

On the foundation of pragmatism

The Program of activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for 2018-2020 outlined the task to create conditions for the implementation of the policy of rational import substitution and development of import substitution, including using the potential of small and medium companies to improve the trade balance of the country, in order to eventually reach an annual increase in import substitution production of at least 600 million dollars. In Belarus the main task of import substitution, which is understood as a state policy aimed at rationalizing the import of goods and services by stimulating domestic producers, including with the participation of foreign capital to organize the production of products that were previously imported, is formulated as not a mechanical substitution of imported goods, but the development of competitive national production. The share of import-substituting products in the country is already close to 40 percent or \$20 billion in monetary terms. And this is not the limit. How is this problem solved today? The answer to this question can be found in the proposed study.



Boris Zalessky

Professional experience in journalism - fifty years. He is now an associate professor at the Department of International Journalism of the Faculty of Journalism at the Belarusian State University. Areas of research: modern international relations; international journalism, international economics.



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Peculiarities of international economic cooperation in modern conditions

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CHAPTER 1

Eurasian Economic Union: Agroexpress as a tool for export diversification

In February 2022, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council at its meeting in Nur-Sultan supported the implementation of a joint Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) project for accelerated rail and multimodal transport, Eurasian AgroExpress, aimed at increasing mutual supplies and exports of agricultural products and food, as well as its diversification. Initially, regular shipments outside the EAEU are expected to be organised to and from China and Uzbekistan. "In the future, the implementation routes may be extended to other countries in the Asian and European regions. The regularity of shipments will make it possible to form competitive maritime freight rates, as well as to reduce the delivery time of goods (up to 10-14 days to China and 4-7 days to Uzbekistan)"¹.

This is primarily a matter of deliveries of oil and fats, dairy, meat, fruit and vegetables, and ready-to-eat food products. This joint project envisages the launch of two full trains per week along the Belarus-Russia-Kyrgyzstan-Kazakhstan-China route, including trains with refrigerated containers for frozen products. The monthly volume of transportations in the direction of China can reach about 10 thousand tons. This project is coordinated by ANO Eurasian Agrologistics, and Bremino Group LLC (Belarus), KTZ Express JSC (Kazakhstan), State Enterprise NC KTZ (Kyrgyzstan), RZD Logistics JSC (Russia) and Slavtrans-Service JSC (Russia) have confirmed their participation in the project.

The Belarusian side, noting the "importance of the implementation of the

¹ Pivovar, E. EEU Prime Ministers Approved Eurasian AgroExpress Project on Accelerated Food Delivery / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/premjer-ministry-eaes-odobrili-proekt-evrazijskij-agroekspres-pohttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/premjer-ministry-eaes-odobrili-proekt-evrazijskij-agroekspres-po- uskorennoj -dostavke--dostavke-prodovolstvij aa-486781 -2022/>.

Eurasian AgroExpress project for food exports"² , hopes to use it to increase food supplies, primarily to China. The fact is that today the carriers of products from Belarus "are mostly Chinese companies"³ . The launch of this project will provide another lucrative opportunity in this regard. The more so because the market of the Celestial Empire has traditionally been one of the main development areas for Belarusian food exports. "In 2021 Belarus exported \$366.1 million worth of products to China (up 47.9% in 2020). In 2016 food exports to China amounted to \$18.8 million. The main share in the growth of exports is beef in cut form, milk powder and whey, chocolate and confectionery, whole milk and other products"⁴ . There has also been an increase in the supply of starch, fruit jams and jellies, pastry and macaroni products, cereal flakes and butter. In addition, 119 accredited Belarusian companies have obtained the right to supply agricultural products to the Chinese market. All of this points to considerable prospects for diversifying commodity export flows from Belarus not only in the meat and dairy group, but also in sugar, vegetable oil, and fish products.

In light of the observed trends of recent years, the Eurasian AgroExpress project may also become relevant for Belarus in the Uzbek direction. It should be recalled that at the same February (2022) meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in Nur-Sultan, Uzbekistan's initiative to expand its participation in the EEU in four areas of mutual interest was approved: issues of the climate agenda; digitalization of freight rail transportation; e-commerce; and

² Industrial cooperation, import substitution, food security: Golovchenko on the key tasks of the EