find interested investors not only in the UAE, but also in other countries.

When it comes to the relations between the Republic of Belarus and **the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**, one should remember that in 2022 it will be a quarter century since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Admittedly, their level is still far from what it could have been. But it is a fact that in January 2022 the sides expressed a mutual desire to deepen and develop contacts, to intensify the dialogue. Minsk assumes that "the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a recognized leader in the Arab world, and Belarus is interested in developing relations in all areas"<sup>56</sup>. Today, the two sides consider several vectors of joint work to be top priorities: first, the contractual and legal framework for the relationship should be significantly expanded; second, partnership ties in the economic sector should be significantly stepped up, because the two sides "have a serious potential in trade and economic cooperation"<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>58</sup>As far as the legal and contractual framework of Belarusian-Saudi relations is concerned, today it includes the General Agreement, intergovernmental agreements on avoidance of double taxation and mutual protection of investments, on cooperation in science and technology, interagency memoranda in sports, education, on cooperation between the

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<sup>56</sup> Andreichenko: Belarus is interested in deepening and developing contacts with Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/andreichenko-belarus-zainteresovana-uglubljat-i-razvivat-kontakty-s-saudovskoj-araviej-480335-2022/>

<sup>57</sup> Kochanova: Belarus attaches great importance to friendly relations with Saudi Arabia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kochanova-belarus-pridaet-bolshoe-znachenie-druzheskim-otnoshenijam-s-saudovskoj-araviej-480404-2022>

<sup>58</sup> Political cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://uae.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/KSA/politics/](https://uae.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/KSA/politics/)

National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and King Abdulaziz City of Science and Technology, as well as "the agreement on cooperation between the BelCCI and the Council of the CCI of Qatar, the Memorandum of Understanding on

Speaking about the need to step up Belarus-Saudi trade and economic cooperation, we note that back in December 2020, the two sides agreed to "work on the next meeting of the joint intergovernmental committee."<sup>59</sup> . The fact is that the first two meetings of this committee were held in 2015 and 2016 in Riyadh and Minsk, respectively. At the first one, the parties agreed to establish a Belarusian-Saudi business council to become a platform for fruitful interaction between representatives of the business communities of the two countries. At the same time, "a contract was signed for the supply of soil mixes from the Belarusian company EridGrow Production"<sup>60</sup> . The second session of the intergovernmental committee considered a wide range of cooperation issues in economics, trade, investment, industry, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, water resources, higher education, science and technology. The Belarusian-Saudi business forum and the contact and cooperation exchange took place on the site of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. 18 Saudi and over 70 Belarusian companies and organizations took part in the forum. At that time, "Belarus was supplying 37 commodity items to Saudi Arabia, including machinery and complex technical equipment"<sup>61</sup> . At the forum, the Saudi partners were offered a much broader range of machinery products, including special machinery, as well as high-tech goods

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<sup>59</sup> Belarus and Saudi Arabia will work on holding a meeting of a joint intergovernmental committee [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-saudovskaja-aravija-prorabotajut-provedenie-zasedanija-sovmestnogo-mezhpravkomiteta-420253-2020/>

<sup>60</sup> Belarus and Saudi Arabia agree to establish a joint business council [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-saudovskaja-aravija-dogovorilis-o-sozdanii-sovmestnogo-delovogo-soveta-2523-2015>

<sup>61</sup> Kiseleva, O. Belarus intends to seriously expand the range of products on the market of Saudi Arabia / O. Kiseleva // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-namerena-serjezno-rasshirit-assortiment-produkcii-na-rynke-saudovskoj-aravii-193602-2016/>

in the field of instrument engineering. For its part, the Saudi side expressed its "interest in cooperation with Belarusian companies in the areas of information and communication technologies, real estate, security, agriculture and engineering"<sup>62</sup>.

One of the most promising areas for stepping up trade and economic cooperation is an increase in food supplies from Belarus to the Saudi market. Suffice it to say that "export of Belarusian food products and agricultural raw materials to Saudi Arabia increased 3.1 times in 2020 compared with 2019 and reached \$6.2 million. Belarus supplied skimmed milk powder, whey, jams, fruit puree and eggs to Saudi Arabia. January-March 2021 exported products for \$1.7 million (24.3% growth),"<sup>63</sup>. Belarusian producers now plan to continue working with the Saudi Food and Drug Agency on the accreditation of their supplies. This primarily concerns dairy products such as butter, cheese, skimmed milk powder and whole milk powder, and, in the future, meat products such as beef and poultry produced in accordance with Halal requirements.

It should be noted that a number of Belarusian exporters are already successfully developing the market of the Persian Gulf country. For example, in July 2021, the first batch of concentrated milk was sent to Saudi Arabia by the Rogachev Dairy Processing Plant. "This happened thanks to the contract concluded with one of the leaders in this country in distribution, which covers retail chains, shops, restaurants and cafes"<sup>64</sup>. Another interesting example in this row is the Polotsk Dairy Plant, which has more than doubled its export volumes in 2021, with its geography already reaching

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<sup>62</sup> Belarus-Saudi Arabia Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.cci.by/o-palate/novosti/biznes-forum-belarus-saudovskaya-araviya/#>

<sup>63</sup> Belarus Interested in Increasing Food Supplies to Saudi Arabia - Kroupko [Electronic Resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-naraschivanii-postavok-prodovolstvija-v-saudovskuju-araviju-krupko-441447-2021/>

<sup>64</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Export of food and agricultural products: growth of supplies and expansion of geography / B.L. Zalesky // Materials for XVII International Scientific Practical Conference, Scientific Potential for Light - 2021, 17 - 25 September 2021: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 5.

22 countries. "There are also plans to ship dried milk to Saudi Arabia in the near future"<sup>65</sup> .

All these facts indicate that the parties have some room for the successful development of mutually beneficial relations in the post-Soviet period, the starting point for which could well be 2022. There are many proposals, directions and initiatives on both sides.

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<sup>65</sup> Polotsk Dairy Plant more than doubled its exports in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bolee-chem-v-dva-raza-uvelichil-eksport-v-2021-godu-polotskij-molochnyj-kombinat-479923-2022>



## 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"<sup>66</sup> . 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 Southeast 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"<sup>67</sup> . 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 products, medicines and cosmetics"<sup>68</sup> . And in terms of development of industrial cooperation in the province of Hung Yen "key Belarusian-Vietnamese projects are being

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<sup>66</sup> 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>

<sup>67</sup> Zaleski, B. Regional community journalism. Theory and practice / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2013. - C. 99-100.

<sup>68</sup> Vietnamese ambassador sees potential for doubling trade turnover with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/posol-vjetnama-vidit-potentials-dlja-udvoenija-tovarooborota-s-belarusju-493021-2022/>.

implemented, including the assembly of MAZ trucks (JV Maz-Asia LLC) and production of dairy products from Belarusian raw materials (Au Viet Milk)<sup>69</sup>. 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"<sup>70</sup> has become 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. Besides, Vietnam is interested in organizing production of fire-fighting equipment and tailoring protective clothing for fire-fighting services 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"<sup>71</sup>.

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 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.

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<sup>69</sup> Belarus and Vietnam discuss prospects for developing joint ventures [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-vjetnam-obsudili-perspektivy-razvitiya-sovmestnyh-predpriyatij-478965-2022/>

<sup>70</sup> 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>

<sup>71</sup> 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-vozmoznost-sovmestnogo-proizvodstva-ekipirovki-dlja-pozharnyh-sluzhb-494398-2022/>

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: Krinitza, Belsolod, Spartak, Minskkrystal, Minsk Sparkling Wine Factory, Slodych, Kommunarka, Krasny Pospelik, Mashpischeprod, Lidapischkontsy, Malorit cannery, Minsk Margarine Factory and Pinsk Winery"<sup>72</sup>. 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: at this exhibition, the Belarusian national exposition received the "Special Guest" status, which "implies central placement in the exhibition hall, active advertising and information support and large-scale congress events, including the Belarusian-Vietnamese business forum"<sup>73</sup> aimed at finding business 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

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<sup>72</sup> 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/>

<sup>73</sup> A national exposition of Belarus will be presented at the Vietnam Expo in April [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-budet-predstavlena-na-vietnam-expo-v-aprele-485336-2022/>

oncological diseases of internal organs<sup>74</sup> . 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 serious scientific and industrial potential,"<sup>75</sup> . 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"<sup>76</sup> .

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

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<sup>74</sup> 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/>

<sup>75</sup> Andreichenko: Belarus-India relations are developing on the principles of equality, trust and respect [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/andrejchenko-otmosenija-belarusi-i-indii-razvivajutsja-na-printsipah-ravenstva-doverija-i-uvazhenija-479047-2022/>

<sup>76</sup> Zalessky, B. International relations and media. A View from Belarus / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2014. - C. 452.

areas that are not fully developed. This is especially true of trade and economic relations"<sup>77</sup>. 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 potential"<sup>78</sup>. As far as cooperation in education is concerned, 150 Indians are studying at Grodno State Medical 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 pulp, timber, electric current control apparatus, stone products are in demand in India"<sup>79</sup>. In 2022, the parties put into practice the issue of resuming the

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<sup>77</sup> 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/>

<sup>78</sup> 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/>

<sup>79</sup> 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/>

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 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, the Tekhnolit 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<sup>80</sup>. 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

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<sup>80</sup> Strakhar: Mogilev's Tekhnolit shows its efficiency under difficult conditions [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/strahar-mogilevskij-tehnolit-v-neprostyh-uslovijah-pokazyvaet-svoju-effektivnost-493160-2022>

and solar batteries"<sup>81</sup>. The FEZ Mogilev, which signed agreements with two companies from India on the implementation of investment projects at the FEZ in March 2022 at the World Expo 2020 in Dubai, is also significantly intensifying cooperation with the Indian side.

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 raised hopes in Minsk that the previously existing level of bilateral cooperation would be restored.

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<sup>81</sup> Agriculture, Textiles: India's 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>

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 cooperation in order to "not only restore the previous level of trade turnover in the best years, but also surpass it many times over"<sup>82</sup>. 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"<sup>83</sup>. 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 a contractual framework that included 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 double taxation; on military-technical cooperation; on cooperation in education, science and culture; on air communication; on scientific and technical cooperation; on international

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<sup>82</sup> 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](http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b49e0d253459ccba.html).

<sup>83</sup> 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-belorusskoj-avtotehniki-155561-2015/>



carriage 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 in this regard, they see 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<sup>84</sup> .

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 commodity items, but also for engineering products, passenger, agricultural, freight, construction equipment, as well as "for the construction of high-quality and comfortable housing"<sup>85</sup> . The fact is that the restoration of industry, agriculture, construction and the services sector is under 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

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<sup>84</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus can meet most of Syria's machine-building needs [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10143>

<sup>85</sup> 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/>

of the work is estimated at \$540 billion. In this regard, the country needs a wide range of materials, services and technologies"<sup>86</sup> .

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"; "Ecology 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 presented railway automation, telemechanics and communication equipment, which turned out to fully meet the requirements of the Syrian market, as "Syria's railway 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."<sup>87</sup> .

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<sup>86</sup> 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-krupnejshej-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-sirii-458048-2021/>

<sup>87</sup> Sluka: Syria today needs modern achievements of the Belarusian economy [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sluka-sirija-segodnja-nuzhdaetsja-v-sovremennyh-dostizhenijah-beloruskoj-ekonomiki-462466-2021/>

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"<sup>88</sup>, 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 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 construction.

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 Syrian General Organization for Television and Radio Broadcasting of 12 November 2007 and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Belarusian Telegraph Agency and the Syrian Arab News

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<sup>88</sup> 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/>

Agency (SANA) of 27 November 2008. These documents note "the importance of objective information support for interstate cooperation. The role of mass media in strengthening mutual understanding between the countries and the peoples is especially emphasised."<sup>89</sup> . 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 signed seven 'pilot' contracts for joint R&D works"<sup>90</sup> . In this regard, the task of journalists is to comprehensively reflect these trends in the media sphere.

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<sup>89</sup> 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/>

<sup>90</sup> Cooperation in Science, Education, Culture [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: [http://syria.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/cooperation/ec5318cc4fb8b9c5.html](http://syria.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/cooperation/ec5318cc4fb8b9c5.html)

## The Asian vector expands cooperation

Increasing supplies of Belarusian goods to Asian and Middle Eastern countries is one of the top priorities of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE). Figures show that by the end of 10 months of 2022, exports of domestic products through the BUCE to a number of Asian countries increased significantly: to Singapore by 6.6 times, to Turkey by 21 times, and to Uzbekistan by 30 times.

In this context, in 2022 the **Chinese** segment of electronic exchange trading on the BUBS became much more active. However, even "in 2021, the Belarusian-Chinese exchange turnover grew three and a half times at once"<sup>91</sup>. And in October 2022, 100 companies from China were already working on the BUCE, three of which had the status of stock brokers. In the nine months of 2022 their transactions amounted to 27 million dollars. More than 24 million dollars was accounted for by lumber, mainly sawn softwood boards. China Township Enterprise Co., Ltd. (CTEC) is the 100th Chinese company accredited to bid on the BUTB, which initially intends to use the exchange to purchase wood products. In fact, from the end of October 2022, the BUTB has resumed the practice of holding special trading sessions to sell lumber to China with delivery in containers to the destination. "In addition to lumber, unrefined rapeseed oil and skimmed milk powder have been supplied to China through the exchange this year. The total value of the transactions amounted to more than \$3 million"<sup>92</sup>. Given that one of CTEC's activities in China is the trading of agro-industrial products, it is possible that in the future the Chinese company will develop this segment of the commodity exchange market as well.

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<sup>91</sup> Zalessky, B. Systemic partnerships. Specificity of economic interaction of the Belarusian side with the post-Soviet republics / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 45.

<sup>92</sup> The 100th company from China has been accredited at BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovalas-100-ja-kompanija-iz-kitaja-530408-2022/>

Coming back to the topic of lumber exports to China, we note that according to the results of the special trade session, which took place in the first decade of November 2022 at the BUTB, more than 20 thousand cubic meters of lumber produced in Belarus were sold to the Chinese market. The session was attended by 11 Chinese residents. "Several delivery bases were provided for the convenience of buyers, namely Taicang, Tianjin, Shanghai and Changsha cities. A key feature of the special trading sessions is that they focus on a specific sales market - in this case China"<sup>93</sup>. In December 2022, the results of the special export trading session were record-breaking both in terms of the sum of transactions made and the volume of resources sold to the Chinese market. It is more than 60 thousand cubic meters of lumber "worth a total of 85.5 million yuan, or the equivalent of \$12.3 million <...>. As a result, residents of China and Singapore bought 10 lots of lumber with a volume of 62.2 thousand cubic meters, which is half of all the lumber put up for auction"<sup>94</sup>. It should be noted that special trading sessions on sales of sawn timber to China have been held at BUTB since December 2020 with the support of the Ministry of Forestry of Belarus to diversify export supplies of products of domestic woodworking enterprises and increase export revenues through the use of the competitive mechanism of exchange trading.

For reference: as of 1 November 2022, 103 Chinese companies had already been accredited on the BUTB. Among the new participants of the Belarusian electronic marketplace was a company from China, which bought tanned semi-finished products "vet-blue" for the first time on the BUTB. Thus, the geography of sales of this product through this marketplace has

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<sup>93</sup> Companies from China and Singapore bought more than \$4 million worth of lumber products at the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/piloproduksiju-na-bolce-chem-4-mln-priobreli-na-butb-kompanii-iz-kitaja-i-singapura-533965-2022/>

<sup>94</sup> \$12.3 million worth of lumber sold to China through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pilomaterialy-na-123-mln-prodany-v-kitaj-cherez-butb-541419-2022/>

expanded to eight countries. "Vet-blue semi-finished products are in steady demand from leather goods manufacturers around the world. Companies from Russia, Kazakhstan, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, Lithuania and Poland regularly buy this product on the exchange. In January-October this year, the total sum of the deals amounted to \$6.5 million."<sup>95</sup> . So far no such products have been shipped from Belarus to China. Apparently, after the pilot deal, new supplies of tanned leather are not far off.

Another interesting fact. In November 2022, a large Chinese trading company headquartered in Chongqing, which specialises in supplying cattle, chicken and seafood to the southern provinces of China, expressed interest in bidding for agricultural products at the BUTB. The firm "has an extensive network of suppliers around the world, including Belarus, but all relationships have been put on hold during the pandemic. Using the BUTB trading platform, which features leading domestic suppliers of meat and meat products, the Chinese importer intends to establish new business contacts and resume the purchase of frozen beef in Belarus"<sup>96</sup> . The more so since Belarusian-made products have gained popularity at the Chinese market in recent years and are in high demand among Chinese consumers. Therefore, the company does not expect any problems with sales. In addition to the office and wholesale outlets in Chongqing, the company has representative offices in other provinces of China, which will ensure the widest possible geography of sales of the meat purchased on the exchange.

In order to promote Belarusian-Chinese electronic trade, the BUTB continues to expand the list of partners from the Celestial Empire to further strengthen trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and

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<sup>95</sup> Now China: the geography of exports of Belarusian leather products through BUTB has expanded [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/teper-i-kitaj-geografija-eksporta-belorusskoj-kozhevennoj-produktsii-cherez-butb-rasshirilas-533733-2022/>

<sup>96</sup> A major Chinese importer of meat and seafood is interested in cooperating with BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krupnyj-kitajskij-importer-mjasa-i-moreproduktov-zainteresovalsja-sotrudnicestvom-s-butb-536236-2022/>

the People's Republic of China. In particular, in September 2022 the BUTB signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Chinese branch of the BRICS Institute for the Study of Future Networks (BIFNC) to promote greater involvement of Belarusian and Chinese companies, including small and medium businesses, in cross-border exchange trading. "One promising area of interaction could be the accreditation of BIFNC as a broker. This will allow not only to fully utilise BIFNC's wide network of business contacts to attract Chinese sellers and buyers to exchange trading, but also to conclude transactions on their behalf, thus ensuring growth of exchange trade turnover between Belarus and China.<sup>97</sup> . It is expected that at the initial stage, the main focus will be on supplies of Belarusian lumber and fuel pellets to China as the most sought-after commodity items on the Chinese market.

Another new partner for BUTB in November 2022 is the Alliance of Economic and Commercial Advisers of China. The Chinese side is interested in such highly liquid commodity items as lumber, rapeseed oil, and vet-blue leather, because "in the near term, the level of demand will increase, including for Belarusian-made goods that have proven themselves in the Chinese market.<sup>98</sup> . So the Belarusian-Chinese exchange trade appears to be reaching a new qualitative level.

BUTB also has big plans with other countries on the Asian continent, including **India, Pakistan, Turkey and Mongolia**.

For example, in September 2022, the BUTB and the Inventivepreneur Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCI) headquartered in New Delhi, **India**, decided to join efforts to attract Indian companies interested in entering the Belarusian market to the exchange platform. After all, the use

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<sup>97</sup> The BUTB and the BRICS Institute's China branch will promote electronic exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-kitajskij-filial-instituta-briks-budut-sodejstvovat-razvitiju-elektronnoj-birzhevoj-torgovli-525751-2022/>

<sup>98</sup> The BUTB and the Alliance of Economic and Commercial Advisers of China have identified areas for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-aljjans-ekonomicheskij-i-kommercheskih-sovetnikov-kitaja-opredelili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-535514-2022/>



of the exchange mechanism will not only help strengthen trade relations between Belarus and India, but also create favorable conditions for closer cooperation in related areas. As a reminder, ICCI has over 10 thousand members all over India. These are mainly small and medium-sized enterprises operating in various sectors of industry and agriculture that use the services of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry to effectively conduct their business, including market analysis, assistance in attracting investments, staff development courses and finding business partners in India and abroad. The main objective of the ICCI is to assist in the scaling up of a business, which usually involves entering markets in other countries, including Belarus. Given the low risks, wide product range and direct access to leading Belarusian companies, BUTB is the optimal solution for starting an ICCI in Belarus. In particular, "there is a high demand for Belarusian acrylic fibre and other petrochemical products in India, as transactions in this group of goods are regularly made <...>. Equally promising items are lumber, dairy products and light industry products"<sup>99</sup>.

Another curious fact: in November 2022, a pharmaceutical company from India, Tosco Pharmachem, which produces and sells special chemicals and reagents for the Indian pharmaceutical industry, was accredited for the first time on the Belarusian exchange to purchase petrochemical products. "Tosco Pharmachem plans to buy acetone cyanohydrin on the Belarusian exchange platform and, in the future, other chemicals and preparations it needs"<sup>100</sup>. There are several reasons for the company's interest in the BUTB platform. Firstly, India is one of the world's top three producers of pharmaceuticals. Secondly, the Indian company will open up new export

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<sup>99</sup> The BUTB and the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry plan to collaborate on exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-indijskaja-torgovo-promyshlennaja-palata-planirujut-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-birzhevoj-torgovli-524659-2022/>

<sup>100</sup> BUTB plans to start exporting petrochemicals to the Indian pharma industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-nachat-eksport-neftehimicheskij-produktsii-dlja-indijskoj-farmotrasli-535977-2022/>

opportunities for Belarusian companies in the petrochemical sector through exchange trading. Thirdly, apart from increasing the Belarusian-Indian exchange trade turnover, the BUTB will provide experience in the Indian market that can be useful in selling other sought-after commodity items, including synthetic fibers, to this South Asian country. In December 2022, the first deal was registered on the BUTB: Tosco Pharmachem bought 23 tonnes of Belarusian acetone cyanohydrin following a trading session. The small volume of the purchase was due to the Indian company's desire to work out the entire scheme for importing goods from Belarus. "The Indian side is interested in long-term cooperation with the exchange, which implies regular participation in exchange trading and an increase in the volume of purchases. At the same time, due to the lack of practical experience in operating in the Belarusian market through the exchange platform, the company preferred to make a trial deal for a small amount to minimize possible risks"<sup>101</sup>. In this regard, the BUTB expects an increase in supplies of Belarusian petrochemical products to India. For reference: export trading in chemical and petrochemical products has been conducted at BUTB since October 2021. The entire nomenclature of goods produced by the petrochemical industry of Belarus is exported abroad. In 2022, synthetic fibers, gasoline, oils, and solvents were in particular demand among foreign buyers. The main markets are a number of countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as the "far arc" countries - China, Syria, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey.

In 2022, certain steps have also been taken to intensify exchange trading between Belarus and **Pakistan**. Specifically, the first broker company from that country has already been accredited to the BUTB, and thanks to the efforts of the Embassy of Pakistan in Belarus, the central office

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<sup>101</sup> An Indian company has struck its first deal at the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/indijskaja-kompanija-vpervye-sovershila-sdelku-na-butb-537935-2022/>

of the exchange was visited by 70 representatives of the Pakistani business community, who are interested in purchasing products from Belarus. And it's not just lumber, but also chemical and petrochemical products. For example, "Belarusian acrylic fiber is in high demand in Pakistan, which has recently been regularly supplied to this market through our trading platform. Transaction volumes are not very large yet, so expanding the circle of Pakistani buyers is a task of paramount importance."<sup>102</sup> , in order to really increase trade turnover between Belarus and Pakistan.

Another country in Asia that is very promising in terms of marketing Belarusian goods through the BUTB is **Turkey**. During the three quarters of 2022, 27 Turkish companies were accredited to the exchange. "This year they have bought domestic lumber, as well as scrap and waste of non-ferrous metals on the exchange trading. If compared to January-September last year, the amount of transactions made by Turkish participants has increased by almost 1.5 times"<sup>103</sup> . Not only traditional export-import transactions involving Belarusian companies, but also transit transactions between non-residents are considered as possible areas for cooperation.

In November 2022, the BUTB agreed to develop exchange trade in agricultural and wood products with the Istanbul Commodity Exchange (ISTIB) to "combine efforts to increase mutual trade between Belarus and Turkey, with the main focus on agricultural and wood products, the demand for which is consistently high in both countries"<sup>104</sup> . In this regard, Belarusian partners hope for support and assistance on the part of ISTIB, whose

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<sup>102</sup> BUTB arranges supplies of Belarusian lumber to Pakistan's industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-organizuet-postavki-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-dlja-promyshlennosti-pakistana-535371-2022/>

<sup>103</sup> BUTB to showcase the benefits of exchange trading at an exhibition in Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-predstavit-preimuschestva-birzhevoj-torgovli-na-vystavke-v-turtsii-529829-2022/>

<sup>104</sup> BUTB and the Istanbul Mercantile Exchange will develop trade in agro-industrial products and wood products [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-stambulskaja-tovarnaja-birzha-budut-razvivat-torgovlju-produktsiej-apk-i-derevoobrabotki-533002-2022/>

members comprise over ten thousand Turkish enterprises, and for many of them ISTIB could become a "window" to the Belarusian market and the Eurasian Economic Union. After all, the exchange platform is an effective tool for establishing direct contacts between producers and consumers of the two countries, which would allow regular trade in highly liquid commodity items such as lumber and dairy products.

Starting from December 2022, in order to make the exchange mechanism more attractive for foreign companies, including potential buyers of fuel pellets or pellets and other wood products, the BUTB has introduced a simplified accreditation procedure for residents of Turkey. Note that "the simplified accreditation procedure is already in place for residents of 21 countries, which makes the exchange mechanism more accessible to foreign companies and contributes to the growth of supplies of Belarusian goods to these markets"<sup>105</sup>. More than 18 thousand cubic meters of light and gray pellets were offered at the first export auction, which was aimed at the Turkish market and took place in the first decade of December 2022. More than 20 Turkish companies expressed interest in buying Belarusian biofuel. And, apparently, the clear logistics and significant capacity of the Turkish market make it one of the most promising export destinations for Belarusian fuel products.

Also. In January 2023, the first company from **Mongolia** was accredited to participate in trading at the BUTB. This means that the geography of Belarusian exchange trading in the new year has expanded to 71 countries on four continents. Through the BUTB, "a Mongolian company plans to supply Belarus with mining products, including fluorspar and slags used in the metallurgical industry, as well as purchase Belarusian metal

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<sup>105</sup> BUTB simplifies accreditation for Turkish companies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-uproschaet-akkreditatsiju-dlja-turetskih-kompanij-537787-2022/>

products and goods of the agricultural group."<sup>106</sup> . The interest of Mongolian businesses in the Belarusian exchange platform is not accidental. All Belarusian metallurgical companies are accredited and participate in trading on BUCE, and the amount of transactions in the steel products section exceeded two billion Belarusian rubles in 2022. The largest consumers and producers of the goods the Mongolian company intends to trade in are concentrated on the exchange. The situation is similar in the agribusiness segment: the BUTB has a wide range of products from Belarusian agricultural enterprises, including exporters of milk, cream, and butter, which are especially in demand in Mongolia. It is expected that the next step in the cooperation between the Belarusian exchange platform and the Mongolian company will be to grant it the status of an exchange broker, which will enable it to act as the official representative of the BUTB in Mongolia and attract new importers and exporters to the Belarusian market.

Overall, with regard to the cooperation of the BUTB with Asian countries, this area of cooperation has enormous export potential. And "in the near future this cooperation will already show high results"<sup>107</sup> . And the first steps in this respect have been taken.

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<sup>106</sup> The first company from Mongolia is accredited to the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-butb-akkreditovana-pervaja-kompanija-iz-mongolii-545414-2023/>

<sup>107</sup> Zalesky, B. The potential of the exchange mechanism. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 52.

## To build on the existing potential for collaboration

<sup>108</sup>In 2021, the **People's Republic of China** launched the 14th Five-Year Economic and Social Development Plan to 2025, which will take new steps in reform policies and shape a new architectonics of mutually beneficial international cooperation to "comprehensively enhance the country's opening up to the outside world, promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, foster innovation and trade development, promote high-quality co-building development of One Belt One Road project". In doing so, the Chinese side will aim to create new advantages in international cooperation and competition as it believes "international economic cooperation and exchanges are still an objective requirement for global economic development. Openness to the outside world is the basic state policy of the country"<sup>109</sup>. As far as Belarus is concerned, the Chinese side expresses its confidence that both countries should continue to mutually use the advantages of their economies, which complement each other to a great extent, develop the existing potential for interaction, including within the framework of the One Belt, One Road project and the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone, and expand cooperation "in such areas as epidemic control, trade and economy, education, science and technology, culture, interregional relations"<sup>110</sup>.

It should be recalled that the Republic of Belarus has by now built quite strong and open relations with the People's Republic of China, which are characteristic of only three countries now - Russia, Pakistan and the United Kingdom. This is confirmed by the following figures. "The PRC is

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<sup>108</sup> Communiqué of the Fifth Plenum of the 19th CPC Central Committee [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://ru.china-embassy.org/rus/ggl/t1832267.htm>

<sup>109</sup> Qimin, C. China in 2021-2025 intends to implement new development plan / C. Qimin // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/kitaj-v-2021-2025-godah-nameren-realizovat-novyj-plan-razvitija-7479/>

<sup>110</sup> Xiaoyun, S. Taking the Bull by the Horns / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/vzjat-byka-za-roga-sovety-posla-knr-kak-pravilno-vstretit-kitajskij-novyj-god-7657/>

Belarus' second foreign trade partner after Russia, with an annual turnover of \$5 billion. <...> About 500 Belarusian exporters have already gained a foothold in this competitive market. More than 100 agricultural enterprises have been accredited. Twenty-four projects worth nearly \$4.5 billion have already been implemented in Belarus using China's resources."<sup>111</sup> .

The flagship project in this context is undoubtedly the Sino-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park, which in its incomplete six years of existence has already seen \$650 million in investments, with 68 residents from 14 countries already registered with a reported investment of \$1.2 billion, of which about half have commenced operations. As a result, "supercapacitors, truck cranes, laser equipment, drones, Euro 6 engines and heavy-duty gearboxes, a 5G pilot communication zone and a multimodal container terminal are just a few examples of projects currently underway in the park"<sup>112</sup> . There are plans to attract a further 17 new residents in 2021. The project to create a multimodal rail terminal involving Germany, China and Switzerland, which will start being built in the near future, and also the arrival here of the US company Ivy Global, which is considering opening a "pharmaceutical plant to produce a wide range of medicines, including for fighting COVID-19" in Velikiy Kamen<sup>113</sup> , are high hopes in this regard. In the same year, "when the second phase of development of the park begins,

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<sup>111</sup> Yaroshenko: Belarus has built strong and open relations with China [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/jaroshenko-belarus-vystroila-prochnye-i-otkrytye-otnoshenija-s-kitaem-428410-2021/>

<sup>112</sup> Investments in Velikiy Kamen during the project implementation amounted to \$650 million - Yaroshenko [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/investitsii-v-velikij-kamen-za-vremja-realizatsii-proekta-sostavili-650-mln-jaroshenko-428432-2021/>

<sup>113</sup> US company Ivy Global is considering opening a pharmaceutical plant in Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/amerikanskaja-kompanija-ivy-global-rassmatrivaet-vozmozhnost-otkrytija-v-velikom-kamne-farmzavoda-426540-2021/>

there are also plans to build a second residential complex with 173 flats and a second substation"<sup>114</sup> .

Continuing the construction theme, it should be noted that in 2021 the construction of a national football stadium and an international standard swimming pool in Belarus with Chinese grant aid will also come to the fore, with completion of these projects in 2023, and the beginning of the third phase of social housing construction on Belarusian soil using again Chinese grant aid in the first half of 2021. We would remind you that during the first two phases of the project 38 houses with 3,286 flats were built in six regions and in Minsk to improve the living conditions of over ten thousand people. During the third stage "it is planned to build 1166 social housing flats in 20 houses. The total built-up area will be around 66,000 square metres. The flats will be provided to citizens who are registered as being in need of better housing conditions and who have the right to receive social housing"<sup>115</sup> .

Finally, with regard to the coronavirus pandemic, the two countries joined forces from the outset to combat it, providing each other with aid and support. As a result, "40 tonnes of humanitarian medical supplies were sent from Belarus to China. From China, two shipments of emergency medical supplies worth about 32.6 million yuan, provided by the Chinese government, and 110 tonnes from twin regions and partner companies"<sup>116</sup> . Given the current situation with the re-emerging outbreaks of the epidemic, the parties intend to continue to work together actively to address this global

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<sup>114</sup> Great Stone Industrial Park expects to attract around 17 residents in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/industrialnyj-park-velikij-kamen-rasschityvaet-v-2021-godu-privlech-okolo-17-rezidentov-423412-2021/>

<sup>115</sup> China is going to build another 20 social houses in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitaj-sobiraetsja-postroit-v-belarusi-esche-20-sotsialnyh-domov-426882-2021/>

<sup>116</sup> Qiuyan, C. Covid not a hindrance - trade between Belarus and China turned out to be stress-resistant / C. Qiuyan // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/kovid-ne-pomeha-torgovlja-belarusi-i-knr-okazalas-stressoustojchivoj-7641/>.



challenge, confirming with concrete actions the existing level of trust-based comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation.

As for the interaction between the regions of the two countries, back in January 2021 the parties "proposed to declare the Year of Regions of Belarus and China and hold it for three years, from 2021 to 2023, in order to develop interregional cooperation"<sup>117</sup>. A number of Belarusian and Chinese regions are already taking active steps to update these partnerships. Back in 2020, the Belarusian region of **Grodno** and the Chinese province of **Hainan** signed an agreement on twinning, which envisages a significant increase in cooperation between the regions in the economic, trade and cultural spheres. This is not the first partner for Grodno Region in the Celestial Empire.

Back in 2007, Grodno residents established twinning relations with **Gansu** province. In 2014, "the parties signed a memorandum of cooperation to strengthen economic and trade cooperation and developed the Programme of cooperation of the Grodno Region and Gansu Province for 2014-2020, which systematically tried to address the most important aspects of the development of bilateral partnership and twinning relations"<sup>118</sup>.

The Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, which has established multifaceted cooperation with 10 Chinese universities, has become an active participant in this interregional cooperation. Today, Chinese students study in Grodno "at all levels - from the preparatory department to postgraduate studies. Several joint research projects in biochemistry are also being developed. Earlier, a project in the field of mechanical engineering was implemented, now we are also counting on a project in the field of

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<sup>117</sup> Telephone conversation with President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/telefonnyy-razgovor-s-predsedatelem-kitayskoy-narodnoy-respubliki-si-czinpino>

<sup>118</sup> Zalesky, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 105.

logistics"<sup>119</sup> . In August 2018, an internship centre for Gansu province employees opened in the Yanka Kupala GrSU building. In 2019, four investment projects based on Chinese investments were implemented in Grodno. In particular, the former Grodno Hotel was being reconstructed. A Chinese resident registered in the free economic zone Grodnoinvest, who was planning to implement a logistics project there. In addition, "a centre for traditional Chinese medicine and a trade and exhibition centre has also been opened in Grodno, where goods of the region's partners from China are presented"<sup>120</sup> .

In 2018, Grodno Region signed a Protocol of Intent to establish friendly relations with **Fujian** Province. In official language, "the document outlines important areas of interregional complementary cooperation - trade, investment, logistics, culture"<sup>121</sup> . It can be added that the rapprochement of the regions was brought about by the fact that the Chinese province has a welldeveloped industrial sector - electronics, machine building, while the Belarusian region has agriculture. And this is "only one of the avenues for mutually complementary cooperation that can be established in the trade and economic area"<sup>122</sup> . In addition, Belarusian flax and wood products are in demand in the Chinese market, and the Chinese side has declared its readiness to increase investments in the Grodno Region in a wide range of areas: from nuclear power plants to high technologies. And now the parties are working on the implementation of the agreements reached.

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<sup>119</sup> Yanka Kupala State University develops joint research projects with Chinese universities [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grgu-im-janki-kupaly-razvivaet-s-kitajskimi-vuzami-sovmestnye-nauchnye-proekty-344391-2019/>

<sup>120</sup> Four investment projects with Chinese capital are being implemented in Grodno Region [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-grodnenskoj-oblasti-realizujutsja-4-investproekta-s-kitajskim-kapitalom-344505-2019/>

<sup>121</sup> On the establishment of regional ties of the Grodno Region with the Chinese province of Fujian [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: [http://shanghai.mfa.gov.by/ru/o\\_generalnom\\_consulstv/news/b1e61ad9861a3f9c.html](http://shanghai.mfa.gov.by/ru/o_generalnom_consulstv/news/b1e61ad9861a3f9c.html)

<sup>122</sup> The Grodno Region and the Fujian Province of the People's Republic of China will develop cooperation more actively [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-knr-futszjan-budut-aktivnee-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-313085-2018/>

In short, the People's Republic of China has become a strategic partner for the Belarusian western region, as evidenced by the figures. Grodno Region companies exported more than \$160 million worth of goods to the Chinese market in the first 10 months of 2020. These are mainly foodstuffs and refined oil products. The appearance of new Chinese partners, namely Hainan Province, means that Grodno Region will actualize cooperation in other areas as well - in high technology, electrical engineering production, and implementation of more global and ambitious projects. Among them are the construction of a logistics centre at Grodno Airport and the opening of direct flights between Grodno and Hainan Province. This will allow, firstly, more actively developing tourism and humanitarian cooperation and, secondly, promoting mutual supply of goods"<sup>123</sup>. In the future, the logistics centre may become a transport hub and a gateway to promote Chinese goods not only to Belarus, but also to the nearest European countries. Moreover, it is safe to say that the establishment of twinning arrangements between the Grodno Region and Hainan Province will help develop cooperation between Belarusian and Chinese cities. Thus, agreements between such cities as **Lida** and **Sanya**, **Ostrovets** and **Tsyunhai** are already at the draft stage. The administrative centres of **Grodno** and **Haikou** will not be spared from this process.

Another interesting example is the **Gomel Region**, which signed a twinning agreement with China's **Sichuan** Province in April 2021 to expand cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres. As a reminder, the Belarusian and Chinese regions established friendly relations six years ago, when in May 2015 they signed an agreement on cooperation, which envisaged "organisation of cooperation on the principles of partnership, equality, trust and mutual benefit in such areas as economy, agriculture,

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<sup>123</sup> Grodno Region and the Chinese province of Hainan signed an agreement on twinning [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-hajnan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-421086-2020/>

healthcare and culture, education, sports and tourism"<sup>124</sup> , and also agreed to establish direct contacts and twinning between the cities of the region and the province. And three years later, in August 2018, the administrative centres of the regions - the cities **of Gomel** and **Chengdu** - adopted an agreement on the establishment of twinning relations.

By that time, the interregional cooperation of the Gomel region on the Chinese vector was developing in three more directions - with the **Inner Mongolia** (2011) and **Xinjiang Uygur** (2016) autonomous regions, as well as **Jiangsu** province (2016). This enabled the region's enterprises to increase their exports to China almost three and a half times, from \$3.9 million to \$13.5 million, at the end of 2018. The main export items then were dairy products, flax, wool and lumber. And the list of accredited enterprises to supply dairy products to the Chinese market already included "five Gomel producers: Milkavita, Rogachev Dairy Canning Plant, Turov and Kalinkovichi Dairy Plants, and Mozyr Dairy Products"<sup>125</sup> .

The next two years showed an even more impressive growth of export supplies from the Gomel region to China, convincingly demonstrating how much demand for these products is in the Chinese market. In particular, "in 2020, with an increase of 32%, \$91 million worth of goods were sent to this country"<sup>126</sup> . Wood pulp, timber, meat and dairy products and confectionery have already made up the bulk of these shipments. And it should be assumed that the current level of interaction with Chinese regions is far from exhausting its potential, as "Gomel producers are ready to meet Chinese demand for flax, confectionery products, chocolate, alcoholic beverages,

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<sup>124</sup> Zalesky, B. The potential for multi-vectorism. Chronicle of international cooperation / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2020. - C. 63.

<sup>125</sup> Enterprises of Gomel region increased exports of goods to China by almost 3.5 times in 2018 [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-v-2018-godu-uvelichili-eksport-tovarov-v-kitaj-pochti-v-35-raza-338253-2019/>

<sup>126</sup> Enterprises of the Gomel region increased their exports to the PRC by a third [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-gomelskoj-oblasti-natret-uvelichili-eksport-produktsii-v-knr-434841-2021/>

carbon fibre, non-woven carbon fibre, lumber and furniture"<sup>127</sup> . In addition, there is considerable interest in expanding supplies of Gomselmash's corn cob and forage harvesters to China.

It should be noted that there are great development reserves for the Homiel Region in interaction with virtually every Chinese partner or twin region, agreements reached earlier with which need to be updated today. For instance, in Sichuan province, which is home to more than 90 million people, in its administrative centre Chengdu, the Belarusian National Pavilion was opened back in November 2019, divided into seven zones, where Belarusian goods, including food and drinks, agricultural products and handicrafts began to be sold. At the same time, the Belarusian and Chinese sides said they were ready to build on the pavilion "a comprehensive bilateral platform of ties that would cover such areas as economy, culture, education, tourism, investment and services"<sup>128</sup> . Let's hope that the agreement signed in April 2021 to establish twinning relations between the Homiel Region and Sichuan Province will become another real instrument to solve the task.

Interesting opportunities may open up in 2021 in cooperation between the Gomel Region and China's **Inner Mongolia** Autonomous Region. After all, the regions already adopted a cooperation programme for 2020 in 2019. And backed up this document at the same time with an Agreement of Intent regarding the establishment of twinning relations between the administrative centres of the region and the autonomous region - the cities of **Gomel** and **Hohhot**, which envisaged the development of cooperation in economy, trade, science, technology, environment, culture, education, sports, tourism and healthcare. The fact that Inner Mongolia is an area rich in "natural

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<sup>127</sup> Gomel region and the Chinese province of Sichuan signed agreements on twinning [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-sychuan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-svjazjah-436511-2021/>

<sup>128</sup> Mozgov, E. The Belarusian National Pavilion was opened in Chengdu, China / E. Mozgov // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/v-kitajskom-chendu-otkrylsya-belorusskiy-natsionalnyy-pavilon.html>

resources: forests in the east, iron ore in the west, cattle breeding in the north and grain growing in the south" provides further opportunities for expanding this cooperation<sup>129</sup>. On the part of Hohhot, "engineering industry, in particular the production of agricultural machinery"<sup>130</sup>, as well as food industry and construction were named among the priority areas of cooperation at the same time. The seriousness of Gomel enterprises' intentions to enter the Inner Mongolia market with their products is evidenced by their participation in the Belarusian-Chinese regional forum held in Hohhot in June 2019, where "investment potential of Gomel region, <...> Gomel meat and milk company, JSC Spartak were presented with separate presentations"<sup>131</sup>. It should be assumed that all these intentions of the parties to cooperate are now entering the phase of implementation of concrete joint projects.

To sum up, we would like to emphasize that all the above facts once again confirm the rightness of the course chosen in Belarus to establish and develop various twinning and partnership relations of Belarusian regions with their colleagues from other countries, the experience of implementation of which already shows that this is "an important and effective sector of international cooperation, characterized by openness, mutual trust, tolerance and kindness"<sup>132</sup>, whose consistent and steadfast development partners pass on to encourage

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<sup>129</sup> An agreement of intent has been signed [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [http://gomel.gov.by/ru/news/podpisano-soglashenie-o-namereniyakh/?NEWS\\_FILTER\\_TYPE=sotrudnichestvo](http://gomel.gov.by/ru/news/podpisano-soglashenie-o-namereniyakh/?NEWS_FILTER_TYPE=sotrudnichestvo)

<sup>130</sup> The authorities of the Chinese city of Hohhot intend to develop industrial relations with Gomel [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vlasti-kitajskogo-goroda-huh-hoto-namereny-razvivat-otnoshenija-s-gomelem-v-promyshlennosti-366222-2019/>

<sup>131</sup> Grishkevich, A. The Belarusian-Chinese regional forum was held in the city of Hohhot / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/belorusko-kitajskij-regionalnyj-forum-proshel-v-gorode-xux-xoto\\_i\\_99900.html](https://www.belarus.by/ru/business/business-news/belorusko-kitajskij-regionalnyj-forum-proshel-v-gorode-xux-xoto_i_99900.html)

<sup>132</sup> Batura, B. Twinning - small links of big friendship / B. Batura // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/pobratimskoe-dvizhenie-malenkie-zvenija-bolshoj-druzby-7603>

## Regions as a factor in inclusive strategic partnerships

In January 2021 the Republic of Belarus and the **People's Republic of China** reached an agreement at the highest level to celebrate the Year of Regions of the two countries in the next two years - from 2021 to 2022. This decision once again emphasizes the enormous role that intensified interaction at the level of autonomous regions, oblasts, provinces, and cities of the two countries plays in the development of bilateral Belarus-China relations, and the potential of which is yet to be fully explored by the two sides. This is evidenced by the results of 2020, when trade turnover between Belarus and China exceeded \$4.5 billion and export of Belarusian goods increased by almost 10 percent. At the same time, "agricultural and woodworking products became the driver of Belarusian export to the PRC, with deliveries doubling"<sup>133</sup>. It is also important that more than a hundred Belarusian agricultural producers have already been accredited in China, and the overwhelming majority of them are located in the regions of our country.

The evidence shows that the two countries are taking a variety of measures to unlock the full potential of bilateral cooperation between Belarus and China. Particular attention in this regard is paid to resolving issues related to the access of Belarusian goods to the Chinese market. In particular, at the December 2020 meeting of the Belarus-China Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee, a practical platform has been created to work out all the issues of access to the Chinese market, as well as veterinary, quarantine surveillance and logistical chains, in the form of the Customs and Quarantine Cooperation Commission. A working group comprising experts from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the Belarusian Ministry of Economy, which was formed in late 2020, will also

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<sup>133</sup> On the outcome of bilateral trade with China in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c603710a55ba783e.html>

simplify trade procedures and create a framework for active trade. The working group is to draft an agreement on trade in services and investments, "the realization of which will change the essence and depth of mutual development and facilitate mutual investments without restrictions and exclusion lists. Facilitating trade in services is the basis for active trade at this stage, since modern goods are made up of 80% services"<sup>134</sup>. The same December (2020) meeting of the intergovernmental cooperation committee also pointed to the need to involve as soon as possible the remaining Chinese credit resources of about USD 4 billion for specific projects to develop social and transport infrastructure in the Belarusian regions into the economic turnover.

As we can see, the tasks set at the interstate level are ambitious and concrete. Obviously, it will hardly be possible to resolve them without committed participation of the regions. It is here that regional media should have a say in promoting the ideas of the Belarusian-Chinese comprehensive strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation in the next three years. All the more so because they are now faced with no less ambitious tasks to update both their form and content.

It should be reminded that at the February 2021 board meeting of the Ministry of Information of the Republic of Belarus, regional print media, which constitute a significant segment of the Belarusian media sphere and cover almost the entire territory of the country, were named among the most important issues of developing the information field of our country that must be elaborated and solved as a matter of priority. The priority of their activities should be the creation of a high-quality media product. At the same time, they "must meet the challenges of time, be able to quickly adapt to the needs

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<sup>134</sup> Belarus and the PRC set up a platform to work out issues of access to the Chinese market [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-knr-sozdali-ploschadku-dlja-otrabotki-voprosov-dostupa-na-kitajskij-rynok-420487-2020/>



of the reader"<sup>135</sup>, as well as contribute to the formation of a positive image of Belarus. In this respect, the most active participation of the Belarusian regional media in covering the implementation of the "three-year plan" of the regions of Belarus and China can and should become a very important step in the formation and development of its international segment. All the more so because the thematic focus of the publications devoted to the cooperation between the regions of the two countries can and should already be very diverse.

In particular, such form of cooperation between the regions of the two countries as twinning and partnership relations should receive a particularly powerful impetus for development in the next three years. Their current level is eloquently demonstrated by the following fact: every Belarusian region and Minsk have already become twinned or partnered with two or more Chinese regions, which ensures that almost all provinces in the Middle Kingdom are covered. For example, the Brest Oblast has been twinned with Hubei Province (since 1994), Qinghai Province (2015), and Qinghai Province (2015), Qinghai (2015), Anhui (2016), Shanxi (2019); Vitebsk province: Shandong (2004), Heilongjiang (2005), Guizhou (2015), Jiangxi (2018); Gomel - Inner Mongolia (2011) and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Regions (2016), Sichuan (2011) and Jiangsu (2016); and Grodno - Gansu (2007), Fujian (2018), Hainan (2019) Minsk: Chongqing (2002), Guangdong (2012) and Zhejiang (2015); Mogilev: Jiangsu (1997), Henan (2008), Hunan (2016), Shaanxi (2018), Tianjin (2019); the Belarusian capital: Changchun (1992), Beijing (1997), Shenzhen (2013), Shenyang (2016), Shanghai (2018). In addition, "more than 20 agreements on the establishment and development of cooperation at the city-city level have been concluded

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<sup>135</sup> Igor Petrishenko: Today a journalist should be a universal media worker, able to work on different platforms - in a newspaper, on a website, in social networks and messengers [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9758>

between regional centres and cities of Belarus and administrative centres and cities of central subordination of China"<sup>136</sup> .

It is characteristic that the process of expansion and actualisation of twinning and partnership relations continues today. Thus, in terms of development of twinning relations between **the Grodno Region and Hainan Province**, "agreements between such cities as Lida and Sanya, Ostrowiec and Qionghai are already at the stage of elaboration"<sup>137</sup> . In April 2021, the **Gomel region and Sichuan province** decided to significantly expand twinning relations in the economic, social and cultural spheres. At the end of March 2021 the **Brest Region and Hubei Province** discussed the whole range of interaction. As a result, "the parties agreed to agree on a roadmap for the development of cooperation in the near future"<sup>138</sup> .

As for **the Mogilev Region**, it signed a roadmap for cooperation with China's **Henan Province** in June 2021 to continue cooperation in trade and increase it in the investment sphere. In addition, according to the parties, "among the important issues that need to be worked on is the improvement of transport communication and logistics between our countries"<sup>139</sup> . It should be reminded that the agreement on the establishment of friendly relations with Henan Province was signed by the Mogilev Region back in 2004. Ten years later, "in July 2014, Zhengzhou, the administrative centre of this province, became Mogilev's twin city"<sup>140</sup> . Perhaps this is also the

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<sup>136</sup> Belarus-China interregional cooperation and twinning [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral/regional/info/>

<sup>137</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Grodno region: Chinese vector of interregional cooperation / B.L. Zalesky // *Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2021"*, Volume 4. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 8.

<sup>138</sup> China's Hubei and Brest Region intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kitajskij-hubej-i-brestskaja-oblast-aktivizirujut-sotrudnichestvo-434998-2021/>

<sup>139</sup> A roadmap for cooperation development signed by the Mogilev region and the Chinese province of Henan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dorozhnuju-kartu-po-razvitiu-sotrudnichestva-podpisali-mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-444325-2021/>

<sup>140</sup> Zalesky, B. Real multi-vectorism. Belarus in the system of foreign relations / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2015. - C. 26.

reason why the development of engagement with Chinese partners for this Belarusian region has been gaining momentum since then, as evidenced by the figures. In particular, since 2015, the trade turnover between the Mogilev Region and the People's Republic of China has increased 13-fold, reaching almost USD 95 million in 2020.

It should be noted that the Mogilev Region, apart from Henan Province, has four other partners among Chinese regions. These are the provinces of Jiangsu, Hunan, Shaanxi and the city of Tianjin. In addition, friendly relations have been established between the partner cities: Mogilev - Nanjing, Bobruisk - Wuxi, Osipovichi - Yangzhou, Krychiv - Lianyungang. In September 2019, during the first Regional Belarusian-Chinese Cooperation Week in Mogilev, it was noted that "relations with each of these partners are developing in several areas: the parties are interested in cooperation in the medical and educational fields, industrial and tourism sectors, as well as in interregional exchange"<sup>141</sup>. With the same province of Henan, back in July 2017, opportunities for investment projects in the Mogilev Free Economic Zone (FEZ) and the southeastern region, where there are serious preferences for business, were discussed. In particular, there is vast vacant land in the south-eastern part of the Mogilev Region for "the establishment of a joint venture to produce beef, taking into account the culinary requirements and needs of the Chinese side with subsequent supply of products to the Celestial Empire"<sup>142</sup>.

**As for Shaanxi** province, its Department of Commerce in April 2019 signed an agreement of intent to promote economic development and friendly cooperation with the Economy Committee of the Mogilev Regional

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<sup>141</sup> Mogilev region has increased its beef exports to the PRC by 9 times in the last year [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/za-poslednij-god-mogilevskaja-oblast-v-9-raz-uvelichila-eksport-govjadiny-v-kr-360961-2019/>

<sup>142</sup> Kuliagin, S. Mogilev region and the Chinese province Henan intend to more actively develop investment cooperation / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2017 - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-henan-namereny-aktivnee-razvivat-investsotrudnichestvo-257928-2017/>

Executive Committee, in which the parties agreed to "provide active support and information assistance to enterprises interested in investing and establishing import-export relations"<sup>143</sup>. In December 2020, the Mogilev Regional Development Agency hosted an online meeting of more than 30 representatives of the parties' enterprises, including FEZ Mogilev, Red Foodstuffs, Bobruisk Meat Processing Plant, Oasis Group, Babushkina krynka, Mogilev Ice Cream Factory, Servolux CJSC and the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy (BSAA). One of the concrete results of the meeting was a partnership "between the BGSAA and the Northwest University of Agriculture and Forestry. There are already some developments in approbation of Chinese wheat and other cereal varieties"<sup>144</sup>.

A concrete result of cooperation with the city of **Tianjin** was already seen back in June 2017, when a social building was commissioned in the regional centre, the general contractor of which was Tianjin Electric Construction Company. "The 10-storey, 120-apartment new building is located in the under-construction Kazimirovka neighbourhood on Grunwaldska Street. This is one of the three houses, which were built in the Mogilev region, thanks to the implementation of the first phase of the project "Construction of social housing" with the technical and economic assistance of the People's Republic of China. Similar facilities have appeared in Bobruisk and Osipovichy"<sup>145</sup>. In May 2019, the parties signed a Memorandum on twinning. And in November 2020, investment projects of

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<sup>143</sup> Mogilev region and the Chinese province of Shaanxi intend to develop economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-kitajskaja-provintsija-shensi-namereny-razvivat-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo-342757-2019/>

<sup>144</sup> Emelianova, O. Issues of trade and economic cooperation and education were discussed during the online meeting between representatives of the Mogilev region and Shaanxi province / O. Emelianova [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://mogilev-region.gov.by/news/voprosy-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-i-obrazovaniya-obsudili-vo-vremya-onlayn>

<sup>145</sup> Emelianova, O. A social house built with China's technical assistance was commissioned in Mogilev / O. Emelianova // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/postroennyj-s-tehpomoschju-kitaja-sotsialnyj-dom-sdali-v-ekspluatatsiju-v-mogileve-254650-2017/>

the Belarusian region in tourism, cattle breeding, housing construction were thoroughly examined by such Chinese companies as Tianjin Constant Towards International Trade Co., Bonyum International Trading Co., Tianjin Mengdong International Trade Co., Zhonggong Huamu (Tianjin) Food Co.

China's **Jiangsu** province, which signed a twinning agreement with the Mogilev region in 2015, became the first region of China, with which in July 2020 the Mogilev residents held a contact and cooperation exchange via video conference, the participants of which from the Chinese side were more than 20 companies working in the meat and dairy industries, flax processing, alcoholic beverage production. Their interest in the event is understandable, since entrepreneurs of Jiangsu Province in 2020 "have additionally invested over \$2 million in the further development of their enterprises" only based on previously implemented projects. Chinese investors are now implementing and planning to implement projects on growing and processing flax, producing mushrooms and various medical products"<sup>146</sup> . Finally, the province of **Hunan** is interesting in this context because in January 2018 it presented Mogilev with two new electric buses. And Zoomlion is implementing a project here to produce special machinery.

Speaking of the **Minsk** Region in this context, it should be noted that in July 2021, the Minsk Region Executive Committee and China SAMSE Engineering Corporation JSC signed a memorandum under which major healthcare facilities will be built in the Belarusian capital region with the help of the Chinese side. In particular, the adopted document envisages "construction of an infectious diseases hospital in Barysau and a surgical block in the regional hospital, export-import trade in agricultural products,

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<sup>146</sup> Business communities of the Mogilev region and the Chinese province of Jiangsu discuss prospects of cooperation at the contact and cooperation exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://mogilev-region.gov.by/news/delovye-krugi-mogilevskoy-oblasti-i-kitayskoy-provincii-czyansu-obsuzhdayut-perspektivy>

construction of a baby food factory and solution of problems with waste processing"<sup>147</sup>. Recall that in our country, SAMSE - a subsidiary of Beijing-based Sinomach National Machinery Corporation - owns shares in NWAO Industrial Park Development Corporation, acted as the general contractor for the construction project of a sulphate bleached pulp plant at the Svetlogorsk Paper Mill and on such facilities in the Great Stone Industrial Park as the engineering and transport infrastructure, the administrative management building, the plants of Zumlion Bel-Rus LLC and MAZ-Weichai LLC.

It should be noted that the Chinese vector of trade and economic cooperation is now playing an increasingly important role in the foreign economic activities of Minsk Region. In 2020, the People's Republic of China became the second largest trade partner of the Belarusian capital region, accounting for 14.3 percent of total foreign trade. And there is every reason to believe that this figure will only increase in the coming years, as Minsk Region "pays special attention to the Chinese market, which is promising for food supplies"<sup>148</sup>. In particular, all the milk processing enterprises of the Myasomolprom Holding have already received permission to export butter, cheese, milk whey, skimmed and sterilized milk powder to that country. As for the meat processing enterprises and poultry farms of Minsk Oblast, they are actively working on the accreditation for the delivery of their products to China. Velez-Mit LLC, Slutsk Meat Factory OJSC and Stolbtsy Meat Canning Factory OJSC have already received permits to export the frozen beef, while Dzerzhinsky Agrocomplex OJSC and Smolevichi Broiler OJSC have received permits to ship poultry meat products. Permission to supply pasteurized milk, cream and milkshakes to

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<sup>147</sup> Health care facilities will be built in Minsk region with the participation of a Chinese corporation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/v-minskoj-oblasti-pri-uchastii-kitajskoj-korporatsii-postrojat-objekty-zdravoohranenija-449374-2021/>

<sup>148</sup> Foreign economic activity [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.minsk-region.gov.by/ekonomika-i-finansy/vneshneekonomicheskaya-deyatelnost5898/>

the Celestial Empire was also granted to Nesvizh Children's Food Factory LLC.

The already existing twinning arrangements offer great potential for stepping up cooperation with Chinese partners. In particular, back in June 2002, an agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural areas was signed between the Minsk Regional Executive Committee and the People's Government of **Chongqing**, which is now home to over 30 million people. In 2016, this interaction was resumed at the initiative of the Belarusian capital region. At the same time, a memorandum was signed to develop twinning relations between the Kopyl district of Minsk Region and the Wanzhou district of Chongqing. A year later, it came to the adoption of the agreement on the establishment of twinning relations between the Belarusian region and the Chinese city.

<sup>149</sup>In March 2019, Chongqing hosted the Minsk Region Days, during which a business forum attended by over 225 business representatives from both sides saw the signing of a cooperation roadmap for 2019-2020, cooperation agreements between the Chongqing International Chamber of Commerce and the Minsk branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Chongqing Education Committee and the Main Department of Education of the Minsk Region Executive Committee, as well as a number of "product supply agreements between business representatives totaling USD 24 million" xml-ph-0000@. At the same time a representative office of Veles-Mit LLC was opened in Chongqing. Just two months later a representative office of the capital region itself opened here to assist in searching for "potential partners for promotion of products of Minsk region enterprises to the Chongqing market. Chongqing"<sup>150</sup>. In August 2019, the

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<sup>149</sup> Chongqing hosts visit of Minsk Oblast delegation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://minsk-region.gov.by/novosti/glavnye-novosti/v-g-chuntsin-prohodit-vizit-delegatsii-minskoy-oblasti/>

<sup>150</sup> On the opening of a representative office of the Minsk Region in Chongqing [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/a7ecb1467556d183.html>

two sides signed two investment cooperation agreements under the projects "Village with Chongqing flavor in Belarus" and "Village with Belarusian flavor in Chongqing," where "rural dwellings of Chongqing's Bayu culture and architectural features of eastern Sichuan" respectively will be the prototypes of the development<sup>151</sup>, and in China, one of the dominants of the future village will be an exact copy of the Nesvizh Castle.

However, the arrival of the pandemic slowed things down. And in 2020, the interaction between the parties was expressed in the provision of humanitarian assistance to each other at the most critical moments. In particular, last February, when the whole COVID-19 affair was just beginning, a batch of medical masks was sent to Chongqing from Minsk Region in response to an appeal by the Chinese side. Now, however, opportunities are opening up for a return to "pre-coronavirus" projects.

And this is typical of the interaction between Minsk Region and another Chinese twin region, **Guangdong** Province, whose cooperation roadmap for 2020-2021 was signed in November 2019 and included "issues of supplies of Belarusian agricultural products to China and establishment of a joint milk processing enterprise"<sup>152</sup>. Let's hope that the effective implementation of Minsk Region's cooperation plans with this Chinese region is not far off.

The Belarusian capital also has some interesting developments in cooperation with Chinese partners. In November 2019, **Minsk** and **Shanghai** signed an agreement to establish twinning relations. Interestingly, before this document appeared, the Belarusian capital had already "signed 22

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<sup>151</sup> A settlement with a Chinese flavour will be built near Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://www.belmir.by/2019/08/01/%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4-%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%8F%D1%82-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%BA-%D1%81-%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B9%D1%81/>

<sup>152</sup> Minsk Region and China's Guangdong Province have signed a roadmap for cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://belaruschina.by/ru/news/2019/November/12November-2087.html>



cooperation agreements with Chinese cities, including 3 on twinning (Beijing, Changchun, Shenzhen)<sup>153</sup>. This may be the reason why Chinese companies have already invested about USD 30 million in Minsk. When signing the new twinning document, the parties "identified priority areas for cooperation - increase in mutual trade, infrastructure construction, tourism"<sup>154</sup>. Minsk's citizens are highly interested in Shanghai's experience in a number of areas. In particular, in the organization of the working process in educational institutions, medical infrastructure facilities, social service and rehabilitation centres for people with disabilities. Minsk's administrative and business circles are also interested in the Shanghai Free Trade Zone, which is used by the People's Republic of China for economic and social reforms.

One of the most effective forms of coordination of trade and economic cooperation between Minsk and Shanghai has already become an annual business forum of the business communities of the Belarusian and Chinese cities. For example, in September 2018, a similar forum in Minsk brought together "over 130 domestic and Chinese companies interested in cooperating in mechanical engineering, construction, information technology, chemical industry, food, and jewellery production"<sup>155</sup>. At the same time, the Belarusian capital was visited by Chinese manufacturers of electronics and household appliances, clothes and fabrics, medical equipment packaging, cosmetics, toys, and jewellery, as well as importers of cars, electrical and welding equipment, and computer equipment interested in finding business partners in Minsk.

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<sup>153</sup> Minsk Days in Shanghai to be held on 7-9 November [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dni-minska-v-shanhae-projdu-7-9-nojabrja-368252-2019/>

<sup>154</sup> Grishkevich, A. Minsk and Shanghai established twinning ties / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-shanhaj-ustanovili-pobratimskie-svjazi-368815-2019/>

<sup>155</sup> Zalesky, B. Vector of partnership - China. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 149.

The Shanghai-Minsk Business Forum, which took place in November 2019 and brought together over a hundred Chinese and more than thirty Belarusian enterprises and companies, was equally broad in scope. The forum's programme included discussions on topical issues of cooperation "in specialised three sections: 1) Foodstuffs, food industry; 2) Tourism and hospitality of Minsk and Shanghai; 3) Industry"<sup>156</sup>. The high practical value of this event is demonstrated by the documents adopted as a result of the forum. In particular, the Minsk City Executive Committee signed a Memorandum of Intent to establish cooperation with the Lotusland Shanghai Corporation to introduce heat pump technology and equipment in the construction of industrial and civil facilities in the Belarusian capital. The point is that "the application of heat pump installations for Minsk's satellite towns would make it possible to abandon the laying of many kilometres of heating networks"<sup>157</sup>.

A memorandum on strategic partnership in the field of tourism exchanges was the result of negotiations between representatives of the Belarusian RUE Tsentrkurot and the Chinese group tourist company Shanghai Airlines Tours International (Group) Co. An agreement on cooperation in the field of international exhibitions was signed by Minskexpo and Shanghai industry and commerce exhibition Co. Besides, the Minsk Free Economic Zone and Shanghai Allynv Technology Co., Ltd, as well as JSC Slodych Confectionery Factory and Shanghai Teemo Foods have formalized their intentions to actively cooperate in the near future. Kommunarka also plans to increase supplies of its confectionery products to the Shanghai market, having signed a memorandum with the Chinese Misier Trading and Economic Company LLC.

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<sup>156</sup> Shanghai-Minsk Business Forum, 8 November 2019. [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [https://www.tppm.by/announcement/index.php?ELEMENT\\_ID=23213](https://www.tppm.by/announcement/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=23213)

<sup>157</sup> Beluga, V. Minsk-Shanghai Business Cooperation Forum was held in China / V. Beluga // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://minsknews.by/forum-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-minsk-shanhaj-prohodit-v-kitae/>

The fact that the market of this Chinese city attracts serious attention of the Belarusian capital's manufacturers is also confirmed by the fact that nine Minsk enterprises took part in the second China International Import Goods and Services Exhibition, which was held in Shanghai in November 2019. Among them were Kommunarka SAO, Minsk Grape Wine Factory CJSC, Krinitza OJSC, Slodych OJSC, Kristall OJSC, Minsk Bakery Products Plant OJSC, Minskkhlebprom KUP and Minsk Refrigeration Plant No.2 TUPUP.

Also. The memorandum on the establishment of friendly relations between the Moscow district of the Belarusian capital and the Jiading district of Shanghai, signed in November 2019, also opens up interesting prospects for interregional cooperation. Just a month later - in December - a Jiading district delegation was already in Minsk, where it discussed with the leadership of the Moscow district of the Belarusian capital ways to implement the memorandum in the context of "intensifying bilateral trade and economic cooperation, as well as cooperation in the area of student exchanges between the two districts"<sup>158</sup>. One of the concrete outcomes of this visit was an invitation from the Chinese side to the students of the Moscow district of Minsk to attend a summer camp in Shanghai. Apparently, the friendly ties between the Soviet district of Minsk and another Shanghai district - Changning - will also be intensified in the near future.

All of these facts suggest that the topic of Belarus-China inter-regional cooperation should be firmly and permanently "fixed in the Belarusian regional press and reflect the experience that has already been gained in this regard as much as possible"<sup>159</sup>. This will require creative strategies specific

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<sup>158</sup> About the visit of the delegation of Jiading district of Shanghai to Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

[http://shanghai.mfa.gov.by/ru/o\\_generalnom\\_consulstv/news/b8beff0b9304c615.html](http://shanghai.mfa.gov.by/ru/o_generalnom_consulstv/news/b8beff0b9304c615.html)

<sup>159</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Information sovereignty and international journalism / B.L. Zalesky // Rehiyanalnyy Mass Media of the Republic of Belarus in the personal era: from lakalnaya prablematyki to iinfarmatsiyy vvaspekty dzharstva: materialy Resp. nauk.Conference, Minsk,

to international regional issues, which should be developed by representatives of this segment of Belarusian journalism in the near future.

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## Industrial park development and regional cooperation

Directive No. 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and **the People's Republic of China**," adopted in December 2021, lists the stepping up of trade, economic, financial, investment cooperation and expansion of interregional ties among the priority objectives until 2025. Within the framework of the declared course to raise the status of Belarusian-Chinese relations to the level of iron brotherhood, exemplary all-round strategic cooperation and all-weather partnership, the activities of the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone, one of the main objectives of which is to ensure effective activities of its residents, attract new ones, actively develop innovation activities, startups, cluster cooperation, and engage Belarusian companies in the pro At the same time, a specific goal is set: "To ensure the number of park residents is at least 170 companies by 2025..."<sup>160</sup>

It should be noted that a number of specific measures to meet this objective were taken at Velikiy Kamen back in 2021. In particular, in the three quarters of this year, the industrial park's residents increased their investment in fixed assets by more than a third. At the same time, "the volume of industrial production grew by more than 2.5 times to Br222.6 million. <Export of residents' products and services increased by more than 16% and is carried out to 20 countries of the world"<sup>161</sup>. An important detail: if "at the end of 2020 [in the park] there were 68 companies from 14 countries registered"<sup>162</sup>, then as of mid-November 2021 there were 81 companies from

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<sup>160</sup> Presidential Directive No 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China". - Minsk. 2021. - C. 6.

<sup>161</sup> In Great Stone, investment in fixed assets increased by more than a third in 9 months [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-velikom-kamne-za-9-mesjatsev-bolee-chem-na-tret-uvlechilis-investitsii-v-osnovnoj-kapital-470611-2021/>

<sup>162</sup> Zalesky, B. With a view to sustainable development. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 13.

15 countries already registered as residents. The work to expand Great Stone, on the other hand, continues.

For example, in October, the Belarusian-Latvian company SMD Bai LLC was registered here, which "plans to create high-tech production of electronic products (boards) of small and medium series"<sup>163</sup> widely used in telecommunications, medicine, automotive industry, instrument making, to supply them to the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union. In November, the list of residents of the industrial park was supplemented by several more business entities. One of them is Rufais LLC. The new resident's investment project involves production and application of advanced polymer materials in construction. Innovative approach here is that "the composite material is the company's own development, differs from the analogs with higher operational properties. It has a wide scope of application, including for the production of roofing and other elements of buildings and constructions"<sup>164</sup>, which gives a good reason to hope for sales of this product not only in the domestic market, but also in Russia, as well as in the European Union countries.

Among the new residents is the Belarusian LLC InKata, which was previously registered in Great Stone as an investor to build facilities here to support subjects of innovation activities of the industrial park. "The project will provide design, prototyping and technical documentation services, as well as provide jobs and equipment"<sup>165</sup>. Another Great Stone resident in November is the Sino-Belarusian Centre for Innovative Bioengineering Technologies LLC, which intends to cooperate closely with the National

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<sup>163</sup> A new Great Stone resident will produce electronic circuit boards [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-elektronnye-platy-465743-2021/>

<sup>164</sup> A new Great Stone resident will produce composite materials [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-kompozitnye-materialy-469205-2021/>

<sup>165</sup> InKata Ltd. became a resident of Great Stone [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ooo-inkata-stalo-rezidentom-velikogo-kamnja-471320-2021/>

Academy of Sciences of Belarus. "The company will produce reagents for diagnostics of coronavirus and some other diseases, as well as for food safety diagnostics"<sup>166</sup>, which are supposed to be exported to the countries of the Eurasian Economic and European Union, as well as to China.

In the first half of December, the industrial park registered a new innovation entity - Needle Med LLC - which is going to implement a project in Velikiy Kamen to create a perfect simulator for practising practical manual skills by employees of various professions - surgeons, tattoo artists, medical students. Interestingly, this project was created in 2019 by a group of students. "Its idea is to create a simulator as close to real human tissues as possible to train professionals for practice"<sup>167</sup>. Thanks to the opportunities the industrial park offers to innovators, the development of the young specialists is likely to find widespread application in real life. In the second half of December, another resident was registered at Great Stone - Tianyu Changyin UAV Science and Technology Company (MSC) LLC, whose founder is one of China's leading enterprises in the development and production of intelligent unmanned systems - Beijing Tianyu Changyin UAV Science and Technology Company. The aim of this investment project in the industrial park is "to set up high-tech production of universal logistics systems for drones and drone equipment"<sup>168</sup>.

Speaking of the development of cluster cooperation in the Great Stone, it should be recalled that back in June 2021, the Republic of Belarus adopted a decree that improves the legal regulation aimed at improving the

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<sup>166</sup> A new Great Stone resident will produce reagents for diagnosing diseases [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-reagenty-dlja-diaagnostiki-zabolevanij-471849-2021/>

<sup>167</sup> Great Stone's new company will create simulators to practice chiropractic skills in surgery [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/novaja-kompanija-velikogo-kamnja-budet-sozdavat-trenazhery-dlja-otrabotki-manualnyh-navykov-v-hirurgii-474239-2021/>

<sup>168</sup> A new Great Stone resident will start producing unmanned aerial vehicles [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachnet-proizvodit-bespilotnye-letatelnye-apparaty-476043-2021/>

investment climate in the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone. In particular, this document provides for: 1) making the park's administration more independent by transferring additional powers from local authorities in terms of administrative procedures; 2) expanding the types of activities of the industrial park; 3) supporting start-ups; and 4) creating preferential conditions for large investment projects with an investment volume over USD 50 million.

Among the new areas of Great Stone's activities should be primarily the establishment and development of productions in the fields of biopharmaceuticals, medical products and medical services. A very attractive innovation in this regard are special conditions for the development of medical activities in the park, where it will be possible to provide medical services with the use of medicines, medical equipment and products, treatment methods of foreign countries without mandatory registration in Belarus and without the need to obtain a license for medical services. The terms will be shortened considerably and the procedures for registration and re-registration of medicines and medical devices, as well as for conducting clinical trials, will be simplified for manufacturers. In other words, all these changes "open up great opportunities for the development of a medical and pharmaceutical cluster in the park, and primarily in the field of traditional Chinese medicine"<sup>169</sup>.

The focus on the development of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in the field of medicine in the context of the fight against the coronavirus epidemic is very timely. After all, Chinese traditional medicine "has unique advantages in the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of diseases. <...> It not only has a good therapeutic effect on mild COVID-19, but also has

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<sup>169</sup> Koroteev, K. Support for start-ups, preferences for investors, simplification of land relations - about innovations of the decree on development of Velikiy Kamen Park / K. Koroteev // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/podderzhka-startapov-preferentsii-investoram-uproschenie-zemelnyh-otnoshenij-koroteev-o-novatsijah-ukaza-po-7805/>



clear advantages in treating critically ill patients, so that the mortality rate in severe cases has dropped from 21% to 5%"<sup>170</sup> . Using the Great Stone platform to realise the existing potential of Belarus-China collaboration in health care could have a major positive impact in terms of preventing new "waves" of the coronavirus epidemic.

We would like to remind you that the Velikiy Kamen industrial park has 12 residents operating in the medical area. "These are companies from Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Russia, and the USA"<sup>171</sup> . An important component of the medical cluster being created here will be the company Novoera Biotech, which became a resident of the industrial park in March 2021. Its founders include Jingtai Institute of Culture and Economy, Xishanqingxue Chinese Medicine Clinic LLC (Beijing) and Xishanqingxue Pharmaceutical Technology Company LLC (Beijing). The new resident will implement a project related to Chinese traditional medicine. "The medicines, supplements planned to be produced are based on environmentally friendly natural material. They will be in demand not only to help in the treatment of coronavirus, but also in the treatment of colds, flu, asthma"<sup>172</sup> . In particular, the production of Linlan Yiqing, aimed at effectively treating coronavirus infection, will be set up. At the first stage, it was planned to start producing medicines in 2021 and export them to Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and India.

In March 2021, plans were also announced to set up the Eurasian Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine at Great Stone, which will provide

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<sup>170</sup> Xiaoyun, S. Belarus and China: growth of business cooperation and collaboration in drug production in coronavirus treatment / S. Xiaoyun // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belarus-i-kitaj-rost-delovogo-sotrudnichestva-i-vzaimodejstvie-v-vypuske-lekarstv-pri-lechenii-koronavirusa-7873/>

<sup>171</sup> The Centre for Expertise and Testing in Health Care and Great Stone Park have agreed to cooperate [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/tsentr-ekspertiz-i-ispytaniy-v-zdravoohraneni-i-park-velikij-kamen-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-441421-2021/>

<sup>172</sup> New Great Stone resident launches Chinese medicine project [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachinaet-proekt-v-sfere-kitajskoj-medsiny-433283-2021/>

medical services to the industrial park's residents and its Chinese and foreign employees, as well as interact with research institutions, healthcare institutions of Belarus and neighboring countries to share experience in traditional Chinese medicine. In May 2021, a memorandum of cooperation was signed by the Industrial Park Development Company and the Centre for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare RUE. And in July, Great Stone signed an agreement to establish a Sino-Belarusian zone for advanced cooperation and an international park for traditional Chinese medicine and healthcare there, which implies a new model for cooperation between Belarus and China in the said area.

All of these facts point to active steps to deploy an "extensive cluster in the industrial park, which will bring together expertise in the field of Chinese medicine. <...> A medical centre for diagnostic services is expected to follow. This area is already in the works"<sup>173</sup>. Besides, the development of the sphere of medical tourism is also envisaged here, for which a kind of medical village will be built near the Volmian reservoir - clinics and different medical institutions in the sphere of rehabilitation. Let us also remind you that in the complex of measures aimed at development of the national innovation system in Belarus for the years 2021-2025 the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" is designated "as a site for organization of innovative productions"<sup>174</sup>. Judging by the above facts, this site is developing quite successfully, confidently and dynamically in the current five-year period.

Turning to the task of expanding interregional ties, which is one of the priorities in the development of Belarusian-Chinese relations, we can note

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<sup>173</sup> Kryzhevich, I. Two new Great Stone residents will develop artificial intelligence and develop equipment for data processing and storage / I. Kryzhevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.sb.by/articles/zvanyy-biznes.html>

<sup>174</sup> Measures for the development of the national innovation system until 2025 are defined [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/opredeleny-meroprijatija-po-razvitiju-natsionalnoj-innovatsionnoj-sistemy-do-2025-goda-475735-2021>

the successful experience of such Belarusian regions as **Minsk** and **the Gomel Region**. Speaking of the Belarusian capital, suffice it to say that "in January-May this [2021] year, trade turnover between Minsk and China totaled USD 730.6 million, whereas last year it was USD 613.8 million in the same period.<sup>175</sup> . The main exporters are RUE Bellesexport, Best Meat Company, Meat and Dairy Company, Mobiora, Integral. The basis of Minsk supplies to China was formed by timber, meat and edible by-products of poultry, milk and condensed cream, rapeseed oil, electronic integrated circuits and micro assemblies, tanned or dressed fur skins, measuring and control devices, collections and collectibles for zoology, equipment for measuring or monitoring of electric values, ready-made media for recording sound. It is important in terms of consolidating this trend in the future to intensify ties between the Belarusian capital and China's twin cities, of which Minsk has four - Changchun (1992), Shenzhen (2014), Beijing (2016), and Shanghai (2019).

Changchun, the administrative centre of Jilin Province in northeastern China, which is home to about eight million people, has a special place in the list of twin cities. May 2022 will mark the 30th anniversary of the agreement on twinning arrangements between Changchun and the Belarusian capital. In 2010, a Belarusian-Chinese technopark was opened in the hi-tech production zone of this Chinese city to become a platform for joint projects and further promotion of products not only in China, but also in the neighboring countries. It was based on about 15 enterprises that were part of the zone and had long-standing stable ties with Belarusian scientific and innovation companies. At that time, among the joint projects planned in the technopark was "setting up an enterprise to produce medical laser equipment, and an agreement on setting up a joint venture to produce a high-

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<sup>175</sup> Kухареv and the Chinese ambassador discussed cooperation between Minsk and Chinese cities [Electronic resource] - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/kuharev-i-posol-kitaja-obsudili-sotrudnichestvo-minska-s-gorodami-knr-453612-2021/>

precision electric motor. At the first stage, around 30 hectares of land have been allocated to the project for construction of office and production facilities, and another 30 hectares may be further allocated"<sup>176</sup> . More specifically, the technology park is divided into six functional areas: the research and development centre, a project incubator, a museum, and three complexes - international cooperation, regional cooperation, and service. In addition, an art gallery, a bookstore, an exhibition hall and a concert hall are planned. But the main thing is that here, "the development is based, among other things, on a fund of 80 Belarusian projects"<sup>177</sup> .

Today, "a complex of technopark buildings has already been built there, and one of the pressing issues now is to fill it with joint high-tech projects"<sup>178</sup> . And it has already welcomed its first three residents: The Sino-Belarusian centre for research and development of precision medical equipment of the BNTU Politechnik technopark and the Belarusian-Chinese technopark in Changchun; the Belarusian-Chinese centre for joint development and application of carbon-carbon composite materials between Svetlogorsk Khimvolokno OJSC and the Jilin Lenke company; A Belarusian-Chinese centre for the development of functional berry crops between the Central Botanical Gardens of the National Academy of Sciences, Poleski Zhuraviny Ltd. and the North-Eastern Institute of Geography and Agricultural Ecology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. To support this growing dynamics of bilateral cooperation, the Belarusian and Chinese sides have set a goal "to focus on improving the conditions for

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<sup>176</sup> Polezhai, T. Belarusian-Chinese Technopark opened in Changchun / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/president/view/belorusko-kitajskij-tehnopark-otkrylsja-v-gorode-chanchun-134192-2010>

<sup>177</sup> The China-Belarus Technopark is being built in Changchun [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://primgazeta.ru/news/v-chanchune-stroyat-kitajsko-beloruskij-tehnopark-08-07-2019-05-00-12>

<sup>178</sup> Technopark in Changchun will make a significant contribution to the development of relations between Belarus and China - Shumilin [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tehnopark-v-chanchune-vneset-suschestvennyj-vklad-v-razvitie-otnoshenij-belarusi-i-kitaja-shumilin-405335-2020/>

mutually beneficial cooperation, expanding and deepening contacts, including among young people"<sup>179</sup> . And today, the main thematic areas of the technopark already include such areas as "photoelectronics, laser technology, new materials, construction and energy, agricultural and biotechnologies technologies, informatics"<sup>180</sup> .

The Belarusian-Chinese technology park in Changchun is not the only area for Minsk's cooperation with this twin city. Back in June 2014, the two sides agreed to develop business cooperation, for which they planned to hold business forums. "During such events, businessmen will have an opportunity to agree on the implementation of specific projects. In addition, the forums will further strengthen the economic basis of our cooperation"<sup>181</sup> . In June 2017, the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Changchun People's Government adopted an agreement to establish cooperation in tourism and the development of cultural ties in order to expand twinning relations. As part of the bilateral business forum in the Chinese city, "memorandums of cooperation with Chinese partners were signed by Kommunarka Joint Stock Company, Minskkhlebprom KUP, Zapadnaya Wholesale Base KUP, Belryba OJSC, Minotel OJSC"<sup>182</sup> . So, the opportunities for enhancing cooperation between the two twin cities are, undoubtedly, very vast. It is only necessary to use them without wasting time, and with mutual benefit.

As for the Gomel region, it has already signed bilateral cooperation documents with four Chinese regions - the Inner Mongolia (2011) and

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<sup>179</sup> About 300 applications have been submitted to the Sino-Belarusian Youth Innovation Projects Contest [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/okolo-300-zajavok-podano-na-kitajsko-belorusskij-molodezhnyj-konkurs-innovatsionnyh-proektov-442132-2021/>

<sup>180</sup> Belarus-China Science and Technology Park in Changchun [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://changchun.park.bntu.by/about-technology-park/>

<sup>181</sup> Minsk and China's Changchun plan to develop business cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitajskij-chanchun-planirujut-ravzivat-biznes-sotrudnichestvo-47498-2014/>

<sup>182</sup> Minsk and China's Changchun signed an agreement on cooperation in tourism and culture [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/minsk-i-kitajskij-chanchun-podpisali-soglasenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-turizma-i-kultury-250871-2017/>

Xinjiang Uygur (2016) autonomous regions, Sichuan (2015) and Jiangsu (2016) provinces. Naming Sichuan Province in this list, we note that in April 2021, the two sides raised the level of their friendship relations by signing "an agreement on the establishment of twinning relations, which provides for increased cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres"<sup>183</sup> .

Such a variety of partnerships and twinning arrangements could not but have an impact on the overall interaction between the Gomel region and China. Suffice it to say that over the past three years, supplies from the Belarusian region to the Chinese market have grown 20(!) times. And "export of Gomel enterprises to China in January-November of the last year [2021] exceeded \$100 million. The main export items to China are wood pulp, timber, wool, meat, dairy and confectionary products"<sup>184</sup> . And this level is not considered a limit for the region, because they see serious potential in increasing the supply of beef, meat and edible by-products of poultry, whole-milk products, milk, condensed and dried cream and dried whey to this East Asian country. For this purpose, 16 enterprises of the region have already been accredited in Celestial Empire: 6 meat processing plants, 7 milk processing plants, 2 distillery plants and one confectionery plant. And three enterprises with Chinese capital have already been registered in the Belarusian region itself - those producing hydroelectric power, concrete, and engaged in restaurant activities.

An important detail: Gomel Region continues to actively expand ties with Chinese regions in 2022. In January, they held a roundtable on multifunctional cooperation with Hebei province, whose business entities have been cooperating with Gomel partners in terms of production

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<sup>183</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Gomel Region: Chinese Vector of Partnership / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVIII Mezinárodní vědecko-praktická konference "Efektivní nástroje moderních věd - 2021". Volume 5: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 16.

<sup>184</sup> Gomel region has increased exports to China by 20 times in three years [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-za-tri-goda-uvlechila-eksport-v-kitaj-v-20-raz-481090-2022/>

cooperation for quite some time. In particular, back in September 2015, Hebei province set up the Chongqing Zongshen-Homel Agricultural Machinery Enterprise LLC to assemble bob harvesting combines, forage harvesters, and grain harvesters. The investor on the Belarusian side was Gomselmash OJSC, and the investor on the Chinese side was Zongshen Industrial Corporation LLC. This cooperation project enabled the Belarusian manufacturer to strengthen and expand its presence in the Chinese market. "In 2016, deliveries of machine parts to the PRC amounted to about USD 2.6 million. In 2017. - 10 million USD. In 2018. - 7 million USD. <sup>185</sup>THE AMOUNT OF MACHINERY PACKAGES SHIPPED TO THE PRC IN 2016 WAS ABOUT USD 6 MILLION.

As a follow-up to this project, in March 2017, the construction of a new plant to produce combine harvesters for maize, grain and rapeseed was launched in Weixian county of the same Hebei province by the Chongqing Zongshen-Homel Agricultural Machinery Enterprise, a Belarusian-Chinese joint venture. And at the same time, "the first contracts were signed with agricultural companies of Hebei and Heilongjiang provinces to buy combine harvesters made in Belarus-China."<sup>186</sup> . In June 2019, a new contract was signed to supply another batch of forage harvesters to China for more than a million and a half dollars. And by mid-2019, "the company had produced 500 harvesters"<sup>187</sup> .

The logical continuation of these partnerships was the adoption of a memorandum of intent on twinning between the cities of Gomel and Handan in October 2019, in order to foster mutually beneficial cooperation. In

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<sup>185</sup> Inter-regional relations between Belarus and China: state, problems and prospects for development / T.S. Vertinskaya [et al.] - Minsk: Belaruskaya nauk, 2020. - C. 221-222.

<sup>186</sup> Grishkevich, A. A new Belarusian-Chinese combine plant began to be built in Hebei Province / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-belorussko-kitajskij-zavod-po-proizvodstvu-kombajnov-nachali-stroit-v-provintsii-hebej-237889-2017>

<sup>187</sup> Gomselmash will supply machine sets of forage harvesters worth over USD 1.5 million to China. [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://expotr.by/news/gomselmash-postavit-v-kitay-mashinokomplekti-kormouborochnih-kombaynov-na-summu-bolee-15-mln-doll>

particular, for the Gomel side, the topic of increasing exports of food products, beef in particular, was very relevant in this context. It was also said that "the sides should develop industrial cooperation, in particular, Gomselmash and Hebei Zongsheng-Gomel agricultural machinery enterprise on a partnership basis. There are prospects for the implementation of joint ideas in tourism, culture and education"<sup>188</sup>.

In this regard, it should be said that the twinning arrangements between the cities of the Gomel region and Chinese partners quite organically complement the entire complex of interregional cooperation of this Belarusian region with China. At the beginning of 2022, seven bilateral documents were signed between the administrative-territorial units of the Gomel region and China. The eighth was the agreement signed in January 2022 to establish sworn brotherhood relations between Svetlogorsk district and the city of Baoding, located in Hebei province, with a population of over ten million. This document "envisages the development of mutually beneficial cooperation in various spheres - economic, trade and humanitarian"<sup>189</sup>. The parties certainly have the necessary potential to develop effective cooperation. Let us hope that the next step in the development of the Chinese vector of foreign economic relations of the Gomel region will be the establishment of twinning arrangements with the entire Hebei province.

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<sup>188</sup> Gomel and China's Handan intend to develop twinning ties [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomel-i-kitajskij-handan-namereny-razvivat-pobratimskie-svjazi-366580-2019/>

<sup>189</sup> Svetlogorsk District and Baoding of China signed an agreement on twinning relations [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/svetlogorskij-rajon-i-kitajskij-baodin-podpisali-soglashenie-o-pobratimskih-otnoshenijah-481071-2022/>



## Prospects for cooperation identified

In May 2022, the sixth meeting of the **Belarus-China** Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation discussed the status and prospects of bilateral trade and investment cooperation, transport and logistics partnership, as well as the implementation of the joint project - the China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone. Recall that at the end of 2021 the volume of mutual trade in goods and services between the two countries came close to six billion dollars, and the share of Belarusian supplies to the Celestial Empire more than doubled. At the same time, "the capacity of Belarusian manufacturers makes it possible to ship nearly \$2 billion worth of Belarusian-made goods to the Chinese market by the end of this year [2022]. This requires a consolidation of the efforts of the parties to maximize the opening of the Chinese market for new Belarusian manufacturers, establish joint trading companies, and develop the largest electronic trading platforms of China"<sup>190</sup> .

The Belarusian side suggested deepening trade cooperation in five promising areas. The first one is to expand direct contacts between the business communities of the two countries. The second is to increase the range of products supplied to China from Belarus. The third one is to promote new mechanisms to expand bilateral trade with a focus on the establishment of joint export-import companies and the positioning of Belarusian goods at Chinese electronic trading platforms. Fourth, development of logistics through prompt delivery of cargoes by rail. Fifth, to step up investment cooperation within the framework of existing bilateral projects and work together to create new import-substituting enterprises

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<sup>190</sup> Cherviakov: friendly and partnership relations with China are especially important for Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherviakov-druzhestvennye-i-partnerskie-otnoshenija-s-kitaem-osobo-znachimy-dlja-belarusi-504062-2022>

"through the development of the Great Stone Industrial Park and deepening interregional cooperation. .<sup>191</sup>

The results of the first quarter of 2022 attest to the fact that work in the aforementioned areas is going on quite actively. Specifically, the trade turnover between Belarus and China totaled USD 1.2 billion during that period. Belarus has become one of the ten largest suppliers of potash fertilizers, dairy whey, meat products and rapeseed oil to China. Agreements reached during the work of the commission should facilitate the successful implementation of the outlined cooperation avenues. Thus, the Belarusian Ministry of Industry intends to work closely with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce on the import and export of engineering and electronic products. The memorandum signed by the parties "is aimed at strengthening the Belarusian-Chinese partnership in industry.<sup>192</sup> . A memorandum on cooperation in import and export of woodworking products was also signed by Bellesbumprom Concern and the China Wood and Wood Products Circulation Association. The document is aimed at improving the efficiency of partnership relations, "analysis of mutual trade problems and search for mutually acceptable ways to solve them"<sup>193</sup> by holding joint exhibitions, fairs, business meetings, exchange of economic, legal, scientific and technical information in all areas of interaction.

In the set of measures to develop the national innovation system in Belarus for 2021-2025, the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" has been identified as a platform for the organization of innovative productions. One of its main tasks for the nearest five years is "to ensure

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<sup>191</sup> Belarus-China trade turnover in the first quarter amounted to \$1.2 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-belarusi-i-kitaja-v-i-kvartale-sostavil-12-mlrd-504056-2022/>

<sup>192</sup> Belarus and China Strengthen Industry Partnership [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kitaj-ukrepljajut-partnerstvo-v-promyshlennosti-504071-2022/>

<sup>193</sup> "Bellesbumprom will cooperate with the Chinese wood products export association [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bellesbumprom-budet-sotrudnichat-s-kitajskoj-assotsiatsiej-po-eksportu-produktsii-derevoobrabotki-504024-2022>

effective activity of its residents, attraction of new ones, active development of innovation activity, startups, cluster cooperation..."<sup>194</sup> . A record 21 residents in 2021 are a testament to how this task is being handled here. To be more precise, 85 residents were registered here at the end of 2021. By the beginning of 2022, "more than \$718 million had already been invested in the park, with 37 companies producing products, conducting research and development, and providing services. Great Stone's enterprises have created more than 1,700 jobs <...>. Exports have also increased - by almost 17% compared to 2020. Deliveries are made to 20 countries around the world."<sup>195</sup> . In the last days of 2021, Belarus-based SinRubEnergo LLC became the 85th resident with a research project in the field of creating digital energy facilities and a smart city. "The company will develop integrated automation and dispatching systems"<sup>196</sup> .

With the arrival of 2022, the industrial park has continued to work actively both to increase the number of residents and the volume of their economic activity. Thus, as of mid-April 2022, 89 residents from 15 countries had "already registered here. The volume of announced investments amounts to \$1.24 billion, of which more than \$750 million have already been invested in the park's development. Residents have created over 1.8 thousand new jobs. In addition, almost half of the companies have commenced operations in the park"<sup>197</sup> .

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<sup>194</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Industrial Park "Great Stone": new projects bring the future / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVIII Miedzynarodowej naukowii-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej dzialnoscii - 2022", Volume 1. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - C. 3.

<sup>195</sup> Yaroshenko: Great Stone's enterprises supply products to 20 countries worldwide [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/jaroshenko-predpriiatija-velikogo-kamnja-postavlajjut-produktsiju-v-20-stran-mira-479114-2022/>

<sup>196</sup> A new Great Stone resident will build digital energy facilities [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zajmetsja-sozdaniem-tsifrovyh-energoobjektov-477402-2021/>

<sup>197</sup> Yakimov, P. "Great Stone" opens broad opportunities for strengthening cooperation between Belarus and China / P. Yakimov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/velikij-kamen-otkryvaet-shirokie-vozmozhnosti-dlja-ukreplenija-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-i-kitaja-8150/>

The 86th resident of the industrial park in March 2022 was Bel Samoed Cloud Scientific and Technical Company LLC, which "will develop digital financial technologies and mobile payment systems. There are also plans to create an e-commerce centre in Belarus and provide services in this area to Belarusian and Chinese companies"<sup>198</sup>. An important detail: the initiator of this project is one of the largest cloud solution providers in China - Samoyed Cloud Technology Group Holdings Limited.

April 2022 was a particularly fruitful year for Great Stone in terms of new resident registrations. Earlier this month, for instance, the 87th resident was Hong Kong-based YuZZYu Science and Technology Company Ltd, whose founder works in product targeting and branding and has branches in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Hangzhou and Wuhan. The new resident "plans to create a digital promotion centre to organise e-commerce using Internet marketing technologies"<sup>199</sup> will cooperate with Belarusian manufacturers to promote their goods in China and intends to provide training on e-commerce organisation.

A little later, the 88th resident, the Belarusian company CUBI RND LLC, registered in the industrial park with an investment project to produce equipment and components for modular construction of smart houses. "The production is based on the innovative Cuby technology, which is the company's own development. It makes it possible to produce high-tech constructions with high environmental characteristics."<sup>200</sup>. It is expected that

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<sup>198</sup> A new Great Stone resident will take care of digital technologies and mobile payment systems [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zajmetsja-tsifrovymi-tehnologijami-i-sistemami-mobilnyh-platezhej-490657-2022/>

<sup>199</sup> Great Stone's new resident will take on digital promotion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-zajmetsja-tsifrovym-prodvizheniem-tovarov-493650-2022/>

<sup>200</sup> A new Great Stone resident will start producing equipment for smart homes [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-nachnet-vypuskat-oborudovanie-dlja-umnyh-domov-495324-2022/>

90 percent of the products produced at Velikiy Kamen by the new resident will be exported.

The 89th resident is another Belarusian company, HomeLand Group LLC, which plans to manufacture in the industrial park multifunctional noise-insulated cabins AeroCapsule with an automated control system based on the Internet of Things - a data transfer concept. Interestingly, this project won second place in the national innovation competition in 2021. The aero-capsules, created using smart technology and equipped with innovative embedded features, "can be widely used in open-air offices, airports, shopping centres, production plants, and allow the creation of optimal conditions for rest and work"<sup>201</sup> .

By mid-May 2022, the number of residents had increased to 90, with a reported investment of \$1.24 billion. In May 2022, a new resident of the industrial park was the Chinese company Transport Complex - AF LLC, which will create a transport monitoring centre using IoT technology. At the same time, a letter of intent was signed for Hongjiu Corporation JSC to join the park, which "plans to engage in biotechnology activities in the Great Stone"<sup>202</sup> . Following the results of the first quarter of 2022 in the industrial park managed to provide "growth of indicators of proceeds from the sale of goods - 1.8 times compared with the first quarter of last year (Br123.4 million), the residents' industrial production - 1.7 times (Br95.4 million), exports - 1.4 times (\$22.6 million), investments in fixed assets - 1.1 times (Br30.4 million)"<sup>203</sup> .

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<sup>201</sup> A new Great Stone resident will produce innovative aero-capsules [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-budet-proizvodit-innovatsionnye-aerokapsuly-495913-2022/>

<sup>202</sup> New Great Stone resident to create cross-border transport monitoring centre [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-rezident-velikogo-kamnja-sozdast-tsentr-monitoringa-transgranichnyh-perevozok-501098-2022/>

<sup>203</sup> The number of Great Stone residents has risen to 90 with a reported investment of \$1.24 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chislo-rezidentov-velikogo-kamnja-vozroslo-do-90-s-zajavlennym-objemom-investitsij-v-124-mlrd-502265-2022/>

An important focus of Great Stone is the creation of sub-parks, understood as the arrival of not just one investor, but a pool of iconic companies led by a separate management company, which opens up broad prospects for large corporations. Cooperation with the Chinese province of Guangdong is particularly good in this regard. As a reminder, "back in January 2017 in its administrative centre, Guangzhou, there was a signing ceremony to establish the China (Guangdong) LED Sub-Park in the Great Stone Industrial Park, as well as five more documents on the intention of specific companies to join this sub-park"<sup>204</sup>. Today, this sub-park already has 15 residents specialising in areas such as LED product manufacturing, integrated logistics, electric transport, unmanned systems and R&D. A joint innovation centre set up by the Guangdong Provincial Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus will soon be added to them, focusing on research and development in industrial and digital technologies, as well as new materials, biotechnologies, and pharmaceuticals. So in this direction, too, we see successful implementation of the plans outlined a few years ago.

Further unlocking the potential of the Great Stone's innovative areas should also be facilitated by the planned cooperation of the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park with similar preferential economic zones in other countries. In particular, in Cuba and Uzbekistan. Thus, back in January 2021, a memorandum of understanding was signed with Cuba's Mariel Special Development Zone (SDZ), which provides for cooperation "in attracting investments, strengthening ties between the Belarusian and Cuban business communities, as well as providing for information exchange"<sup>205</sup>. Priority

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<sup>204</sup> Zalessky, B.L. "Great Stone": perspective development - subparks / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Science and civilization - 2020", 30 January - 07 February, 2020. Economic sciences. : Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 21.

<sup>205</sup> "Great Stone and Cuba's Mariel Special Development Zone will cooperate in attracting investment [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij->

areas of the Cuban ZOR, established in November 2013, located 45 kilometres from Havana, where there were more than 60 residents from 21 countries at the end of 2021, include electronics, logistics, pharmaceuticals, energy, as well as the financial and banking sectors. In January 2022, the parties had already started discussing specific areas of cooperation, "in particular in the area of attracting residents and developing interaction with Cuban pharmaceutical companies"<sup>206</sup>. Considering that the pharmaceutical sector is currently on the rise in the Great Stone, it is not difficult to assume that concrete results from this collaboration will not be long in coming.

Another interesting example in this context is the Uzbek free economic zones (FEZ) Jizzakh and Syrdarya. In early April 2022, the administration of the Great Stone discussed with their representatives areas of possible cooperation, including "establishing cooperation between residents of the park, free economic zones and enterprises in the field of import and export of component materials, finished products"<sup>207</sup>. The parties agreed to sign a memorandum on cooperation that would set forth their aspiration to implement joint projects. That there may well be such projects is evidenced by the specialisation of Uzbek FEZs.

In particular, the Jizzakh FEZ was established in March 2013 in Jizzakh oblast to attract direct investment in the creation of high-tech and innovative industries. And today there are already some interesting examples in this regard. For instance, in March 2020, an agreement was signed here to establish production of Volkswagen light commercial vehicles on the basis of Jizzakh Automobile Plant LLC. The implementation of this project is

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[kamen-i-kubinskaja-zona-osobogo-razvitiya-mariel-budut-sotrudnicat-v-privlechenii-investitsij-426316-2021/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-kubinskimi-farmpredpriyatijami-487548-2022/)

<sup>206</sup> "Great Stone intends to develop cooperation with Cuban pharmaceutical companies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-kubinskimi-farmpredpriyatijami-487548-2022/>

<sup>207</sup> "Great Stone and Uzbekistan's FEZ intend to develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-i-sez-uzbekistana-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-493658-2022/>

divided into two phases. In 2020-2021, German cars will be delivered here in completed form for market research and marketing analysis. From 2022, the "full production cycle, which includes welding, painting and assembly processes <...> will begin. Dealer and service networks in every region of Uzbekistan will also be expanded"<sup>208</sup> .

Another interesting example is the Uzbek enterprise ADM Jizzakh, located in the Jizzakh FEZ and producing KIA and Lada models there. In October 2021, it announced that in early 2023 it would start small-scale assembly of these vehicles. A total of "314 parts and components will be produced and a welding and painting shop will be launched"<sup>209</sup> . This will enable production of 100 thousand of those models per year, create three thousand new jobs and bring the localization of production to 30 per cent. It seems that such experience may be of great interest to the Belarusian side as well.

As for the Syrdarya FEZ, it was established on the basis of the Djizak FEZ branch in the Syrdarya region in April 2018. One of its main objectives is to ensure comprehensive and efficient use of the production and resource potential of this Uzbek region "based on deep processing of mineral resources, expansion of production of high value-added import-substituting products demanded in foreign markets"<sup>210</sup> . The following production areas have been identified as priorities for attracting investment and advanced technologies: deep processing, storage and packing of horticultural and other agricultural products, textile, footwear, leather goods, chemical, food, electrical engineering, agricultural machinery, and construction materials industry. With the help of the FEZ the export component of the region, where

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<sup>208</sup> Production of Volkswagen cars in Uzbekistan will start in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/06/26/volkswagen/>

<sup>209</sup> KIA and Lada plant in Uzbekistan to increase localisation to 30% in 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/20211022/zavod-v-uzbekistane-po-vypusku-kia-i-lada-v-2023-godu-povysit-lokalizatsiyu-do-30-21019614.html>

<sup>210</sup> A new free economic zone is being created in Syr Darya [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://kun.uz/ru/94899784?q=%2Fru%2F94899784>



"more than 80 exporting enterprises are already working, supplying abroad more than 50 types of production"<sup>211</sup> . So the range of joint interests with Great Stone could be very broad here as well. All this shows that the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park retains its strategic importance as a country-wide growth point for Belarus.

As for interregional cooperation, in the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of All-round and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Relations adopted in September 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China commended the expansion of deep trade and economic cooperation of Belarusian regions with cities and provinces of the Middle Kingdom. Turning to the task of expanding interregional ties, "which is one of the priorities in the development of Belarusian-Chinese relations,"<sup>212</sup> , it is possible to note the successful experience of such Belarusian regions as the Viciebsk, Grodno and Brest regions in 2022.

For example, in October 2022, **the Vitebsk region** and the Chinese **province of Jiangxi** signed an agreement on cooperation in economy, education, health, sports and will establish contacts in trade, science and technology. The parties will interact in a comprehensive manner. For example, there are plans to organize meetings via videoconferencing in which leading enterprises of the Vitebsk Oblast, their developments and technologies, which can be useful and interesting to companies from Jiangxi, will be presented to their Chinese partners. In particular, we are talking about joint projects for the development of agriculture, mechanical engineering as well as science parks and university developments. Note that the two regions, Belarus and China, have already held events before: a conference on professional education and training of specialists in engineering and

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<sup>211</sup> Mirzaev, G. Syrdarya opens doors to investors / G. Mirzaev // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://rg.ru/amp/2019/08/29/v-syrdarinskoj-oblasti-uzbekistana-gotovy-k-millionnym-investiciiam.html>

<sup>212</sup> Zalesky, B. Time for concrete solutions. Chronicle of international cooperation / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. !00.

technology, as well as on combating COVID-19. In addition, "container trains regularly run to Nanchang, the city district where the Jiangxi authorities are based, and are formed by a logistics company from Orša, among others. Nanchang and Orsha have partnership ties, and another city in the province, Funzhou, has ties with Polotsk<sup>213</sup>". The signed agreement appears to help the northern region of Belarus and the Chinese province, located in southeastern China, to reach a new level of relations. In the context of this topic, it is interesting that in September 2022, in the framework of the Year of Regions of Belarus and China, Days of the Vitebsk Region were held in another Chinese province, **Heilongjiang**, where the "potential for cooperation of the twin regions in trade, economic, manufacturing, tourism and investment spheres" was presented<sup>214</sup>. By the way, more than 30 million people live in this region of China.

And in October 2022, the cities of **Grodno** and **Lanzhou**, the administrative centre of China's Gansu province, also signed an agreement on the establishment of friendly exchanges and cooperation, where the parties envisaged "deepening bilateral cooperation, expanding exchanges and cooperation between the regions in trade, economic, scientific, technical, cultural, tourist and other spheres. The document also aims at strengthening friendly ties between the residents of the two cities."<sup>215</sup>. It will be recalled that a memorandum on twinning arrangements between **Gansu province** and **Grodno region** was signed in 2007. There have been more than 10 different agreements signed between the regions in 15 years. Especially

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<sup>213</sup> Pushniakova, A. Trade, science, sport: Vitebsk region signed agreement on cooperation with Chinese Jiangxi / A. Pushniakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/torgovlja-nauka-sport-vitebskaja-oblast-podpisala-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-s-kitajskoj-tszjansi-532401-2022>

<sup>214</sup> Days of Vitebsk region are held in Chinese province Heilongjiang [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/dni-vitebskoj-oblasti-prohodjat-v-kitajskoj-provintsii-hejluntszjan-525147-2022/>

<sup>215</sup> Grodno and China's Lanzhou signed an agreement on the establishment of friendly exchanges [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodno-i-kitajskij-lanzhou-podpisali-soglashenie-ob-ustanovlenii-druzhestvennyh-obmenov-532444-2022/>

dynamic is the development of trade and economic cooperation. In April 2022, Gansu and Grodno Region signed the Program of Cooperation for 2022-2023 which is filled with concrete joint projects. It "further elaborated the areas where cooperation is not yet so active <...>. It is agriculture, tourism, technology exchange and traditional Chinese medicine"<sup>216</sup> . And Novogrudok District and the Chinese city of Dunhuang from Gansu Province have agreed "to conclude an agreement on the establishment of cooperation"<sup>217</sup> . For reference, it should be noted that Grodno Region has also signed an agreement on twinning relations with **Hainan Province**.

And another interesting example: **the Brest Region and Hubei Province**. In May 2022 the parties signed an action plan to develop trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation in 2022-2024 which provides for development of international interregional cooperation in four main areas: mutual trade, investment, medicine and education. In particular, Brest Region manufacturers have been supplying food and wood products to the Chinese province for several years. But the plan is to expand this interaction, including by establishing direct business ties between business entities. Thus, for instance, it is planned to establish investment cooperation between the Brest free economic zone and enterprises of the automotive industry of Hubei province as well as between the Berezovsk Engine Repair Plant and producers of diesel engines in this region of China. The possibility of participation of Chinese investors in the implementation of projects in Brest region concerning the organization of production of charging units for electric cars, powder and liquid detergents production on the basis of Barkhim, technical re-equipment of Baranovichi cotton production

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<sup>216</sup> Grodno Region intends to expand cooperation with China's Gansu Province [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/grodnenskaja-oblast-namerena-rasshirjat-sotrudnichestvo-s-kitajskoj-provintsiej-gansu-498323-2022/>

<sup>217</sup> Novogrudok District and the Chinese city of Dunhuang intend to conclude an agreement to establish cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogrudskij-rajon-i-kitajskij-gorod-dunhuan-namereny-zakljuchit-soglashenie-ob-ustanovlenii-495725-2022/>

association, production of clinker products on the basis of Goryn construction materials factory, development of Gorodnoe glass sand deposit<sup>218</sup> will also be studied. As for the medical sphere, the prospects of cooperation between the Brest Oblast and the Hubei Province are linked to the joint production of ultrasound diagnostic equipment and organization of the production of disposable blood transfusion systems and medical solutions. There are also plans to set up a traditional Chinese medicine centre on the basis of the Brest Regional Clinical Hospital, for which purpose the physiotherapeutic building can be reconstructed there.

All of these facts are a good illustration of how multifaceted Belarus-China interaction is now reaching the level of all-round strategic cooperation and all-round partnership as stated in Directive No 9 "On the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China", signed in December 2021.

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<sup>218</sup> Brest Region and Hubei Province signed a road map for cooperation for 2022-2024 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/brestskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-hubej-podpisali-dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-na-2022-2024-gody-503065-2022/>

## Priorities for the new phase of partnership

In September 2022, the Republic of Belarus and the **People's Republic of China** adopted the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an All-round and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which contains Belarusian-Chinese agreements to intensify scientific and technological cooperation, expand practical cooperation between research institutions, higher education institutions and enterprises, encourage establishment of platforms as joint centres of applied research and laboratories. At the same time it is noted that the development of bilateral relations has moved to a new stage, when "the interaction between research institutions and enterprises of the two countries in the field of innovation is continuously strengthened. The areas, mechanisms and methods of scientific and technological cooperation are constantly expanding"<sup>219</sup>. In this regard, three priority components can be distinguished. "The first is in the field of scientific research, where the parties are involved in the implementation of major joint projects. The second is in the field of innovation activities, where a network of joint innovation centres and research laboratories is being formed and developed. The third one is in the field of education, where joint training and mutual internships of specialists, teachers and students take place".<sup>220</sup>

In particular, the National Academy of Sciences [NAS] of Belarus alone has already set up over 20 international research centres and laboratories jointly with Chinese partners, which are engaged in the development and adaptation of advanced technologies, as well as their promotion to the markets of Belarus, China and third countries. "Contractual

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<sup>219</sup> Xie Xiaoyun: Belarus-China cooperation in science and technology is continuously strengthening [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/se-sjaojun-sotrudnichestvo-belarusi-i-kitaja-v-sfere-nauki-i-tehnologij-nepreryvno-ukrepljaetsja-534171-2022>

<sup>220</sup> Zalessky, B. Frontiers of multi-vectorism. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 471.

documents have already been signed by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus with leading scientific organizations of China - the Chinese Academy of Sciences, academies of sciences of a number of Chinese provinces, large manufacturing corporations of China - Huawei, AVIC..."<sup>221</sup> . In particular, in April 2022 the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus signed an agreement on scientific and technical cooperation with the Chinese company SAMSE. Environmental Technologies", which specializes in environmental protection issues. The signed agreement, which aims to promote scientific and technical cooperation and the practical implementation of joint scientific and technical developments in the field of environmental protection, primarily concerns soil remediation technologies, which are of particular interest to the Chinese partners. The fact is that the Chinese company, bringing together designers, scientists, equipment manufacturers, investors and operators in the field of environmental protection, today focuses on expanding activities in the field of municipal water supply and sanitation, industrial wastewater treatment, solid waste management, energy conservation and management of cyclical use of waste as a resource. At the same time, the Chinese Engineering Corporation CAMS was established, which also signed a cooperation agreement with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. This document defines the priority areas of cooperation as "energy saving and environmental protection, new energy sources, new materials, optics, precision instruments, semiconductors and biomedicine, as well as expansion of commercial application of the results of joint scientific activities"<sup>222</sup> .

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<sup>221</sup> More than 20 joint centres and laboratories with Chinese partners have been set up at the NAS [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-nan-sozdano-bolee-20-sovmestnyh-tsetrov-i-laboratorij-s-partnerami-iz-kitaja-494752-2022/>

<sup>222</sup> Biomedicine and new energy sources. The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus signed an agreement with a Chinese corporation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/biomeditsina-i-novye-istochniki-energii-nan-belarusi-podpisala-soglashenie-s-kitajskoj-korporatsiej-498676-2022/>

When it comes to cooperation between higher education institutions of the two countries, the parties will develop cooperation "on the basis of development of joint educational programmes with the subsequent establishment of joint educational structures (faculties, institutes) between leading higher education institutions, including with the use of distance learning technologies..."<sup>223</sup> . Suffice it to say that Belarusian and Chinese partners have already signed over 540 direct cooperation agreements. "Today almost 500 citizens of the Republic of Belarus study in the People's Republic of China, the number of Chinese students in Belarusian universities has reached 8,000. The parties have developed over 30 joint educational programmes..."<sup>224</sup> . The Belarusian universities actively developing cooperation with the Chinese side in science and education include the Belarusian State University, the Belarusian National Technical University, the Belarusian State Technological University, the Brest State Technical University, and the Polesky State University.

For example, the first agreement between the Belarusian State University (BSU) and Chinese partners was signed in 1990 with Chengdu University of Science and Technology. Today the BSU has more than 80 agreements with more than 50 Chinese institutions. The partners include Harbin University of Science and Technology, Henan University, East China Pedagogical University and Foshan University. "In 2019, bilateral partnership documents were signed with Peking University and Shanghai Transport University"<sup>225</sup> . BSU received the honorary right to host the

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<sup>223</sup> China and Belarus publish Joint Declaration on the Establishment of an All-weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://rg.ru/2022/09/16/kitaj-i-belarus-opublikovali-sovmestnuiu-deklaraciiu-ob-ustanovlenii-otnoshenij-vsepodgodnogo-i-vsestoronnego-strategicheskogo-partnerstva.html>

<sup>224</sup> Belarus and China hold a videoconference on cooperation in education [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kitaj-proveli-videokonferentsiju-po-sotrudnichestvu-v-sfere-obrazovanija-526453-2022/>

<sup>225</sup> Kreinina, O. BSU on development of cooperation with leading universities of China / O. Kreinina // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/bgu-otrazvitii-sotrudnichestva-s-veduschimi-universitetami-kitaja-8187/>

Confucius Institute within its walls. The Chinese partner in this matter is also Dalian Polytechnic University (DPU), with which cooperation has been developing since 2007. A significant result of this cooperation is the opening of two joint institutes at the BSU and the DPU. Today there are 244 Chinese students in the Sino-Belarusian institute. Two graduations have already taken place. "In 2021 there will be 78 Chinese graduates and five Belarusians graduating from the BSU and the DPU. In 2022 there will be 74 Chinese and two Belarusian graduates. There are 142 Belarusian students studying at the Belarusian-Chinese joint institute. The first graduation will take place in 2023"<sup>226</sup> .

In May 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between BSU and Tsinghua University, which is ranked 17th among the world's top universities. The Memorandum "provides for the exchange of students, invitation of teachers and scientists, implementation of joint research, educational projects, exchange of publications, information, educational materials, organisation of scientific, educational and cultural events"<sup>227</sup> . This university was founded in 1911. It is located northwest of Beijing in the Haidian student district. Today Tsinghua has about 53,000 students, more than 3,200 of whom are international students. The educational process is provided by more than 3600 teachers. The university has 21 institutes and 59 faculties.

And in September 2022, another BSU partner appeared in China - Huzhou University in Zhejiang Province. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two universities "provides for the implementation of joint research projects, educational programmes, student

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<sup>226</sup> Cooperation between BSU and Dalian Polytechnic University depicted in a bronze tetrapod dyne [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sotrudnichestvo-bgu-i-daljanskogo-politehnicheskogo-universiteta-zapechatleli-v-bronzovom-tetrapode-514967-2022/>

<sup>227</sup> BSU and Tsinghua University signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-universitet-tsinhua-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-441298-2021/>



exchanges and other areas of cooperation"<sup>228</sup>. Huzhou University has more than 100 years of history. The university now specialises in a wide range of academic disciplines and has achieved internationally recognised excellence in research and teaching in mathematics, clinical medicine and engineering. In 2017, the university established the Intercultural Research Centre, which is involved in international projects, including with the Belarusian side.

As for the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU), in February 2022 the Belarusian university signed an agreement with the Shenyang Technological University (STU) on scientific and technical cooperation to establish the China-Belarus Innovation Research and Production Centre for hardening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts, where new technologies and equipment will be concentrated in one place, prototype parts will be promptly manufactured e "The centre will concentrate all the new methods of hardening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts. There is no other centre like this in China"<sup>229</sup>. At the STU's request, the centre will include such Belarusian technologies as: flame spraying of thermoplastic polymer powders; hypersonic metallization; deformation cladding with flexible tools; flame spraying of metal, ceramic, polymer and composite powders; laser cleaning of surfaces from organic and inorganic contamination, rust, dross and paint coatings; plasma coating with metal, ceramic and composite powders; restoration of working surfaces from corrosion. And already in October 2022, the centre was inaugurated at the Shenyang University of Technology.

In addition, a conference on scientific exchange between BNTU and the Institute of Applied Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences was

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<sup>228</sup> BSU and China's Huzhou University signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-kitajskij-universitet-huchzhou-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-524518-2022/>

<sup>229</sup> Kravchuk, M.A. Opening of the Sino-Belarusian innovative training, scientific and production centre for hardening, restoration and corrosion protection of machine parts / M.A. Kravchuk // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11923-otkrytie-kitajsko-belorusskogo-innovacionnogo-uchebno-nauchno-proizvodstvennogo-centra>

held in Changchun in October 2022. As a reminder, in December 2019, the parties signed an agreement to establish a joint Sino-Belarusian laboratory of advanced materials and production "One Belt, One Road", which started its activities in February 2020. This entity "is engaged in the development of high-performance sodium-ion and potassium-ion batteries, catalysts for water electrolysis, hydrogen production, research in solid oxide electrolysis for efficient production of green hydrogen and green ammonia"<sup>230</sup>. Within the framework of the conference the Belarusian specialists drew attention to the BNTU's experience in the field of modification of machine parts surfaces by methods of high-energy impact and study of their structure and properties, which in future will expand the field of scientific research and application of its results in Chinese industry.

Speaking about the Belarusian State Technological University (BSTU), currently it has already signed 17 cooperation agreements with universities and organizations in many regions of China, including Guangdong province. "In cooperation with Chinese partners, joint educational programs in such areas as "Machines and apparatuses of chemical production and building materials enterprises", "Automation of technological processes and productions", "Mechatronics" have been created and are functioning successfully"<sup>231</sup>. In addition, in March 2022 BSTU signed memorandums: with Guangzhou Knowledge City - Technology Industrial Service Company - on strategic cooperation in energy saving and environmental protection to promote the construction of a "carbon-free community"; with JSC Guangzhou Hengyun Group - in the field of hydrogen technology for the joint construction of a hydrogen energy industrial park.

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<sup>230</sup> Sheleg, V.K. Conference on scientific exchange between BNTU and Institute of Applied Chemistry of Chinese Academy of Sciences / V.K. Sheleg, M.A. Kravchuk // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11931-konferenciya-po-nauchnomu-obmenu-bntu-i-institut-prikladnoj-himii-an-kitaya>

<sup>231</sup> BSTU and Belarusian companies signed memorandums of cooperation with Guangzhou [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bgту-i-belorusskie-kompanii-podpisali-memorandumy-o-sotrudnichestve-s-guanchzhou-489362-2022>

Another example in this context is the Brest State Technical University (BrSTU), where a joint Belarus-China IT project funded by the Belarusian Republican Foundation for Fundamental Research and the National Natural Science Foundation of China was launched in 2022. And in April 2022 it became known about the launch of a joint educational program between BrStU and Xinxiang University, which concerns the training of students in the field of mechanical engineering technology. "Training will take place in the full-time format on the territory of the People's Republic of China on the materials presented by Brest University. A large block of the programme will be taught to Chinese students directly by BrStU lecturers"<sup>232</sup>. In October 2022 Brest University also established cooperation with Guangdong Construction Vocational and Technical College to create long-term conditions for training qualified personnel in Belarus in the interests of the construction sector in China and to cooperate in organizing a joint educational training program for specialists in architecture and construction. It should be noted that the Chinese partner of BRSTU is "the only state college in Guangdong province that trains highly qualified specialists in the field of construction. The college was founded in 1979 and has graduated more than 200,000 highly qualified personnel in 43 years"<sup>233</sup>.

As for interaction of the Polesie State University with colleagues from China, in September 2022, the Belarusian university held the first international scientific conference, which was called Pinsk Readings. The students of Pinsk together with their Belarusian and foreign partners discussed the topical issues for economy, banking sector, development of

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<sup>232</sup> BrStU and Sinyanskiy University have launched a joint programme [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brgtu-i-sinsjanskij-universitet-nachali-realizatsiju-sovmestnoj-programmy-496937-2022/>

<sup>233</sup> BrStU and Guangdong Construction Vocational College have agreed to establish cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/brgtu-i-guandunskij-stroitelnyj-proftehkolledzh-dogovorilis-naladit-sotrudnichestvo-530263-2022/>

biotechnologies, engineering, healthy life style, and preservation of historical and cultural heritage. During the conference, PolesU signed a cooperation agreement with the Shanxi Institute of Science and Technology, which "specializes in nature management, engineering and biotechnology. We aim to build serious partnerships."<sup>234</sup> . In addition to joint research projects, the universities see prospects for cooperation in academic mobility.

High scientific, technological and innovation cooperation between Belarus and China is also evidenced by the fact that in November 2022 at the China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, the largest exhibition event in the Celestial Empire, where almost three thousand companies from 127 countries participated, 126 scientific and technological developments of scientists from 32 organizations of the Belarusian National Academy of Sciences and institutions of the Ministry of Education and Science were presented in the Belarusian country pavilion "High-tech equipment and information technologies".<sup>235</sup> In particular, the exposition section of the Ministry of Education and Science included such areas of cooperation as "digital information and communication technologies and interdisciplinary production based on them; biological, medical, pharmaceutical and chemical technologies and industries; energy, construction, ecology and environmental management; mechanical engineering, machine building, instrument engineering and innovative materials; agricultural and food technologies; ensuring human and social security" xml-ph-0000@d

Among the presented novelties were ultra-small orbiting spacecraft created by the Belarusian State University (BSU). The first nanosatellite was put into orbit four years ago. The second nanosatellite has already been created under the State programme "Science-intensive Technologies and

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<sup>234</sup> PolesSU will cooperate with an institute of science and technology from China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/polesgu-budet-sotrudnichat-s-institutom-nauki-i-tehnologii-iz-kitaja-524605-2022/>

<sup>235</sup> Universities of Belarus at the V China International Import Expo [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://times.bntu.by/news/11970-vuzy-belarusi-na-v-china-international-import-expo>

Technology"; its design is based on an innovative modular layout of on-board subsystems of a small spacecraft. BSU is also introducing the anti-tumour drugs Temodex, Prospidelong and Cisplacel"<sup>236</sup>. Another interesting novelty is an electric scooter manufactured by the JSC "Instrument-making plant Optron" of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Maximum speed is 60 kilometres per hour and payload capacity 200 kilograms. Besides, such advanced developments were presented in Shanghai as "unmanned aerial vehicle Burevestnik (Scientific and Production Center of Multifunctional Unmanned Complexes of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus), automated system for registration of welding processes (Belarusian-Russian University), heat-resistant shock-resistant coatings (F. Skaryna State University of Gomel), bread of high nutritional value (Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies)..."<sup>237</sup>

Also. In November 2022 at the IX Belarus-China Youth Innovation Forum "New Horizons - 2022" held in Minsk, it was noted that this year the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus together with the Ministry of Science and Technology of China held a competition of Belarusian-Chinese science and technology projects. "Based on its results, 35 projects will receive state support from the two countries"<sup>238</sup>. All these facts show that the multifaceted scientific, technical and innovation cooperation of the two countries, when the partners work systematically and purposefully to develop ties, gives fruitful results.

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<sup>236</sup> More than 120 Belarusian developments are presented at the China International Import Exhibition [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/bolee-120-belorusskih-razrabotok-predstavleny-na-kitajskoj-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-importa-533702-2022/>

<sup>237</sup> Food industry innovations and spacecraft: what Belarus will present at the China Import Fair [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novinki-pisheproma-i-kosmicheskie-apparaty-chto-predstavit-belarus-na-vystavke-importa-v-kitae-533240-2022/>

<sup>238</sup> Young scientists from Belarus and China develop cooperation in innovation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/molodye-uchenyje-belarusi-i-kitajci-razvivajut-sotrudnichestvo-v-sfere-innovatsij-534160-2022/>

## 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 parties 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"<sup>239</sup>. 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"<sup>240</sup>.

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"<sup>241</sup>. 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 attended by more than 30 enterprises and organizations from the two countries, it was noted

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<sup>239</sup> 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](https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ee2bb4e24073dbac.html)

<sup>240</sup> Belarus and Indonesia agree to intensify trade and investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-indonezija-dogovorilis-aktivizirovat-torgovoe-i-investitsionnoe-vzaimodejstvie-271768-2017/>

<sup>241</sup> Zaleski, B. Partnership Journalism. Theory and practice / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG, 2013. - C. 69.

that "the government's goal to reach \$1 billion in mutual trade turnover between Belarus and Indonesia is quite realistic for the near future"<sup>242</sup> .

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"<sup>243</sup> . 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 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

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<sup>242</sup> 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/beltp-uvlichenie-tovarooborota-s-indoneziej-do-1-mlrd-realnaja-zadacha-na-blizhajshuju-perspektivu-368953-2019/>

<sup>243</sup> Trade and economic relations with the Republic of Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/be/bilateral\\_relations/trade\\_economic/](http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/be/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/)

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 to their colleagues from Indonesia the halal quality infrastructure created in the country, to confirm the possibility of implementing Indonesian requirements for halal products and conduct necessary conformity assessment procedures in Belarus"<sup>244</sup>. 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 necessary certificates and have already entered the high-capacity Indonesian food market"<sup>245</sup>. 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

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<sup>244</sup> Belarus and Indonesia sign memoranda 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>

<sup>245</sup> 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>



baby food"<sup>246</sup> , 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 from Belarus to Indonesia of dairy products. 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."<sup>247</sup> . The development of partnership ties 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"<sup>248</sup> . 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

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<sup>246</sup> 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/>

<sup>247</sup> 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-ekonomicheskome-sotrudnichestve-426979-2021/>

<sup>248</sup> 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-ozhivlenija-turisticheskogo-rynka-473916-2021>

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 then<sup>249</sup>. 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 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"<sup>250</sup>, where Belarusian machines 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 Grodno

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<sup>249</sup> 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/>

<sup>250</sup> 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/>

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 online lectures to Airlangga University students"<sup>251</sup>. 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

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<sup>251</sup> Memorandum of Understanding signed between BGU and the University of Airlangga [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/memorandum-ovzaimoponimani-i-podpisan-mezhdu-bgu-i-universitetom-airlangga-414083-2020/>

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 Center of Indonesian language and culture in MSLU"<sup>252</sup>. Here it is appropriate to add that UNR "Veteran" is one of the state universities in Indonesia. It is a patriotically oriented university that is 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".<sup>253</sup> [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 Science and Technology

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<sup>252</sup> 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>

<sup>253</sup> Noskova, S.A. Indonesia - Belarus: mutual interest / S.A. Noskova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [http://baa.by/news/?ELEMENT\\_ID=5208](http://baa.by/news/?ELEMENT_ID=5208)

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)"<sup>254</sup> .

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 2019, thereby confirming the agreement that "this document will contribute to building an effective infrastructure for the development of trade and economic cooperation."<sup>255</sup> . 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 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,

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<sup>254</sup> 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-indoneziyskikh-proektov>

<sup>255</sup> 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.

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"<sup>256</sup> .

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.

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<sup>256</sup> 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/>

## The aim is to increase scientific and technical cooperation

In March 2022 the 15th meeting of the **Belarus-Vietnam** intergovernmental commission on trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation was held. The commission set specific directions of further interaction for 2022-2023 in virtually all spheres of the bilateral partnership, including science and technology, where many interesting results have been achieved over the past 30 years.

Scientific and technological cooperation between Belarus and Vietnam is based on the intergovernmental agreement on scientific and technological cooperation of June 5, 1995. The legal framework in this area already includes a number of agreements in various spheres of scientific and technological cooperation. And it continues to expand. In 2020, the National Economic University of Hanoi conducted a study, which showed that "scientific and technical organizations and enterprises of Vietnam are most interested in the following forms of cooperation with Belarus: exchange of scientific and technical information; exchange of specialists; implementation of joint scientific and technical projects; technology transfer"<sup>257</sup>.

<sup>258</sup>The fact that the Belarusian exposition at the 31st international exhibition Vietnam Expo in Hanoi in April 2022 included more than a hundred innovations in hi-tech equipment, about 30 of which were developed by the Belarusian State University - food supplements, pharmaceutical products, technological equipment, etc., shows the seriousness of the cooperation with this South-East Asian country in the scientific and technical field. The Belarusian State University was one of the

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<sup>257</sup> Potential BSUIR partners in Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2022. – URL: <https://iti.bsuir.by/files/science/%D0%9F%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%8B%20%D0%B2%D0%BE%20%D0%92%D1%8C%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B5.pdf>

<sup>258</sup> Zalessky, B.L. From trust and respect to joint economic projects / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVIII International scientific and practical conference "Cutting-edge science - 2022", April 30 - May 7, 2022: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 42.

co-founders of the Belarusian-Vietnamese Innovation and Education Centre established in 2012 together with Binh Duong University and Vietnamese company Venture Capital & Equity Investment Holding Inc.; since that time many joint projects in priority directions of scientific and technological activities aimed at "expanding and deepening scientific knowledge, being innovative in design and research methods, having scientific and practical importance" have been implemented<sup>259</sup>. Among them are "Creating a composition of cellulolytic strains effective for the degradation of plant residues", "Investigation of possibilities to obtain new fermented products from vegetable raw materials in Vietnam", "Cross-cultural differences in the perception of visual-image information between Belarusian and Vietnamese businessmen". The Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, whose partners are the Ho Chi Minh Polytechnic University, Le Quy Don State Technical University, Hanoi University of Technology, Hanoi Power University, the Research Institute of Electronics, Information Technology and Automation of Vietnam, the Institute of Tropical Technologies of the Vietnam Academy of Sciences, Binh Duong University, are very actively cooperating with the Vietnamese side.

Active work on the establishment of joint research centres and laboratories with Vietnamese partners in the most promising fields is also underway at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB), whose structures, by spring 2022, "have jointly implemented over 100 projects and published about 150 scientific papers"<sup>260</sup>. In April 2022 the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology agreed to develop a roadmap of scientific and technical cooperation, which will include promising areas of scientific interest. The

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<sup>259</sup> Belarusian-Vietnamese Innovation, Education and Science and Technology Centre [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [http://research.bsu.by/innovative-activity/int\\_sci\\_tech\\_cooperation/inter-innov-centre/belvetnam-centre/](http://research.bsu.by/innovative-activity/int_sci_tech_cooperation/inter-innov-centre/belvetnam-centre/)

<sup>260</sup> On a meeting at the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://vietnam.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/ccca12ba12b7979e.html>



first stage of this cooperation will be to activate the work of already existing joint structures. These include a joint centre for the development and production of technologies in the field of instrumentation and machine building, energy and chemical products, as well as a joint technology transfer centre and a joint laboratory on laser physics, engineering and technology. The sides are also discussing the possibility of creating new entities, one of which could become a Belarusian-Vietnamese tropical research and technology centre, where the Belarusian side could partner with the Central Botanical Gardens of the National Academy of Sciences. In the future, they are planning to start working on a dozen of new projects, from nanoindustry, composite materials and additive technologies, mechanical engineering, mechatronics and robotics to functional food and medicinal products and the widest range of bio-products. A special role here should be played by new materials, which are the future in various spheres of the economy"<sup>261</sup> . Annual grant competitions for scientific projects also play an important role in enhancing cooperation between Belarus and Vietnam in the field of science and technology. There were three of them at once in 2020: the Joint Contest of Basic Research Projects of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology "NASB (BRFFI)-VAST-2021"; the Joint Belarusian-Vietnamese Scientific Projects Contest "BRFFI-VAST-2021"; the Belarusian-Vietnamese Scientific and Technical Projects Contest for 2021-2022 under the aegis of the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus and the Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam. The experience has shown that this partnership format should only be developed to open up new opportunities of scientific search.

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<sup>261</sup> Scientists of Belarus and Vietnam to develop a roadmap for scientific and technical cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/uchenye-belarusi-i-vjetnama-razrabotajut-dorozhnuju-kartu-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-497257-2022/>

## Industry, regions, agriculture

Iran is one of Belarus' most important partners in West Asia and the Islamic world. The countries established diplomatic relations in 1993. And by today, Belarusian-Iranian contacts are developing quite intensively. "In 2021, the bilateral trade between the two countries amounted to \$33.3 million, exceeding the previous year's figure by 34.7%, including Belarusian exports - \$14 million, growth rate - 10.2%. <...> Last year, exports of services from Belarus to Iran reached \$3.35 million. The balance of trade in services for Belarus is positive at \$2.8 million"<sup>262</sup>. The key Belarusian exports to Iran are equipment for the production of articles of paper pulp, specific goods, longitudinally sawn timber, newsprint in rolls or sheets, equipment for the thermal treatment of materials, reciprocating internal combustion engines, bearings.

In July 2022, the 15th meeting of the mixed Belarusian-Iranian commission for economic cooperation was held, where the sides discussed successful bilateral projects and reached certain agreements on the implementation of joint promising activities. Minsk and Tehran are interested in increasing trade turnover between the two countries. In the best years, the sides reached \$250-300 million. "Therefore, we intend to reach a trade turnover of around \$500 million in a short period of time. And there are all the prerequisites for that"<sup>263</sup>. Iran is increasingly interested in Belarusian industrial products, agricultural machinery, machine tools, passenger vehicles, electric transport, and household appliances.

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<sup>262</sup> NCM on peculiarities of doing business in the Iranian market and promotion of export of Belarusian goods and services [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/ntsm-ob-osobennostjah-vedenija-biznesa-na-rynke-irana-i-prodvizhenii-eksporta-belorusskih-tovarov-i-uslug-8226/>

<sup>263</sup> Parkhomchik: Belarus and Iran are interested in stepping up industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/parhomchik-belarus-i-iran-zainteresovany-v-naraschivanii-sotrudnichestva-v-promyshlennosti-516021-2022/>

Iran, in particular, is interested in large deliveries of BELAZ mining equipment. After all, the country has huge reserves of copper, which today is a strategic raw material for the production of electric vehicles. "For the last ten years, BELAZ machinery has been in high demand in the Iranian market. It is reliable and has shown itself only from a good side"<sup>264</sup>. Since Iran is planning to ramp up production in the mining sector, the country would like to receive another 800 or so dump trucks. First of all, the Iranian partners are interested in dump trucks with a payload capacity of 90-130 tonnes.

And Iranian investment projects are attracting interest in Belarus. In particular, in the free economic zone Vitebsk the first resident in 2022 "became BRR Arshie ECO Health LLC, an enterprise with Iranian capital for the production of biodegradable tableware and packaging"<sup>265</sup>. In July 2022 another resident of FEZ Vitebsk became Belarusian-Iranian Oriye Galvmetal LLC. The company was set up to build a hot-dip galvanizing plant near the village of Farinovo, Polotsk District. The site has good infrastructure facilities; now the founders are getting down to pre-project preparation and design of the facility. It is planned to purchase Iranian equipment for the production. It will take about 2-3 years to erect and put into operation the plant. The enterprise will be built near the Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Metalware, whose products will also be processed. "We are talking about cable bearing constructions, road barriers and other products used in road construction and operated in corrosive environments"<sup>266</sup>. There are also plans to process welded lattice decking,

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<sup>264</sup> Iran is interested in major deliveries of BELAZ mining equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/iran-zainteresovan-v-krupnyh-postavkah-karjernoj-tehniki-belaz-516134-2022/>

<sup>265</sup> Zalessky, B.L. FEZ "Vitebsk": optimization with a view to result / B.L. Zalessky // Materialy XVIII Mezinardni vedecko-prakticka conference "Vedecky pokrok na prelomu tysyachalety - 2022". Volume 5: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 22.

<sup>266</sup> A Belarusian-Iranian tandem of investors will build a hot dip galvanising plant in FEZ Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/belorusko-iranskij-tandem-investorov-postroit-zavod-gorjachego-tsinkovanija-v-sez-vitebsk-513958-2022/>

which the Process Steelwork plant will start producing in the first quarter of 2021.

Expanding ties between the regions of the two countries is a hot topic. In particular, the Gomel region already intends to resume and develop cooperation with the Iranian province of Mazandaran, "a document on trade and economic, scientific and technical and cultural cooperation with which was signed back in 2009"<sup>267</sup>. The Mogilev region intends to expand trade and economic cooperation and intensify relations in the field of tourism, education and culture with the Province of East Azerbaijan, where the free economic zone Aras is located. Constructive talks were held in May 2022 on prospects of cooperation and development of ties between the Grodno region and the province of Homozgan. "The parties have confirmed mutual interest in implementing joint projects in various areas. Top-priority measures aimed at establishment of long-term stable relations have been identified."<sup>268</sup>. So the regions of the two countries have interesting proposals.

One more thing. The Belarusian side believes that Iran can be seen as a promising destination for increasing domestic exports of dairy and meat products - beef, butter, chicken meat, chicken and quail eggs, as well as vegetable oil, compound feed and premixes for animals, complex technical products, innovative developments in the food industry and agriculture. "In 2021, mutual trade turnover of agricultural products and food products was \$10.9 million, up 22 per cent from 2020"<sup>269</sup>. The parties plan to further increase trade and economic cooperation in agriculture and food, including the organization of supplies of Belarusian crop, meat and dairy products, as

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<sup>267</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Priority - restoration of partnership / B.L. Zalessky // *Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Europejska nauka XXI powieka - 2021"*, Volume 4. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 23.

<sup>268</sup> On the visit of the Belarusian Ambassador to Iran to Hormozgan Province [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://iran.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/bdd91d54c2ef1c14.html>.

<sup>269</sup> Belarus plans to supply crop, meat and dairy products to Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-postavljat-v-iran-rastenievodcheskuju-mjasnuju-i-molochnuju-produktsiju-492495-2022/>

well as animal feed and premixes to Iran, and counter deliveries - of vegetables, fruit, fish and seafood - from Iran to Belarus.

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## **The formula for success is a high level of mutual understanding**

In November 2022, the Belarusian government delegation visited Iran, where various meetings and negotiations at the interstate level took place, which noted that the engagement between the two countries is currently characterized by high development dynamics in virtually all areas. In particular, this year Minsk and Tehran "have considerably increased the volume of cooperation in many areas, from commodity turnover to cargo flows and freight turnover"<sup>270</sup>. But it appears that the two sides still need to take a number of steps, conclude important documents, and conduct many new activities in order to realize the full potential that Belarus and Iran have in industry, science, and technology, and agree on the approaches laid out in the draft roadmap for comprehensive cooperation for 2023-2026. We must say that during the first three quarters of 2022, trade between the two countries "grew to \$63.6 million (2.9 times more than in the same period of 2021), exports to \$48.6 million (4.4 times more), imports to \$15 million (a 41.8% increase). The balance is positive - \$33.6 million"<sup>271</sup>.

An important event in the relations between the two countries was the Iran-Belarus Business Forum held in the Iranian capital in November 2022, organized by the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, "which has been the main partner of BCCI in Iran for 20 years"<sup>272</sup>. More than 120 executives and representatives of Belarusian and Iranian companies took part in this forum. Exporters from the fields of industrial production and

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<sup>270</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Iran can achieve more in trade, economic and investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10474>

<sup>271</sup> Golovchenko: the positions of Belarus and Iran coincide across the full range of issues on the economic agenda [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-pozitsii-belarusi-i-irana-sovpadajut-po-vsemu-krugu-voprosov-ekonomicheskoi-povestki-dnja-536376-2022/>

<sup>272</sup> Iran-Belarus Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.cci.by/о-palate/novosti/iransko-belorusskiy-biznes-forum/#>

mechanical engineering, woodworking, light and food industry were represented from Belarus. The Iranian side suggested a number of measures to stimulate mutual trade. These include: empowering small and medium-sized enterprises of the two countries, strengthening banking and insurance cooperation, identifying new joint projects, developing and simplifying visas for businessmen and tourists, creating the necessary infrastructure to develop economic relations, especially in the commercial, industrial and technical sectors. In addition, it was announced "the opening of a \$100 million credit line for Belarusian traders interested in buying Iranian products"<sup>273</sup> . Following the business forum, the parties signed a number of joint documents. In particular, an agreement on cooperation was adopted by the BelCCI and the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, which "will give a new impetus to the development of relations between the two countries"<sup>274</sup> .

Last summer, at the 15th meeting of the joint Belarusian-Iranian commission for economic cooperation, Minsk and Tehran expressed their interest in increasing trade between the two countries. After all, in the best years Belarus and Iran used to have foreign trade volumes of up to \$250-300 million. Therefore, the parties intend to reach a trade turnover of about \$500 million in a short period. Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade of Iran S. Amin even made a forecast for an even larger turnover. Amin even predicted even higher figures in the medium term and expressed confidence that "we plan to increase cooperation in various areas. All this will enable us to reach \$1 billion in trade turnover in the near future"<sup>275</sup> . In particular, there are great

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<sup>273</sup> The Iran-Belarus Business Forum takes place in Tehran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://iran.ru/news/analytcs/121826/V\\_Tegerane\\_prohodit\\_irano\\_beloruskiy\\_biznes\\_forum](https://iran.ru/news/analytcs/121826/V_Tegerane_prohodit_irano_beloruskiy_biznes_forum)

<sup>274</sup> Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Belarus and Iran sign cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/torgovo-promyshlennye-palaty-belarusi-i-irana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-536244-2022/>

<sup>275</sup> Iran's Industry Minister: trade turnover with Belarus may reach \$1 billion in the near future [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ministr-promyshlennosti-irana-tovarooborot-s-belarusiju-v-blizhajshej-vremja-mozhet-dostich-1-mlrd-516242-2022/>

opportunities to expand supplies of Belarusian machinery for the Iranian mining industry. The more so because this sector is developing very rapidly in Iran. Cooperation in agriculture and food between Belarus and Iran is another important area for the development of trade and economic cooperation in 2022. It is primarily about stepping up supplies of "Belarusian crop, meat, and dairy products, as well as animal feed and premixes to Iran, and counter deliveries of vegetables, fruits, fish, and seafood from Iran to Belarus" to the Iranian market .<sup>276</sup>

With regard to cooperation between Minsk and Tehran in the scientific sphere, a number of treaties, agreements and memoranda have already been signed between institutes of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Belarus and scientific organizations and universities of Iran. For instance, "according to the agreement on scientific and technical cooperation between the NAS and the Islamic Azad University, 16 Iranian scientists have graduated and defended PhD theses at the postgraduate courses of the scientific organizations of the Academy of Sciences"<sup>277</sup> . But the sides intend to expand joint efforts to work on specific scientific areas and projects. To this end, in May 2022 the Belarusian side offered its Iranian partners a package of proposals on which they could work together to achieve effective results. Among them are new materials and technologies, production of medicines and pharmaceutical products, technologies and equipment for comprehensive treatment of drinking water, mineral processing technologies, unmanned aerial vehicles, training and exchange of students, internships for scientists and teachers. It is planned that a draft roadmap for cooperation with scientific organisations in Iran will be developed at the

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<sup>276</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Industry, Regions, Agriculture / B.L. Zalessky // Materials for XVII International Scientific Practical Conference, Innovations on Scientific Progress - 2022, 17 - 25 August 2022: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 59.

<sup>277</sup> The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus will draft a roadmap for cooperation with scientific organisations in Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/nan-belarusi-razrabotaet-proekt-dorozhnoj-karty-sotrudnichestva-s-nauchnymi-organizatsijami-irana-500275-2022/>



initiative of the National Academy of Sciences, which will include promising areas of mutual interest.

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## To achieve a strategic relationship

In November 2022, New Delhi hosted the 11th meeting of the **Belarusian-Indian** Intergovernmental Commission for Cooperation in Trade, Economy, Industry, Science, Technology and Culture, where the sides analyzed the results achieved and identified promising projects in strategic areas of cooperation. While discussing the agenda of the Commission it was noted that over the last 30 years the Belarusian-Indian cooperation has grown stronger in virtually all spheres of mutual interest. And this despite considerable geographical distance between the two countries. Nevertheless, "Belarus views the development of full-fledged cooperation with India as one of the priorities of its foreign policy"<sup>278</sup>. And in this connection the Belarusian government has approved a roadmap to develop key areas of cooperation with this South Asian state, which is reflected in the minutes of the 11th meeting of the commission, and which considers "a full range of issues of bilateral cooperation, primarily in developing cooperation in logistics, industrial cooperation, agriculture, finance, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, science, education, tourism and other fields"<sup>279</sup>. It is about significant Belarusian-Indian projects in the trade, economic and investment sectors that can be implemented through joint efforts of the partners in various areas.

First, speaking of trade cooperation, let us recall that in 2021, the bilateral trade turnover between Belarus and India amounted to USD 567 million. At the same time, "potash fertilizers traditionally account for the largest share of Belarus's export to India, followed by nitrogen fertilizers, tyre raw materials and some types of steel. India mostly supplies Belarus

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<sup>278</sup> Makej: Despite the difficult global situation, cooperation with India is positive. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/makej-nesmotrja-na-slozhnuju-obschemirovujusituatsiju-sotrudnichestvo-s-indiej-idet-v-pozitivnom-534208-2022/>

<sup>279</sup> Agreements at ministerial and big business level. Makeya's visit to India [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/dogovorennosti-na-urovne-ministerstv-i-krupnogo-biznesa-sostojalsja-vizit-makeja-v-indiju-534194-2022/>

with medicines, raw materials for tobacco products, processed tobacco products, cotton yarn, electric transformers, tea, coffee, rice and some nylon products"<sup>280</sup> . At its 11th session, the Belarusian side has focused on increasing the supply of potash fertilizers to India, as well as exports of dump trucks, agricultural products, linen fabric, medicines, petrochemicals and wood processing products. In particular, the Belarusian Automobile Plant (BELAZ) is actively developing exports of its products to the Indian market, having sent a new shipment of vehicles to India in August 2022. "This time the Indian consumer has chosen the 220-tonne dump trucks BELAZ-7530 series. The technical solutions used in heavy trucks are maximally adapted to the conditions of their operation. The trucks are equipped with high-performance air conditioning system, the system of control of loading and fuel, the system of active video - 360 degrees, the system of smart light"<sup>281</sup> . It remains to add that during two and a half years mine dump trucks BELAZ with payload capacity of 136 tons work in conditions of extremely high temperatures - up to 50 degrees - in a coal mine in Chhattisgarh state of India. And the Belarusian equipment has proved its worth.

Second, the Belarusian partners are ready "to support the growing Indian industrial cluster, including participation in government programmes such as 'Made in India' and modernisation of the Indian agricultural sector. The two sides are moving towards the establishment of assembly facilities in India for Belarusian tractors, combines and other agricultural machinery."<sup>282</sup> . Thirdly, Belarusian specialists can help develop India's urban infrastructure under the state programme Smart Cities and export eco-

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<sup>280</sup> Ambassador: India and Belarus seek ways to overcome difficulties in mutual trade. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-indija-i-belarus-ischut-puti-preodolenija-slozhnostej-vo-vzaimnoj-torgovle-518941-2022/>.

<sup>281</sup> BELAZ develops product deliveries to India [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-razvivaet-postavki-produksii-v-indiju-517579-2022/>

<sup>282</sup> Belarus and India complete work on launching a direct flight between the capitals [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-indija-zavershajut-rabotu-po-zapusku-prjamogo-rejsa-mezhdu-stolitsami-534209-2022/>

friendly electric buses, which are produced by Belarus' leading companies - Minsk Automobile Works and Belkommunmash. Fourth, there are interesting plans of the two sides to further develop economic cooperation in the agricultural sector, including exchange of technologies and know-how in crop cultivation and expansion of supplies of a range of Belarusian meat and dairy products to the Indian market.

Fifth, Belarus and India have been very effective in developing science, technology and innovation ties. In particular, "high-tech exports to India in 2021 totaled \$343.1 million"<sup>283</sup>. And now the State Committee on Science and Technology of Belarus and the Ministry of Science and Technology of India are holding a tender for joint Belarusian-Indian science and technology projects for 2022-2023 in such areas as information and communication technologies with a focus on artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, machine learning, cloud services, new materials, biotechnology, including medicine and pharmaceuticals. Sixth, as for the Indian side, it has three ideas that have great potential for cooperation with Belarus. "The first one is tourism. The second is IT, IT opportunities, and the third is current developments and production."<sup>284</sup>.

Overall, the 11th meeting of the intergovernmental commission showed that "India is among those partner countries of Belarus in Asia, large-scale interaction with which is developing in all areas of cooperation"<sup>285</sup> to eventually achieve strategic relations between Minsk and New Delhi.

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<sup>283</sup> Belarus and India intend to develop science, technology and innovation cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-indija-namereny-razvivat-nauchno-tehnicheskoe-i-innovatsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-501726-2022/>

<sup>284</sup> Tourism, IT, advanced developments. In which areas India is interested in cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turizm-it-peredovye-razrabotki-v-kakih-sferah-indija-zainteresovana-v-sotrudnicestve-s-belarusiju-503301-2022/>

<sup>285</sup> Zalesky, B.L. Indian direction of Belarusian regions / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Naukowa przestrzeń Europy - 2022", Volume 2. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 10.

## Partnerships to a new level

**Pakistan is one of** the most important partners of Belarus in Asia, which fits into Belarus's strategy of export diversification and development of long-distance arc cooperation. Pakistan is a friendly country with good industrial potential and a market. Its population is over 200 million people. Pakistan has a well-developed agriculture, which allows you to organize cooperation in the supply of engineering and processing products. As for Belarusian-Pakistani trade and economic relations, "in recent years the trade volume between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has been fluctuating in the range of \$50 to \$65 million.<sup>286</sup> . But in 2021 the trade turnover between them increased by over 77 per cent at once and exceeded \$92 million with a surplus of \$63.6 million for the Belarusian side. The Belarusian exports are based on "tractors and spare parts, potash fertilizers, specific goods, synthetic threads, cellulose, dairy products, medicines, and diesel engines"<sup>287</sup> .

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

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<sup>286</sup> Trade and economic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade\\_and\\_economic\\_bilateral\\_relations/](https://pakistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/trade_and_economic_bilateral_relations/)

<sup>287</sup> Ambassador of Pakistan: agriculture and industry are our key points of interest in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-pakistanaselskoe-hozjajstvo-i-promyshlennost-nashi-kljuchevye-tochki-interesa-v-belarusi-494952-2022/>

"including consumer goods such as soft cheeses, perfumes and cosmetics, household appliances, baby products and watches"<sup>288</sup> .

In January 2023, Minsk hosted the sixth meeting of the joint Belarusian-Pakistani commission for trade and economic cooperation, at which the parties proposed to step up bilateral engagement both in terms of increasing trade turnover and investment cooperation, as "the two countries have good prospects for transition from simple trade to industrial cooperation and establishment of joint productions in the areas of mutual interest"<sup>289</sup> . Specifically, the two countries have agreed to expand cooperation in a number of areas - mechanical engineering, agriculture, science, education and healthcare. For example, Belarus is interested in increasing supplies of industrial products to this South Asian country - Belarusian passenger vehicles, municipal vehicles, agricultural and quarry machinery, textile industry products. "Partnership in agriculture is among the priorities. And this is not only willingness to expand the supplies of Belarusian foodstuffs, but also livestock products: mixed fodders, protein supplements, veterinary preparations. The establishment of a permanent exhibition centre of Belarus in Pakistan will contribute to a more active promotion of Belarusian agribusiness products..."<sup>290</sup> . Another mutually beneficial area is pharmaceuticals, because Belarus is interested in exporting medicines to Pakistan and is ready to consider setting up joint pharmaceutical production facilities.

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<sup>288</sup> National Centre for Marketing on the peculiarities of promotion of Belarusian goods on the market of Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/natsionalnyi-tsentr-marketinga-ob-osobennostjakh-prodvizhenija-belorusskih-tovarov-na-rynok-pakistan-8188/>

<sup>289</sup> Belarus is interested in supplying agribusiness products and agricultural machinery to Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-v-pakistan-produktsii-apk-i-selhoztehniki-544338-2023>

<sup>290</sup> Belarus and Pakistan agree to expand cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-dogovorilis-o-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva-544373-2023>

At the 6th meeting of the joint commission, the sides also specifically discussed opportunities for cooperation in science and high technology. These are nano- and biotechnologies, laser optoelectronics, information and communication technologies, aerospace and geo-information systems. In this regard, in March 2023 in the Pakistani city of Karachi a national exposition of Belarus will be organized at the International Trade and Industry Fair. Recall that at a similar exhibition in November 2021 in Karachi at the collective stand of the State Committee on Science and Technology "was presented about 60 scientific, technical and innovative developments. Institutions of the Ministry of Education as well as organizations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus showed their exhibits in the field of surface treatment and modification, chemical technologies and materials, physical materials science and new materials"<sup>291</sup>. So, apparently, the dialogue between the parties will continue in the near future.

Finally, regional cooperation is gradually becoming another promising area of Belarusian-Pakistani partnership. The fact is that a number of agreements and memoranda between cities, provinces and regions of the two countries have already been signed. For example, the Grodno Region has great potential for cooperation with Pakistan. "The province of Sindh and the city of Karachi, which is the industrial centre of Pakistan, are very important strategic partners. A cooperation agreement was signed between the city of Karachi and the Grodno region in 2015"<sup>292</sup>. And the parties are now ready to renew the agreement and resume relations in all sectors: economy, business, culture and education. For instance, baby food produced by Bellakt

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<sup>291</sup> Zalessky, B.L. To promote domestic technologies / B.L. Zalessky // *Materialy XX Miedzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej dzialalnosci - 2023"*, Volume 1. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - C. 24.

<sup>292</sup> Ambassador: Grodno Region has huge potential for cooperation with Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/posol-grodnenskaja-oblast-imeet-ogromnyj-potencial-dlja-sotrudnichestva-s-pakistanom-515738-2022>

is already well established in Pakistan, and these supplies can be increased. And since the Grodno Medical University has provided education for 122 Pakistani students. So the sides will actively continue their work to develop contacts. After all, this is only the beginning.

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

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## The main thing is new growth points

In November 2022, a Belarusian government delegation visited Syria, holding meetings and talks that will help expand and strengthen Belarusian-Syrian multidimensional cooperation. While discussing solutions that will allow the bilateral cooperation to reach a new, more productive level, the sides believe they have done "the most important thing - they have found new points for growth"<sup>293</sup>. After all, trade and economic cooperation between the two countries is developing today amid a difficult environment of economic sanctions against Syria, the destruction of transport and social infrastructure, an acute shortage of funds from the Syrian government and a decline in the purchasing power of the country's population. Nevertheless, "in 2021, the trade turnover between Belarus and Syria amounted to \$8.2 million (41.3% growth by 2020), exports - \$7.6 million (47.9% growth), imports - \$0.6 million (6.1% growth). The balance is positive - \$7.0 million. Belarus mainly exports to Syria specific goods, milk powder, milk whey, medicines, tractors and truck tractors, and imports olive oil, fruits and vegetables, nuts, coffee"<sup>294</sup>. But both countries are confident that there is still great potential for increasing the supply of machinery and expanding industrial co-operation. Let us remind that "the highest level of Belarus-Syria interaction was registered in 2008, when the volume of bilateral trade reached \$85.5 million"<sup>295</sup>. So it is time to talk about more serious joint projects with Syria.

Minsk and Damascus see the most urgent task in the current situation as developing trade and economic ties as quickly and extensively as possible.

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<sup>293</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus and Syria have found points of growth in bilateral relations [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-i-sirija-nashli-novye-tochki-rosta-v-dvustoronnih-otnoshenijah-536719-2022/>

<sup>294</sup> Belarus and Syria intend to increase mutual trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-sirija-namereny-narastit-vzaimnyj-tovarooborot-536491-2022/>

<sup>295</sup> Zalesky, B. Orientation - to result. Realizing the possibilities of international economic relations / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 42.

"From the Belarusian side, it is primarily technical assistance in the restoration of the Syrian economy and infrastructure after a decade of devastating war.<sup>296</sup> . And Belarus has a lot to offer Syrian friends. In this regard, it was interesting to see how Belarusian companies participated in the seventh international exhibition Rebuild SYRIA, which was held in the Syrian capital last fall.

Belarusian export-oriented enterprises from various sectors took part in the Belarusian exposition. They presented products required for the reconstruction of the Syrian economy, including novelties of production. After all, the country badly needs to restore its industry, agriculture, services, transport infrastructure, water and electricity supply systems, petrochemical industry, and telecommunications. "In this regard, Syria needs engineering solutions, agricultural and construction equipment, software, medical equipment, medicines, food (milk powder, whey, potatoes) and much more"<sup>297</sup> . In particular, there is demand in this Middle Eastern country for Belarusian products - glazed cheese and milkshakes, as well as butter. In general, "the Rebuild SYRIA exhibition includes such thematic sections as energy, construction, mechanical engineering, petrochemicals, agriculture, food industry, environmental protection, information technology, insurance and banking, education, health care"<sup>298</sup> .

The Belarusian exposition was presented by such well-known exporters as Minsk Dairy Plant No.1, Rechitsa Metizny Plant, AMKODOR, Ivatsevichdrev, and Minsk Automobile Plant. In particular, Minsk dairy enterprise offered "Syrian consumers a wide range of products: milk, butter,

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<sup>296</sup> Ambassador: Syrian partners are interested in Belarusian technologies, knowledge and skills [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/posol-sirijskie-partnery-zainteresovany-v-belorusskih-tehnologijah-znanijah-i-umenijah-536593-2022/>

<sup>297</sup> Belarus to exhibit at Syria exhibition [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavit-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-v-sirii-516103-2022>

<sup>298</sup> Belarus to take part in international exhibition in Syria [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-primet-uchastie-v-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-v-sirii-519355-2022/>

cream, skimmed milk powder, whey, glazed curds, curd desserts, soft and hard cheeses. A special attention is paid to the novelty of the production - glazed curd cheeses without added sugar, the only such product in Belarus<sup>299</sup>. Rechitsa Metizny Plant displayed metallurgical fastening products: nails, staples, bolts, screws, nuts, self-tapping screws, screws, rivets, axles and many others.

Machinery from the Minsk Automobile Plant was on display in the outdoor exhibition area: tippers, tractors, and concrete mixers. These machines are designed to perform a wide range of works and are suitable for the Siberian conditions of operation. For the record, Belarus has already provided humanitarian aid to Syria in June 2022. "A batch of MAZ trucks and construction machinery was handed over to the Syrian side. The Belarusian-made vehicles were used to restore the industrial and civil infrastructure in the hardest-hit areas of Syria."<sup>300</sup>

Another growth point is innovative cooperation between Belarus and Syria. In August 2022, a meeting of the Belarusian-Syrian commission for cooperation in science and technology was held, where the participants "considered the issues of cooperation in nano- and biotechnologies, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, technology transfer in agriculture, food, medicine and pharmaceuticals"<sup>301</sup>. An agreement was reached to hold a competition for joint scientific and technical projects for 2023-2024 in promising areas of cooperation. This shows that the two countries are already establishing fruitful cooperation and transforming it into effective joint scientific and commercial projects.

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<sup>299</sup> Machine building, metallurgy, food: what Belarus presented at the exhibition in Syria [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mashinostroenie-metallurgija-produkty-pitanija-chto-predstavila-belarus-na-vystavke-v-sirii-526268-2022/>

<sup>300</sup> Syria discusses supplies of Belarusian-made equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/sirija-obsuzhdaet-postavki-tehniki-belorusskogo-proizvodstva-534010-2022/>

<sup>301</sup> SCST: The share of innovative companies in Belarus is about 30% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gknt-dolja-innovatsionnyh-kompanij-v-belarusi-sostavljaet-okolo-30-518618-2022/>

## Develop dialogue and intensify trade

Intensification of economic cooperation with international organisations and foreign countries is one of the most important areas of development of **the Eurasian Economic Union** (EAEU) until 2025. At the same time, the international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as "creating conditions for the joint entry of enterprises of member states into third countries' markets, including South-East Asian states..."<sup>302</sup>. In this vein, the development of dialogue with **the Association of Southeast Asian Nations** (ASEAN) is one of the priorities of the EAEU's international activities.

ASEAN is a regional organisation comprising 10 countries in South-East Asia - Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia - established to promote social, economic and cultural cooperation in the region. The Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) has successfully cooperated with the ASEAN Secretariat since 2018 under the Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Cooperation. This document aims to promote economic cooperation to enhance trade, economic and investment cooperation between EAEU member states and ASEAN in "the following areas: a) customs and trade facilitation; b) sanitary and phytosanitary measures; c) technical regulations; d) electronic trade; e) trade in services and investment; f) business development, especially for micro, small and medium enterprises..."<sup>303</sup>. A cooperation programme for 2020-2025 has been adopted to implement the Memorandum. It covers areas such as customs legislation

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<sup>302</sup> Zalesky, B. Format of Eurasian integration. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 52.

<sup>303</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/%D1%8E%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82+%D0%90%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%8F+%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81+%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BB.pdf>

and enforcement, trade policy, business, technical and antitrust regulation, SPS measures, energy, functioning of domestic markets. All this work contributes to the growth of trade and economic cooperation between EAEU states and ASEAN countries. "In 2021, the Union's foreign trade turnover with ASEAN increased by 34.6% to \$23.9 billion. This included an increase in Union exports to \$10.2 billion (up 53.5%) and imports to \$13.7 billion (up 23.3%). The share of ASEAN in the Union's foreign trade turnover was 2.8%"<sup>304</sup>. The parties are focused on new points of growth, search for balanced solutions for successful interaction and new long-term forms of cooperation, identification of prospects for the development of scientific, technological and innovative cooperation, industrial cooperation, as well as mechanisms for exchange of practices and competencies taking into account the goals of sustainable development. In particular, digitalisation of the economy is a promising area of interaction, where the EAEU and ASEAN have their own significant developments that are of mutual interest. In addition, the progressive expansion of trade requires strengthening of cooperation in financial and banking sector, including the use of payments in national currencies. The Eurasian Economic Union is successfully developing cooperation with a number of ASEAN governments through bilateral formats, including **Thailand** and **Cambodia**.

When it comes to EAEU cooperation with **Thailand**, the first meeting of the joint working group on cooperation was in November 2019. In September 2021, at the 2nd meeting of the working group, the parties stated that "in the first half of this year [2021], EAEU trade with Thailand increased by 32.6% compared to the same period last year and reached USD 1.2 billion. In the first half of the year [2021], trade turnover between the EAEU countries and Thailand increased by 32.6% compared with the same period

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<sup>304</sup> The EAEU and ASEAN increase trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.caecРазвития nion.org/news/caes-i-asean-narashchivayut-obemy-tovarooborota/>.

last year to US\$1.2 billion. Imports were \$907 million and exports by the EEU reached \$1.2 billion. THE EEU'S EXPORTS INCREASED BY US\$330.5 MILLION AND IMPORTS BY US\$907 MILLION"<sup>305</sup> . Exports increased mainly due to exports of metals and metal products, foodstuffs and agricultural raw materials, leather raw materials, furs and fur products. Imports from Thailand, meanwhile, have increased as a result of greater imports of machinery, equipment and vehicles. Further development of cooperation between the two sides is inseparably linked to the strengthening of ties between business circles in the area of transport infrastructure and the introduction of new technologies. Bio-engineering, the supply of energy resources and energy equipment, as well as agricultural products, are seen as promising avenues.

Another ASEAN country developing engagement in the EAEU is **Cambodia**. A memorandum of understanding was signed in May 2016. In September 2021, following the third working group meeting between EEC and the Government of Cambodia, the parties expressed strong interest in increasing trade and investment and identified such areas of cooperation as trade and investment, customs cooperation, innovation, telecommunications and information and communication technology, industry and infrastructure, technical regulation, SPS measures and intellectual property issues. Recall that EAEU trade with Cambodia declined in 2020 for objective reasons, but already in the first half of 2021, the statistics inspired cautious optimism. "Trade increased 1.4 times compared to the same period last year [2020] and reached US\$130 million. THE INCREASE WAS SEEN IN ALL STATES. At the same time, growth was observed in all EAEU states"<sup>306</sup> . Nevertheless,

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<sup>305</sup> The EAEU and Thailand are interested in developing cooperation in infrastructure, new technologies, digitalisation and green economy [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/caes-i-tailand-zainteresovany-v-razvittii-sotrudnichestva-v-sfere-infrastruktury-novyh-tehnologij-tsifrovizatsii-i-zelenoj-ekonomiki/>

<sup>306</sup> ECE and the Government of Cambodia sign a joint statement on enhanced cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eek-i-pravitelstvo-kambodzhi-podpisali-sovmestnoe-zayavlenie-o-rasshirenii-sotrudnichestva/>

the existing trade turnover does not reveal the full potential of cooperation between the EAEU and Cambodia, so the parties plan to develop dialogue and intensify trade.

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## The potential for cooperation between partners remains high

In December 2022, a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Bishkek approved the Main directions of **the Eurasian Economic Union's** (EAEU) international activities for 2023, where, in the context of the idea of the Greater Eurasian Partnership, the EAEU priorities will contribute to the implementation of the export potential of the Union's countries. "In doing so, the international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as the creation of conditions for joint access of enterprises of member states to third countries' markets"<sup>307</sup> .

As of mid-November 2022, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) had already concluded "46 memoranda with international organisations, 27 memoranda with governments, ministries and agencies of third countries, 14 memoranda with regional integration and interstate associations, and 7 trade agreements with third countries"<sup>308</sup> . In 2023, the EAEU will interact with the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union, the BRICS countries, as well as the World Customs Organization, the World Trade Organization, and the African Union. Priority will also be given to cooperation with a number of states, including **the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iran and Indonesia**.

For example, in June 2022 the EEC signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the **UAE** Government. The EAEU considers this country to be one of the most promising partners for trade and economic cooperation

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<sup>307</sup> Zalessky, B.L. EAEU-ASEAN: to Develop Dialogue and Intensify Trade / B.L. Zalessky // Materials for XVII International Scientific Practical Conference, Scientific Potential for Light - 2022, 17 - 25 September 2022: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 7.

<sup>308</sup> Approved the Main Directions of the EAEU's International Activities for 2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/utverzhdny-osnovnye-napravleniya-mezhdunarodnoy-deyatelnosti-caes-na-2023-god/>



in the Middle East. "According to the results of 2021, the dynamics of trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and the UAE are positive. The trade turnover increased by 60.9 per cent and reached \$6.3 billion, while the overall EAEU foreign trade turnover grew by 35.1 per cent"<sup>309</sup>. The parties agreed in the memorandum to increase the volume of mutual trade, as well as to implement measures aimed at eliminating barriers. The EEC and the UAE intend to cooperate in the areas of customs and technical regulations, application of sanitary, veterinary and phytosanitary quarantine measures, financial markets, transport, industry and agro-industrial complex, competition policy and antitrust regulation, and intellectual property.

In April 2022, the parties established a joint EEU-UAE study group to explore the prospects for a free trade agreement. In December 2022, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council decided to start negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EAEU and the UAE. Negotiations are planned to be conducted in an accelerated mode. The fact is that the formation of a free trade zone with the UAE will create conditions for the growth of supplies in more than 1,300 commodity items both in the industrial sector and in the agro-industrial complex. "The relevance of multifaceted interaction is confirmed by the high interest and presence of a large number of companies from the Union, including innovative ones, in the United Arab Emirates, as well as the role of this state as an international trade and transport and logistics hub. In addition, the agreement with the UAE is seen in terms of strengthening the position of EAEU exporters in the countries throughout the Persian Gulf in the context of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and the North-South corridor".<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> The EAEU and the UAE Government signed a Memorandum of Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/caes-i-pravitelstvo-oae-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimodeystvii/>

<sup>310</sup> The EEU will start negotiations with the UAE on a free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/caes-nachnet-peregovory-s-oae-o-zaklyuchenii-soglasheniya-o-svobodnoy-torgovle/>

In January 2023, the EEC, discussing with the Emirati side issues of trade and economic cooperation between EAEU and the UAE, including prospects for increasing export-import supplies and diversifying trade, invited the UAE leadership and entrepreneurs to actively participate in the Eurasian Economic Forum, scheduled for May 2023. Note that, "According to the EEC, from 2015 to 2021, the volume of trade between EAEU countries and the UAE increased fourfold, EAEU exports to the UAE increased 4.7 times, while EAEU imports from the UAE increased by 47%. At the same time, trade turnover between January and October 2022 increased by another 55% compared to the same period in 2021."<sup>311</sup> .

A new comprehensive trade agreement between the EAEU and **Iran** is also scheduled to be concluded in 2023, which will "give impetus to increase mutual supplies"<sup>312</sup> . In this context, the prospects for long-term mutually beneficial cooperation in transport, cooperation in industry, agriculture and food security, among other areas, are impressive. The future agreement will provide a strong contractual basis for these joint plans.

In terms of figures, "in 2021, trade turnover between the EAEU and Iran increased by 74%, and in the first 10 months of 2022 by another 25% compared to the same period of the previous year"<sup>313</sup> . In January 2023, the parties agreed on all issues to conclude negotiations and sign the agreement, with the exception of mutual market access for certain categories of

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<sup>311</sup> Pivovar, E. Negotiations on a free trade zone between the EAEU and the UAE are to be conducted at an accelerated pace [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/peregovory-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-mezhdu-eaes-i-oae-planiruetsja-vesti-v-uskorennom-rezhime-546918-2023>

<sup>312</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "Today we have a serious incentive to develop regional agreements and regional connectivity". [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-segodnya-my-imeem-sereznyy-stimul-dlya-razvitiya-regionalnykh-soglasheniy-i-regionaln/>

<sup>313</sup> Andrey Slepnev discussed in Tehran the completion of negotiations on a free trade area agreement with Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-obsudil-v-tegerane-voprosy-zaversheniya-peregovorov-po-soglasheniyu-o-zone-svobodnoy/>

agricultural products, for which discussions are still ongoing, but the issue will soon be closed.

Also. In September 2022, the EEC Council decided to start negotiations with **Indonesia** to conclude a free trade agreement in 2023. This country is the largest economy in ASEAN and the fourth most populous in the world, so trade relations with this Asian state have considerable potential. "The EAEU's trade turnover with Indonesia in 2021 increased by 41.5% to \$3.7 billion compared to 2020. At the same time, exports added 34.1% and imports increased by 44.5%."<sup>314</sup> . At the end of the three quarters of 2022, trade turnover between the parties grew by almost half, with exports by the EAEU countries increasing by more than two and a half times. And there is confidence that the liberalisation of trade conditions could allow trade turnover to increase by at least another \$1.5 billion.

In December 2022, the EAEU and Indonesia recorded an agreement to hold the first negotiating round in the first quarter of 2023, stressing that the parties "have prospects both for agricultural goods, which traditionally make up the bulk of Union imports from Indonesia, and for the industrial group, actively traded in both directions"<sup>315</sup> . So again, the potential for cooperation in 2023 remains high.

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<sup>314</sup> Andrey Slepnev: "A business dialogue with Indonesia is proposed within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Forum in 2023". [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-v-ramkakh-evraziyskogo-ekonomicheskogo-foruma-v-2023-godu-predlagaetsya-provesti-bizn/>

<sup>315</sup> The EEU and Indonesia launch negotiations on a free trade agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-indoneziya-dali-start-peregovorom-posoglasheniyu-o-svobodnoy-torgovle/>

## **And the expansion of exports and the search for new markets**

In May 2022, Cairo will host the third **Belarusian-African** Economic Forum, which will focus on the prospects of joint projects in agriculture, mechanical engineering, education and other areas with a number of African countries. This fact once again attests to the fact that "intensification of engagement with African countries is one of the important components of the modern Belarusian foreign policy"<sup>316</sup>. By early 2022 the Republic of Belarus had established diplomatic relations with 51 countries of the African continent, with Belarusian diplomatic missions successfully operating in four of them - Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria and the Republic of South Africa. "The key area of cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the African states in trade and economic sphere is the expansion of export of goods and services. Systematic work is underway to develop new markets on the African continent"<sup>317</sup>. And an important component of this work is the organization and holding of Belarusian-African economic and business forums.

For example, a business forum Africa-Belarus: the current situation and new benchmarks for joint business projects, which was attended by representatives of 17 embassies of African countries, including Burkina Faso, the Gabonese Republic, Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Namibia, South Africa, Sudan and Zambia, as well as over two hundred Belarusian businesses, was held in December 2020 as a video conference. The relevance of the event for the Belarusian side was explained by the fact that official Minsk pays great attention to the development of ties with the countries of this continent, as "Africa is a trove of natural resources, an important source

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<sup>316</sup> Zalessky, B. Vectors of the far arc. Opportunities for sectoral cooperation / B. Zaleski. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing: Saarbrücken, Deutschland / Germany, 2018. - C. 17.

<sup>317</sup> Belarus and African and Middle Eastern countries [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.by/countries\\_regions/africa\\_middle\\_east/](https://www.mfa.gov.by/countries_regions/africa_middle_east/)

of global labor, a huge undeveloped market"<sup>318</sup>. In this regard, it is important not only to increase the volume of mutual trade with the countries of the continent, but also to diversify Belarusian exports, deepen economic and industrial cooperation, while actively using a project approach, the essence of which is to implement projects to establish joint ventures and enterprises in Africa, promote industrial and food products, as well as scientific, technological and industrial developments in the industrial, agricultural, energy and transport sectors

Elaborating on this thesis, participants of the December African-Belarusian Business Forum noted that "for Belarus, from a business perspective, there are three main areas for cooperation with African countries."<sup>319</sup>. First, everything to do with mechanical engineering and the development of the respective infrastructure. Secondly, everything that has to do with food production, agrarian technologies and agricultural machinery. Thirdly, everything that includes the services sector, and especially education, medicine and IT technology. Certainly, in each of these areas the Belarusian side has already accumulated a certain experience of cooperation, which can be used to further realize the huge potential for the development of foreign economic relations that exists here.

A good example in this regard is the Minsk Tractor Works, which increased its export supplies to African countries by almost three and a half times in the first ten months of 2020, while opening two new markets - Zimbabwe and Burundi. But the address of the main deliveries of Belarusian tractors to the "black continent" was Sudan, where 153 machines were sent in 2019 and 510 in January - October 2020. This is the result of cooperation

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<sup>318</sup> Africa becomes a promising and long-term partner for Belarus - Ulahovich [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/afrika-stanovitsja-perspektivnym-i-dolgosrochnym-partnerom-belarusi-ulahovich-413176-2020/>

<sup>319</sup> Belarus invites African countries to cooperate in services, agribusiness and mechanical engineering. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predlagaet-afrikanskim-stranam-sotrudnicat-v-sfere-uslug-apk-i-mashinostroenii-419342-2020>

between MTZ and the Sudanese company MIG Agricultural Co. Ltd, which began back in 2003, thanks to which more than two and a half thousand BELARUS tractors are already in operation in the Sudanese fields.

In addition, Minsk Tractor Plant in Africa has created a certain reserve for the future in the form of a cooperation roadmap signed back in February 2020 with the Ministry of Defence Industry of Egypt, which provides for the organization of assembly production of tractors and engines at the plant of Helwan Diesel Engines Co. with an access to localization of up to 40 percent in the next three years. It is important that the Egyptian partners have already been given a model project for arranging the assembly plant for 500 units of machinery, as well as a list of the necessary equipment and tooling. In addition, the MTZ will prepare and submit a standard assembly production project for the production of 10,000 machines per year. <sup>320</sup>

In the first eight months of 2020, BMZ, the managing company of BMK Holding, increased its shipments to Africa by almost 20 percent, having shipped more than \$11 million worth of fittings. This made it possible to increase the African countries' share in the company's total exports up to 12 per cent. Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin and Ghana are among the main importers of Belarusian steelmakers' products. Interestingly, "shipments to the latter country [Ghana] this year [2020] have tripled in volume terms"<sup>321</sup>

Another African country where the Belarusian presence is growing fast is **Zimbabwe**, which reached an agreement with its government several years ago on supplies of agricultural machinery worth 58 million dollars. And "100 tractors, 20 combine harvesters, 52 seed drills, five tractors and five semi-trailers made in Belarus have already been delivered to Zimbabwe.

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<sup>320</sup> MTZ triples its exports to Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-vtroe-uelichil-eksport-v-afriku-416304-2020/>

<sup>321</sup> BMZ increased its sales of rebar to Africa by almost 20% [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uelichil-prodazhi-armatury-v-afriku-pochti-na-20-407746-2020/>

By the end of this year [2020] another 370 tractors, 20 combine harvesters and 138 seeders will arrive by sea"<sup>322</sup> . The fact is that for this country's economy, apart from the mining industry, the agricultural sector is a key segment. And mechanisation is seen as the backbone of the development of national agriculture here. For this reason, in September 2020, Zimbabwe announced at the state level the launch of a joint government program with Belarus to mechanize the country's agricultural sector. In this regard, a Belarusian trade and service centre was opened in the capital, Harare, where "equipment will be provided to Zimbabwean farmers as part of the government agricultural mechanization program of the country."<sup>323</sup> .

Also. There will also soon be a significant increase in efforts to establish ties between Belarus and **Namibia**, which in November 2020 announced their intention to focus on "developing the legal and contractual framework and establishing a joint intergovernmental committee on trade and economic cooperation"<sup>324</sup> .

The Second Belarus-Africa Economic Forum brought together government, business and financial representatives from 14 African states - Angola, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda - and was held in Minsk at the turn of spring and summer 2021. More than 175 companies and industrial enterprises, interested in establishing contacts with African partners and implementing joint mutually beneficial projects, took part in the event on the Belarusian part. Minsk described the forum as an important dialogue platform aimed at further strengthening and

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<sup>322</sup> Zimbabwe launches a joint programme with Belarus to provide farms with agricultural machinery. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-zimbabve-zapuschena-sovmestnaja-s-belarusju-programma-obespechenija-ferm-selhoztehnikoj-408853-2020/>

<sup>323</sup> "Gomselmash strengthens its position in the Zimbabwe market [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-ukrepljaet-pozitsii-na-rynke-zimbabve-408968-2020>

<sup>324</sup> Belarus and Namibia plan to establish a committee on trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-namibija-planirujut-sozdat-komitet-po-torgovo-ekonomicheskomu-sotrudnichestvu-417026-2020/>

development of bilateral and multilateral relations of Belarus with African countries, expansion of trade, economic and cooperation relations, increase in mutual trade turnover. Suffice it to say that "in the three years following the first Belarusian-African forum, mutual trade between Belarus and African countries totaled more than USD 1.8 billion. Belarus and its African partners have gone from annual trade of \$158 million in the early 2000s to \$553 million in 2020."<sup>325</sup> . This dynamic largely explains why the continent is considered one of the important elements of Belarus's multi-vector foreign policy, where Belarus has a lot of opportunities for joint and mutually beneficial movement towards the creation of new footholds and strengthening of cooperation in a wide range of areas.

It is a fact that Belarus has long been exporting to many African countries. Moreover, "virtually half of the countries of the southern continent know Belarusian products: from food to mechanical engineering."<sup>326</sup> . For example, there is an assembly facility for Belarusian tractors and trucks in **Egypt**, and similar projects are already underway in **Sudan** and **Algeria**. Potash fertilizers and tyres are exported to **the Republic of South Africa**. "Major projects are underway and contracts are being negotiated to supply Belarusian machinery and equipment to Zimbabwe and Angola."<sup>327</sup> .

But the very fact of the second Belarusian-African Economic Forum showed that the achieved indicators of engagement with African partners can and should be much higher. The current level of cooperation is just a starting point for the introduction of new forms and methods of trade and economic

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<sup>325</sup> About the Second Belarus-Africa Economic Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/dd94997d14d9eb8a.html](https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/dd94997d14d9eb8a.html).

<sup>326</sup> Experts link the development of the global economy with Africa. How can Belarus take advantage of it? [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksperty-svjazyvajut-razvitie-mirovoj-ekonomiki-s-afrikaj-kak-etim-mozhet-vospolzovatsja-belarus-443722-2021/>.

<sup>327</sup> Grishkevich, A. Belarusian dump trucks and agricultural machinery took a strong position in the markets of many African countries / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-samosvaly-i-selhoztehnika-zanjali-prochnye-pozitsii-na-rynkah-mnogih-afrikanskih-stran-443820-2021/>



collaboration and diversification of mutual trade. In fact, this is why at this economic forum Belarus suggested that in terms of assistance in ensuring food security African countries should use a comprehensive systematic approach in developing partnerships, from evaluating local farming conditions to supplying a full range of machinery and equipment. The implementation of this approach can significantly increase supplies of "Belarusian machinery, equipment and components to Africa under various forms of industrial cooperation, possibly using various instruments to finance Belarusian exports"<sup>328</sup> , and speed up the establishment of joint ventures using Belarusian technologies and the construction of turnkey industrial and agricultural facilities.

It should be noted that Belarusian proposals at the economic forum were met with considerable interest by the African participants. For example, the Egyptian side, which was represented by some 35 companies in Minsk and expressed its interest in industrial cooperation with partners from Belarus, suggested promoting trilateral cooperation in the framework of which Belarusian tractors assembled in Egypt could be delivered to other countries of the continent, making use of free trade zones there, which would remove a number of tariff barriers. Among other vectors of cooperation, according to Egyptian business, there are several more that look promising today. "The first one is a coronavirus vaccine produced in Belarus, and the second one is an electric bus produced in Belarus."<sup>329</sup> .

As for other African countries, for example, **Uganda**, which is rich in minerals and is engaged in oil and gas extraction, "intends to seriously engage in residential infrastructure and hotel construction to develop

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<sup>328</sup> On the meeting of Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej with the participants of the Second Belarus-Africa Economic Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news\\_mfa/cc66b6a8ee1bbd02.html](https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/cc66b6a8ee1bbd02.html)

<sup>329</sup> Egypt is interested in industrial cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/egipet-zainteresovan-v-promyshlennoj-kooperatsii-s-belarusju-443740-2021/>

tourism. Belarusian partners could help the country in this matter"<sup>330</sup>. Other promising areas of mutual interest between Belarus and Uganda include oil refining, information and communication technologies and education. **Congo would** like to develop relations with Belarusian partners in order to modernize its agricultural policy. Namibia sees prospects for such cooperation in mining, energy, industry, agriculture, and even fisheries.

Interaction between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of South Africa (RSA) deserves a special mention in this context. March 2023 will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In 2020, trade between the two countries exceeded \$25 million, with Belarusian exports accounting for \$18 million. This happened due to deliveries from Belarus of quarry motor vehicles and spare parts, extra large dimension tyres, potash fertilizers, linen fabric, x-ray equipment, certain kinds of foodstuffs. An important point in this case is also that "the distribution network of Belarusian enterprises in South Africa includes the Belshina trade house, a dealer (certified service centre) of BelAZ"<sup>331</sup>.

A characteristic feature of the recent engagement between Belarus and South Africa has been the revival of trade and economic ties. In particular, "in 2020, after a six-year break, supplies of BELAZ mining equipment to South Africa resumed"<sup>332</sup>. And at the end of September 2021, the fleet of these machines in this African country already numbered 49 dump trucks. This fact is a clear indication that Minsk and Pretoria are now starting to

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<sup>330</sup> "We can start working right now" - African countries have voiced promising areas for cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mozhem-nachinat-rabotat-prjamo-sejchas-strany-afriki-ozvuchili-perspektivnye-sfery-sotrudnichestva-s-443755-2021/>

<sup>331</sup> Cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the Republic of South Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/](https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/)

<sup>332</sup> Turchin discusses cooperation in agriculture and machinery with the South African ambassador [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turchin-obsdil-s-poslom-juar-sotrudnichestvo-v-oblasti-selskogo-hozjajstva-i-proizvodstva-tehniki-462069-2021/>

gradually return to realising the full potential inherent in the cooperation between the two countries' regions. It should be recalled that in 2013, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the sides talked about good prospects of "cooperation in the fields of industry, agriculture, interregional development..."<sup>333</sup> . And in 2021, this aspiration became particularly prominent.

For example, in late September 2021, Minsk Region Executive Committee met with the head of the South African diplomatic mission to Russia and Belarus, M.D. Maketuka, to discuss ways to step up cooperation with partners from **Free State**. The meeting resulted in a decision to cooperate in two areas: agriculture and machinery manufacturing. It should be noted that the two regions signed a cooperation agreement back in December 2015. In September 2016, a representative delegation from Free State visited the Belarusian metropolitan area, where it was particularly interested in the technologies and experience of Minsk Region in processing agricultural products. The reason was that agriculture is central to the province's economy. In addition, the South African side expressed a great interest "in the assistance of Belarusian partners in personnel training, and they also intend to develop cooperation in construction and healthcare"<sup>334</sup> . And in November 2020, the South African partners confirmed their readiness to cooperate in various areas, including "in the areas of trade in milk and meat, exchange of students for training"<sup>335</sup> , as well as in the development of tourism. It appears that the time has come for all these interaction plans to be implemented.

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<sup>333</sup> Zalessky, B. International relations and media. A View from Belarus / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2014. - C. 539.

<sup>334</sup> Martynyuk, E. Free State Province of South Africa intends to adopt the Belarusian experience in processing agricultural products / E. Martynyuk // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/provintsija-fri-stejt-juar-namerena-perenjat-belorusskij-opyt-po-pererabotke-selhozproduktov-211004-2016/>

<sup>335</sup> South Africa is interested in cooperation with the Minsk region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/juar-zainteresovana-v-sotrudnichestve-s-minskoj-oblastju-417308-2020/>

Another South African province that has noticeably stepped up its interest in cooperation with Belarusian partners in 2021 is **KwaZulu-Natal**, which is the second most populous (11.5 million people) in South Africa and ranks second in the country in terms of economic indicators. For instance, in April a videoconference entitled "Possibilities of trade and investment cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the province of KwaZulu-Natal in the sphere of textiles and clothing" was held, where "companies operating in the sphere of linen products supply, tailoring and footwear, designers were represented from the South African side"<sup>336</sup>. As a result of the discussion, such Belarusian enterprises as Orsha Flax Enterprise, Kamvol, Mogotex and Luch will soon find reliable business partners in the south of the African continent.

This province of South Africa is of interest to Belarus because it is where a project to set up an assembly plant for Belarusian tractors is expected to take place in a special economic zone. "The parties to the project on the South African side are Nqawana Holdings and the administration of the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ), on the Belarusian side - OJSC MTZ and Round By LLC"<sup>337</sup>. In August 2021, the technical details of this project have already been discussed here and concrete steps for the implementation of the agreements reached have been outlined.

An interesting example of partner regions from Belarus and South Africa is the **Mogilev Region** and **Mpumalanga Province**, one of the most powerful in the country industrially, where mining, telecommunications services and energy are well developed, and where about 40 percent of South Africa's forest land is concentrated. The parties signed a memorandum of

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<sup>336</sup> On the video conference "Opportunities for Trade and Investment Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the Province of KwaZulu-Natal in the Field of Textiles and Clothing". [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/b561f2d89c659bd7.html>

<sup>337</sup> On Ambassador A. Sidoruk's visit to Richards Bay [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/ad33cd30a4281477.html>

cooperation in December 2016. In it, they expressed interest in developing partnerships in trade and industry, agriculture, education, sports, tourism and culture. The province was also interested in developing not only agricultural projects, but also in training specialists in agriculture, forestry, medicine, and information technology at Belarusian universities. In addition, they talked about possibilities of "cooperation in wood processing, establishment of joint agricultural processing and food production enterprises"<sup>338</sup>. Let's hope that it is time for these regions, too, to revisit the partnership plans once adopted in order to successfully implement them today.

**Kenya is** another country on the African continent, with which Belarus has great potential for mutually beneficial cooperation. Here we can recall that in August 2019, a Belarusian-Kenyan business forum was held in Nairobi, where participants outlined promising growth points for bilateral trade and economic cooperation. At the same time, the parties focused on the prospects of joint projects that would contribute to the implementation of the strategic "Big Four Programme" of the Government of Kenya, which includes "food security and nutrition, universal health coverage, affordable housing and manufacturing"<sup>339</sup>. As a result, agreements were signed at the forum to build a reinforced concrete construction factory on Kenyan land and to establish a fish farm at a total cost of over one hundred million dollars. Agreements were also reached on deliveries of automotive tractors and equipment from Belarus to Kenya for nearly twenty million dollars with the subsequent establishment of an assembly facility for Belarusian tractors in that African country with a capacity of up to five thousand units per year.

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<sup>338</sup> Kuliagin, S. Mogilev region and the Mpumalanga province of South Africa signed a memorandum of cooperation / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-provintsija-mpumalanga-juar-podpisali-memorandum-o-sotrudnichestve-222724-2016/>

<sup>339</sup> About the Belarus-Kenya Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/e02ca9530a8dce63.html>

These facts prove that the business forum that took place was an important concrete step towards the establishment of bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Kenya, diplomatic relations between the two countries were established almost 30 years ago. True, the contractual and legal framework for Belarusian-Kenyan cooperation is still in the formation stage. However, it is encouraging that the two countries are now preparing to sign a number of joint documents regulating bilateral relations in a variety of areas, including agriculture, higher education, science and technology.

A positive trend in recent years in the development of partnership ties between the two countries is the rapid growth - by more than forty percent - of mutual trade turnover in 2018, which came close to \$50 million. "The traditional items of Belarusian exports to Kenya are potash and mixed mineral fertilisers, newsprint and printing products. The basis of Kenya's imports to Belarus is formed by supplies of flowers and buds, nuts, fruits and vegetables, coffee and tea"<sup>340</sup>. And this gives grounds for the Belarusian side to predict at the highest level that "Kenya will soon become one of the key partners of Belarus in Africa"<sup>341</sup>.

The seriousness of the intention of the Belarusian side to thoroughly familiarize itself with the Kenyan market is confirmed by the organization of Belarus's first national exposition at the FoodAgro International Food, Hospitality and Agriculture Exhibition, which took place in Nairobi in early August 2019. Minsk is confident that participation in this exhibition, which is part of the largest exhibition event in East Africa - Kenya International Trade Exhibition, "will help promote Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment, fertilizers, food, agricultural products in the Kenyan market and

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<sup>340</sup> Belarus - Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/](http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/)

<sup>341</sup> Lukashenka expects Kenya to become one of Belarus' key partners in Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-rasschityvaet-cto-kenija-stanet-odnim-iz-kljuchevyh-partnerov-belarusi-v-afrike-328984-2018/>

become a launching pad for Belarusian enterprises to enter KOMECA (the integration association of East and Southern Africa) countries.<sup>342</sup> .

In the Kenyan capital, enterprises of the concern Belgospischeprom, JSC Holding Management Company Lidselmash, open joint-stock companies Gomselmash, MTZ, MAZ, Bobruiskagromash, Lidahleproduct, as well as the unitary enterprise Smorgon Bakery Products Plant presented their products. The participation of these Belarusian exporters in the said exhibition is explained by the fact that Kenya is an agricultural country where "over 35% of GDP is accounted for by the agricultural sector"<sup>343</sup> , where in December 2017 a new programme of planned economic development of the country until 2022 was launched with a focus on development of national production, ensuring food security and construction of affordable housing. In this regard, Belarusian manufacturers, with a competent approach, can realistically claim to increase supplies of their agricultural equipment, fertilizers and crop protection chemicals here. The development of meat and dairy production is also promising in this African country, because "the range of such products in Kenya is not wide, so they are interested in proposals to establish meat and dairy complexes, poultry complexes, meat processing lines and cheese production".<sup>344</sup> . Another interesting fact is this. There are many manufacturers working in Kenya today who assemble tractors, tractors, cars here. There is a company that assembles three models of Volkswagen vehicles on its premises. It is the company that would like to expand the range of machinery assembled there with Belarusian tractors.

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<sup>342</sup> A national exposition of Belarus has opened at the FoodAgro exhibition in Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-otkrylas-na-vystavke-foodagro-v-kenii-356957-2019/>

<sup>343</sup> FoodAgro exhibition will allow Belarus to expand its presence in the Kenyan market - Sadoho [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vystavka-foodagro-pozvolit-belarusi-rasshirit-svoe-prisutstvie-na-rynke-kenii-sadoho-349941-2019/>

<sup>344</sup> Demand for Belarusian agricultural machinery in Kenya is constantly growing [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/spro-na-belorusskuju-selhoztehniku-v-kenii-postojanno-rastet-349964-2019/>

It should be noted that the Nairobi exhibition continued Belarus's commitment to active participation in various business events on the African continent in the pre-pandemic period in 2019. In March that year, the national exposition of Belarus was organized for the first time at the Agrofood International Agriculture and Livestock, Food, Beverages, and Packaging Technology Exhibition in Lagos, Nigeria. And in April, Made in Belarus was presented at the 60th Zimbabwe International Trade Fair 2019 in the Zimbabwean city of Bulawayo, one of the largest in the southern African region. Apparently, 2022 is set to be a new "point of reference" for this issue already in the post-pandemic era. This is evidenced by the Plan of National Exhibitions of Belarus in Foreign Countries for this year, which talks about the national expositions of our country in Africa at least at two international exhibition forums: in the first half of the year - Kenia International Trade Exhibition in Nairobi (Kenya); in the second - Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in Bulawayo (Zimbabwe). These events, along with the third Belarusian-African Economic Forum to be held in Cairo in May 2022, should give a new powerful impetus to the systemic work to expand Belarusian exports and develop new markets in Africa.



## Trade shows steady growth

In June 2022, the **Belarus-Latin** America Forum was held in Moscow at the Business and Cultural Complex of the Embassy of Belarus in Russia. The Forum gathered representatives of Latin American embassies in Belarus and Russia from 15 countries. Ambassadors, heads of diplomatic missions and diplomats from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and El Salvador participated in the event.

The Latin American and Caribbean region is interesting for Belarus as an important platform for integration into global trade and economic ties. Last year, total imports of the region's countries from Belarus "amounted to \$715.5 million, an increase of 3.5% compared to 2020. The commodity nomenclature of Belarusian exports to the region includes potash fertilizers, land vehicles, ferrous metal products, chemical and petrochemical products, tools and optical devices, dairy products"<sup>345</sup>. In 2021, the trade turnover between Belarus and the Latin American region was about \$1.5 billion.

Belarus already has positive experience in the region. "This includes participation of Belarusian companies in geological and seismic exploration works, mining operations in Venezuela and Ecuador, construction projects in Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru, supplies of Belarusian agricultural, automotive and passenger vehicles to Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina, Colombia, Nicaragua and Bolivia, export of mining equipment to Venezuela and Chile"<sup>346</sup>. The work in the abovementioned areas is being carried out quite actively. Further increase of trade and investments is expected, first of

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<sup>345</sup> NCM on the prospects of promotion of Belarusian goods and services in Latin America [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/comments/view/ntsm-o-perspektivah-prodvizhenija-belorusskih-tovarov-i-uslug-v-latinskoj-ameriki-8247/>

<sup>346</sup> Shestakov: Belarus is ready to strengthen cooperation with Latin American countries in all areas [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/shestakov-belarus-gotova-k-ukrepleniju-sotrudnichestva-so-stranami-latinskoj-ameriki-po-vsem-510548-2022/>

all, through implementation of joint cooperation projects. In its cooperation with Latin America, Belarus seeks to shift from simple trade to the establishment of joint ventures and assembly plants.

For example, the dynamically developing agrarian sector of Latin American countries needs appropriate machinery. Reliable and cost-competitive tractors, combines, and other Belarusian equipment can take a worthy place here. "The range of modern products manufactured in Belarus, which is primarily agricultural machinery, dump trucks, trucks, road-building machinery, public electric transport, tyre products and much more, may be of direct interest for the needs of Latin American producers of agricultural products, mining industry and transport sector"<sup>347</sup> .

Belarus is interested not only in trade in goods, but also in services exports, which are based on transport, computer, construction and mining services. "In 2021, trade in services with Latin America increased to \$200 million (58.3% by 2020). Belarusian exports reached \$178.9 million (97.9%)"<sup>348</sup> . Nevertheless, the dynamics in mutual trade in goods and services, as well as the current level of trade and economic relations between Belarus and many Latin American countries do not fully correspond to the real possibilities of the parties. There is no doubt that exporters are most interested in promoting Belarusian "sophisticated technical products - engineering and scientific products, ranging from tomographs to spare parts and engines for existing motor vehicles and tractors"<sup>349</sup> . A promising area for cooperation is the expansion of contacts in the field of education.

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<sup>347</sup> Pivovar, E. Belarus in cooperation with Latin America aims at transition to creation of joint ventures and assembly factories / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-sotrudnichestve-s-latinskoj-amerikoj-natselenna-perehod-k-sozdaniju-sp-i-sborochnyh-510550-2022/>.

<sup>348</sup> Pivovar, E. Foreign Ministry of Belarus: trade with Latin America shows steady growth / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mid-belarusi-torgovlja-s-latinskoj-amerikoj-demonstriruet-ustojchiviy-rost-510549-2022/>.

<sup>349</sup> Pivovar, E. Shestakov: Belarus can sell a wide range of products to Latin America / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shestakov-belarus-mozhet-prodat-v-latinskuju-ameriku-shirokij-spektr-produktsii-510577-2022/>

Belarusian universities are ready to accept applicants to study various professions that are in demand in Latin American countries, including training specialists in industry, agriculture, and healthcare.

Latin American countries retained their role as points of growth and foreign trade activity for Belarus in 2021. These include **Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Cuba** and **Venezuela**.

**The Brazilian** market is of great interest to the Belarusian machine-building and chemical industries. This is due to Brazil's ever-growing demand for agricultural and other machinery, fertilizers, tyres and other goods produced by Belarusian companies. In 2021, bilateral trade totalled about \$800 million, and exports stood at \$585 million. The potential for increasing supplies to the Brazilian market is considerable, with commodity items such as cord materials - yarn and fabric - for the production of car tyres, beer malt and electric vehicles.

**Argentina is an** important trade and economic partner for Belarus. Last year, the trade turnover between the two countries totalled USD 136 million. Promising avenues of trade and economic cooperation with this country include deliveries of Belarusian complex technical products: agricultural and forestry machinery, forage and grain harvesters, dump trucks, passenger cars and electric transport vehicles.

In 2021, the trade turnover between Belarus and **Colombia** amounted to \$90 million; Belarusian exports reached \$80 million. New commodity items that may be in demand on the Colombian market include agricultural machinery, buses, food products, and could also become the IT sector.

Belarus and **Cuba** are working on new joint projects in the trade and economic sphere. In 2021, the bilateral trade turnover totaled almost \$23 million, with exports reaching about \$21 million. Tractors and tractor trucks, condensed and dried milk and cream, parts for receiving and transmitting equipment, parts and accessories for tractors, instruments and devices used

in medicine, piston internal combustion engines became the main Belarusian exports to Cuba. Supplies of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment may also become a promising area for Belarusian exports.

There are also points of interaction to intensify trade and economic relations between Belarus and **Venezuela**. In 2021, Belarusian goods worth nearly \$2 million were delivered to Venezuela, an increase of 82 percent. Among the most promising commodity items of Belarusian exports to Venezuela are condensed and dried milk and cream, printed books, brochures, pipes, tubes, hoses and plastic fittings, milk whey.

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## Engineering, medicine, education

In September 2022, a **Belarusian-Cuban** business forum was held, where participants discussed promising areas for trade and economic cooperation between the two countries and topical issues of doing business. More than 90 representatives of 65 companies in areas of interest to Belarus and 18 representatives of Cuban business held talks on the development of "mutually beneficial cooperation and implementation of joint projects in the field of molecular immunology, research and development, education, metallurgy, agricultural engineering, trade, coffee, rum production and other areas"<sup>350</sup>. It should be noted that this is the first meeting of business representatives of the two countries in a long time. In addition, for Belarus, Cuba is an export-import partner, an independent country, and is viewed as a gateway to the large market of Latin America - Venezuela, Bolivia and other major countries of that region. "The trade turnover between Belarus and Cuba in 2021 amounted to \$22.9 million, more than \$20 million of which was accounted for by Belarusian exports"<sup>351</sup>. Participants of the business forum are confident that the potential of the two countries has not yet been exhausted. Moreover, the establishment of business contacts between representatives of the Belarusian and Cuban business communities will spur further development of trade and economic relations.

The Cuban side is ready to cooperate with its partners from Belarus, in particular, in mechanical engineering. For reference: there are over 20,000 Belarusian-made tractors currently operating in the fields of Cuba. Cooperation may take place "not only in purchase of new models, but in

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<sup>350</sup> Belarus and Cuba to discuss prospects of trade and economic cooperation at a business forum on 27 September [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-kuba-obsudjat-perspektivy-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-na-biznes-forume-27-525866-2022>

<sup>351</sup> Businesses of Belarus and Cuba intend to develop cooperation in medicine, engineering and logistics [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/biznes-belarusi-i-kuby-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-meditisine-mashinostroenii-i-logistike-525975-2022/>

purchase of spare parts to restore machinery already available in Cuba. We are interested in supplying spare parts for repair and restoration of tractors, MAZ trucks, AMKODOR, and buses. We can assemble and create projects to supply this equipment to the Latin American market. Belarus and Cuba also have great potential in digital economy and tourism,"<sup>352</sup> .

However, the most interesting area for Cuban partners is medicine. In this context, "supplies of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment may become a promising area for Belarusian exports"<sup>353</sup> . In particular, in November 2022, the first Belarusian medicines were registered in this Latin American country. "This step was made possible thanks to long-term joint work between the Belarusian (Center for Expertise and Testing in Healthcare, the Managing Company of Belpharmprom Holding) and Cuban (Center for State Control of Medicines, Equipment and Medical Devices (CECMED) parties. The drugs in question are drugs produced by UE Minskinterkaps"<sup>354</sup> . In addition, the Centre for Expertise and Testing in Health and CECMED have signed an agreement on inter-laboratory comparisons that will enhance the level of trust between Belarusian and Cuban testing laboratories, the skills of laboratory experts, contribute to the harmonisation of quality control requirements for medicines and, consequently, improve the effectiveness and safety of medicines for patients of the two countries.

The Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education (BelMAPO) and the Medical University of Havana also signed a cooperation agreement in November 2022. At the Cuban Immunological Research

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<sup>352</sup> Medicine, engineering, tourism. Cuban ambassador talks about areas for cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/meditsina-mashinostroenie-turizm-posol-kuby-rasskazal-o-napravlenijah-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-525993-2022/>

<sup>353</sup> Zalessky, B. Investment, clusters, exports. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 14.

<sup>354</sup> Belarusian medicines registered in Cuba [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-lekarstva-zaregistrovany-na-kube-536206-2022/>

Centre, Belarusian specialists agreed to cooperate in prenatal diagnostics, neonatal screening, oncology and diabetology, as well as to use Cuban reagents as an adequate substitute for those currently used in various types of screening tests. "At the Cuban Centre for Molecular Immunology, representatives of BelMAPO agreed to open joint research projects in the treatment of neurological diseases and in ophthalmology and combustingology using stem cell technologies"<sup>355</sup> .

<sup>356</sup>In the same November 2022, the intergovernmental agreement on mutual recognition of education documents was added to the legal framework of Belarusian-Cuban relations. The following trends are viewed as promising for cooperation: "joint research in the development of medicines and pharmaceutical substances; designing and manufacturing of medical items and devices for diagnosis and treatment of diseases in cardiosurgery, traumatology and orthopaedics, oncology, dentistry; development of joint ventures in the field of science and technology. The parties will cooperate both in the framework of scientific and technological parks, which are being actively developed in Belarus and Cuba, and consider the possibility of creating joint ventures, including in Cuba.

Besides, other proposals are being discussed: the possibility for higher education institutions of the two countries to participate in contests of Belarusian-Cuban scientific and technical projects in priority areas of cooperation; implementation of joint educational programmes to train bachelors and masters in a number of areas - pharmaceuticals, information technology, engineering and technical specialties. Ten direct agreements between universities of our countries are now in effect. So, a good foundation

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<sup>355</sup> BelMAPO and the Medical University of Havana signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belmapo-i-meduniversitet-gavany-podpisali-dogovor-o-sotrudnichestve-536529-2022/>

<sup>356</sup> Belarus and Cuba signed an agreement on the recognition of education documents [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-kuba-podpisali-soglashenie-o-priznanii-dokumentov-ob-obrazovanii-535587-2022/>

for further development of the Belarusian-Cuban bilateral relations has already been laid.

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## In order to promote commercial and economic interests

Every year, Belarus approves the Plan of National Exhibitions of the country in foreign countries. Its distinctive feature is the focus of the Belarusian side on promoting its trade and economic interests in Asia, Africa and Latin America - Vietnam, Mongolia, South Korea, India, China, Turkey, Qatar, Iran, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Brazil. The Asian continent is particularly important in this respect, where "there are still many opportunities in this direction <...>. In order to use them successfully, it is necessary to continue systematic and consistent work, developing mutual interest and initiating new formats of contacts, as it is actually happening in the development of partnerships with a number of Asian countries"<sup>357</sup>, including **Vietnam, Iran, Mongolia, Turkey, Pakistan and China**, where Belarusian exporters actively participate in specialized exhibition events.

Characteristically, representatives of Belarus are not participating in a number of trade fairs for the first time, but are already using their previous experience of promoting their interests there. These include, in particular, the **Vietnam Expo** trade fair, which has been held annually since 1990 and is one of the largest in Southeast Asia, regularly attracting hundreds of participants and tens of thousands of professional visitors. In December 2018, this business event was held in Ho Chi Minh City for the 16th time. Belarus was represented with a national exposition, which included more than 50 large enterprises with an emphasis on "science-intensive, complex and technical products, as well as agricultural and food products" .<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> Zalessky, B. Horizons of the far arc. Potential of interaction of the Republic of Belarus with the countries of Asia and Africa / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 25.

<sup>358</sup> Grishkevich, A. National exposition of Belarus presented at the trade exhibition in Ho Chi Minh City / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-predstavlena-na-torgovoj-vystavke-v-hoshimine-328209-2018/>

In particular, the Belarusian State University (BSU) alone presented about 30 scientific and technical developments in the field of agriculture, instrument engineering, chemistry, healthcare, and information technologies. "In particular, the exposition included the complex microbial preparation Zhytsen. Its use has proven effective in increasing the yield of grain crops, it improves soil quality and accelerates the decomposition of stubble and straw"<sup>359</sup>. The BSU biopesticides for complex plant protection "Aurin" and "Stimul", which are used to stimulate plant growth and development and protect plants from bacterial and fungal infections, were also presented here. The exhibition visitors were also interested in ultrasonic gas metering devices, Agent B-602 device for remote monitoring of mobile objects, Ptich-M medical unit for general hyperthermia, antitumour drugs, disinfectants and edible packaging films.

Such companies as Krynica OJSC, Belsolod OJSC, JV Spartak OJSC, Minsk Kristall OJSC - managing company of Minsk Kristall Group Holding, Minsk Sparkling Wine Factory OJSC, Slodych Confectionery Factory OJSC, Kommunarka SAO, Krasny Pestrovik OJSC, Krasny Mozyryanin OJSC, Lidapischekontsy OJSC demonstrated the capabilities of Belarusian food exports in Ho Chi Minh City. Their interest in this business forum can be explained by the fact that "Vietnam is not only a lucrative consumer market of over 92 million people, but also a kind of trade gateway to the entire region of Southeast Asia, the population of which exceeds 600 million people"<sup>360</sup>.

Over 350 companies from 16 countries, including China, the USA, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Cuba, took part in this forum in 2022.

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<sup>359</sup> BSU to present scientific and technical developments at trade fair in Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-predstavit-nauchno-tehnicheskie-razrabotki-na-torgovoj-jarmarke-vo-vjetname-327981-2018/>

<sup>360</sup> Enterprises of Belgospisheprom will present their products at an exhibition in Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-belgospisheproma-predstavjat-produktsiju-na-vystavke-vo-vjetname-327182-2018/>

Belarus presented more than 100 scientific, technical and innovative developments in the field of high-tech equipment at this forum. The event is held under the auspices of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Vietnam. "The topics of the exhibition are IT and telecommunications, science and education, mechanical engineering and industrial equipment, agriculture, food, pharmaceutical and medical products, construction materials, chemical products, light industry, consumer goods"<sup>361</sup> .

As for **Iran**, the Iran Agrofood International Agriculture and Food Exhibition was held in June 2022. A national exposition of the Republic of Belarus was organised at the Tehran International Exhibition Centre. This forum is the key industry event in the field of food production and agriculture in Iran. The main sections of the exhibition: agricultural machinery, food and beverages, equipment for their production, catering, storage and packaging, ingredients. The exhibition is held annually. In 2021, 311 organisations and companies took part in it. This time their products were presented by Belarus, Brazil, Germany, Italy, Turkey, the Netherlands and others. Belarusian manufacturers displayed a variety of products. For example, the range of products of the confectionery factory Vityba included more than 100 items, including breakfast cereals, waffles, and biscuits.

The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus showed innovative developments in several areas. For example, the Scientific and Practical Centre for Animal Husbandry of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus offered a number of veterinary preparations and bio-additives based on nanoparticles for farm animals. Belarusian State Technological University presented to the guests of the exhibition "new types of mineral fertilizers, technologies for processing of agricultural waste with obtaining construction and composite materials, technologies for processing of plant

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<sup>361</sup> More than 100 projects will be presented by Belarus at the Vietnam Expo [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-100-proektov-predstavit-belarus-navystavke-vietnam-expo-495765-2022/>

raw materials and medicinal herbs with obtaining biologically active additives, new methods of flax quality analysis and flax products"<sup>362</sup> . The Belarusian State University has presented 15 scientific and technical developments at the international exhibition Iran Agrofood. Among the BSU innovations are edible films and coatings based on polysaccharides and plant antimicrobial and antioxidant additives. "They are the only type of biodegradable polymer packaging that does not require sorting and special disposal conditions, preserving the taste, flavour, aesthetic appearance and sterility of products. The new type of wrapper is non-toxic, completely biodegradable in humans and animals, and can reduce the use of plastic many times over."<sup>363</sup> .

And in **Mongolia**, in September 2022, there was a national exposition of Belarus at the 47th international multidisciplinary exhibition Ulaanbaatar Partnership in Ulaanbaatar. The exposition was attended by large export-oriented Belarusian companies - manufacturers of food products, pharmaceutical products, machine-building enterprises, scientific and technical organizations, and others. "The Ulaanbaatar Partnership exhibition has a universal character and covers a wide range of thematic sections: food and beverages, agriculture, mechanical engineering, construction, health care, pharmaceuticals, light industry, consumer electronics. The event is one of the largest multi-industry exhibitions in Mongolia, attracting 110 companies and 12,000 visitors in 2021"<sup>364</sup> . Belarus took part in the Ulaanbaatar exhibition as a national exposition in 2019. At that time, the exposition presented products and services of 15 companies: engineering,

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<sup>362</sup> A wide range of Belarusian goods will be presented at Iran Agrofood [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/shirokij-spektr-belorusskih-tovarov-budet-predstavlen-na-vystavke-iran-agrofood-507944-2022/>

<sup>363</sup> Edible films, vitamins, veterinary medicines: BSU presents 15 developments at exhibitions in Iran [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/sjedobnye-plenki-ivitaminy-vetpreparaty-bgu-predstavljaet-15-razrabotok-na-vystavke-v-irane-508439-2022/>

<sup>364</sup> Belarus to exhibit in Mongolia in September [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-v-sentjabre-predstavit-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-v-mongolii-511811-2022/>

food industry, science and education organisations. The business program included the Belarusian-Mongolian business forum with participation of representatives of 60 Mongolian enterprises.

In **Turkey**, the national exposition of Belarus was presented in early November 2022 in Istanbul - as part of the international multi-sectoral exhibition MUSIAD Expo. The participation of domestic enterprises and organizations in the national exposition at this exhibition contributed to the establishment of new business contacts with potential partners, increase of Belarusian exports and diversification of the product range. Turkey is an important partner of Belarus. "Last year, trade turnover between the two countries amounted to \$1081.6 million (146% by 2020), including exports of \$360.5 million (270%) and imports of \$721.1 million (119%). In 2021, turnover of services between Belarus and Turkey was \$94.8 million (162%), exports - \$52.8 million (134%), imports - \$42 million (220%)"<sup>365</sup>. As for the Istanbul exhibition, MUSIAD Expo is Turkey's largest biennial multidisciplinary event. In 2020 it was attended by over 500 companies and over 100 thousand visitors from 125 countries. The main sections of the exhibition are food industry, agriculture, construction, engineering and automotive industry, machine tool industry, metallurgy, petrochemical industry, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, services, tourism, real estate, consumer goods, furniture, energy, logistics, information technology, textile, clothing and footwear industry, leather goods.

In 2023, national exhibitions of Belarus will be organised in several more Asian countries. In particular, in **Pakistan**. We should remind that about 60 scientific, technical and innovative developments were presented at the International Trade and Industry Fair held in the Pakistani city of Karachi in November 2021 at the Belarusian collective stand of the State Committee

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<sup>365</sup> A national exposition of Belarus to be presented at a multi-sectoral exhibition in Turkey [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-budet-predstavlena-na-mnogootraslevoj-vystavke-v-turtsii-514624-2022>

on Science and Technology. Exhibits in the field of surface treatment and modification, chemical technologies and materials, physical materials science and new materials were demonstrated by the institutions of the Ministry of Education as well as in the correspondence format by the organizations of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. "Among the most interesting developments are the technology of optically selective composite absorbing coatings for solar collectors, smart windows with bistable effect, multifunctional complex for preparation and automatic casting of filled and unfilled multicomponent hybrid composite mixtures, technology of energy saving flat and flexible aluminium heaters with resistive element from carbon fibre"<sup>366</sup>. This year there will be even more Belarusian participants.

Speaking about **the China** International Import Expo, which is held annually in Shanghai, it has already become the fifth in November 2022. Twenty-seven organizations from the food industry, logistics, science, and education took part in the Belarusian exposition. Belarus' pavilion at the import exhibition included "two main sections: food and agricultural products" and "high-tech equipment and information technology"<sup>367</sup>. The total area of Belarus' exposition was about 100 square meters. It will become even larger in 2023.

It should be noted that Belarusian expositions have also been presented on the African continent in recent years. For example, in **Kenya**, Belarus's interest in the Kenya International Trade Exhibition (KITE) business forum is explained by the fact that it is the largest exhibition event in East Africa. In 2019, our country was represented there for the first time

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<sup>366</sup> About 60 Belarusian scientific and technical developments will be presented at an international exhibition in Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/tech/view/okolo-60-belorusskih-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-razrabotok-predstavjat-na-mezhdunarodnoj-vystavke-v-pakistane-469010-2021/>

<sup>367</sup> China International Import Expo opens in Shanghai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/world/view/v-shanhae-otkrylas-kitajskaja-mezhdunarodnaja-vystavka-importa-533320-2022/>

with a national exposition at the 22nd international food, hospitality and agriculture exhibition FoodAgro in Nairobi, which is part of KITE. Enterprises of the concern Belgospischeprom, Lidselmash holding management company, Gomselmash, MTZ, MAZ, Bobruiskagromash, Lidakhleboprodukt and Smorgon Kombinat Hleboprodukt displayed their products in the Kenyan capital. Participation in the exhibition opened "new opportunities for them to promote Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment, fertilizers, food, and agricultural products in the Kenyan market"<sup>368</sup>, and also pointed the way to the markets of other Eastern and Southern African countries. In particular, there was adopted a memorandum of understanding between the official representative of Belarusian enterprises MTZ, Lidagroprommash, Bobruiskagromash, Gomselmash, Lidselmash, MAZ and Pewin Motors, and agreement was reached on supplies of Belarusian agricultural machinery - tractors, farm machines, and equipment and accessories. For example, only Bobruiskagromash Holding Management Company signed an agreement to supply its machinery for about 500 thousand dollars. "The greatest interest among visitors [to the exhibition] was attracted by tillage equipment, tractor trailers and semi-trailers, as well as forage equipment (mowers, rakes, balers)"<sup>369</sup>. In addition, "Lidselmash and Peter Wanjohi Company have established cooperation for construction of grain harvesting and grain processing complexes in Kenya, Uganda and other countries of the region"<sup>370</sup>. And Belgospischeprom Concern agreed to supply the first consignments of sunflower oil and light canned beer to this African country. Finally, at the same time, "agreements

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<sup>368</sup> A national exposition of Belarus has opened at the FoodAgro exhibition in Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-otkrylas-na-vystavke-foodagro-v-kenii-356942-2019/>

<sup>369</sup> "Bobruiskagromash will supply machinery and spare parts to Kenya for \$500 thousand. [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobruiskagromash-postavit-v-keniju-tehniku-i-zapchasti-na-500-tys-358196-2019/>

<sup>370</sup> Belarusian enterprises at FoodAgro agreed to supply agricultural machinery to Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predprijatija-na-foodagro-dogovorilis-o-postavkah-selhoztehniky-v-keniju-357705-2019/>

were signed on the construction of a reinforced concrete construction factory on Kenyan land and the establishment of a fish farm worth over a hundred million dollars"<sup>371</sup> .

In **Zimbabwe** in April 2022, the national exposition of Belarus was presented at the 61st Zimbabwe International Trade Fair, the largest multidisciplinary exhibition event in South Africa. More than 400 companies from 15 countries, including Kenya, Mozambique, the Republic of South Africa, Japan, and the United States, showed their products. The Belarusian stand in Bulawayo displayed a "wide range of machinery and equipment, scientific and technical developments, medicines"<sup>372</sup> . The total exhibition area of the pavilion was about 170 square metres.

Foreign importers showed particular interest in the pharmaceutical products presented at the Belarusian pavilion. In particular, representatives of Belmedpreparaty RUE, part of Belpharmprom Holding, conducted effective negotiations. "This is expected to expand the presence of Belarusian medicines in the African market"<sup>373</sup> . The Zimbabwean side has voiced its intention to develop cooperation in this field, as well as to act as representatives of Belarusian companies in the regional market. The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus has signed a number of agreements on cooperation with educational institutions and scientific organisations in Zimbabwe, and BELAZ has signed agreements on supplies of auto parts.

The interest of the Belarusian side in this forum can also be explained by the fact that "today Zimbabwe is actively expanding its mining industry, has significant reserves of hard coal, diamonds, gold, lithium, copper and is

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<sup>371</sup> Zalessky, B.L. Belarus-Kenya: promising points of growth outlined / B.L. Zalessky // Materials for XV International Scientific Practical Conference, Innovations on Scientific Progress - 2019, 15 - 22 August 2019: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 3.

<sup>372</sup> National exposition of Belarus presented at the largest exhibition in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnaja-ekspozitsija-belarusi-predstavlena-na-krupnejshej-vystavke-v-zimbabwe-499129-2022/>

<sup>373</sup> Belarusian drug manufacturers will present their products at an exhibition in Zimbabwe [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-proizvoditeli-lekarstv-predstavjat-svoju-produktsiju-na-vystavke-v-zimbabwe-498300-2022/>



one of the promising export destinations for BELAZ machinery<sup>374</sup>. For reference, Zimbabwe is using Belarusian dump trucks with the payload capacity of 55 and 130 tonnes, bulldozers, loaders, tractor wreckers and sprinkler loaders. The Belarusian manufacturer conducted negotiations with the National Diamond Company ZCDC, "which operates more than 20 dump trucks with payload capacity of 55 tonnes and other special equipment BELAZ, as well as with the coal mining company HWANGE Colliery" at the Bulawayo exhibition<sup>375</sup>. As a result, agreements have been reached to develop existing partnerships.

In 2023, Belarusian expositions will be presented in other African countries - **Algeria** and **Egypt**. In particular, **Algeria** will host the FIA international exhibition. The Belarusian exposition at this exhibition forum was first organised back in 2017. Back then, Belarus was represented by products from the Ministry of Industry, including MAZ JSC, Gomselmash JSC and Minsk Electrotechnical Plant JSC, as well as developments from the State Committee for Science and Technology, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Ministry of Education. "The Belarusian exposition at FIA 2017 attracted keen interest from representatives of Algerian state authorities, major private companies and enterprises, as well as the diplomatic corps. As a result of negotiations held during the exhibition, memoranda of cooperation were signed between MTZ JSC and Belarus Motor Algeria, as well as between the NAS of Belarus and potential partners."<sup>376</sup>. In total, around one thousand companies from 40 countries

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<sup>374</sup> BELAZ to take part in major exhibitions on three continents [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-primet-uchastie-v-krupnejshih-vystavkah-na-treh-kontinentah-497525-2022/>

<sup>375</sup> BELAZ intends to develop cooperation and strengthen ties with Zimbabwean companies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-i-ukrepljat-delovye-svjazi-s-kompanijami-zimbabve-499547-2022/>

<sup>376</sup> Belarus and Algeria have all the prerequisites for expanding cooperation - Rachkov [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-alzhir-imejut-vse-predposylki-dlja-rasshirenija-sotrudnichestva-rachkov-247000-2017/>

took part in the FIA 2017 exhibition in Algeria. In 2023, it appears that there will be even more participants in the forum.

As for Food Africa Cairo, an international food and beverage fair annually held in **Cairo**, the Belarusian exposition will be organised there for the fifth time this year. In December 2022 the exhibition Belarus. The Taste of Nature was presented at the **Egyptian** International Exhibition Centre. As part of the exhibition, 14 Belarusian companies presented a wide range of dairy, meat, starch products, as well as baked goods. Grodnoyasomolprom Holding companies (JSC "Bellakt", JSC "Milk World", Lida Milk Canning Plant and its subsidiary Smorgon Dairy Products) showed their products to foreign visitors, Rogoznitsky starch factory, Volkovysk and Slonim meat processing plants), as well as Agrokombinat Skidelsky, Smorgon Bakery, Primilk LLC, Lidakhleboprodukt OJSC, Slutsk Cheese Factory and Minsk Dairy Plant №1<sup>377</sup> .

All these facts speak for one thing: participation in major trade fairs in Africa can open up new export opportunities for Belarusian enterprises, the potential for which is truly enormous.

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<sup>377</sup> Belarusian exposition presented at food exhibition in Egypt [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskaja-ekspozitsija-predstavlena-na-prodovolstvennoj-vystavke-v-egipte-538642-2022/>

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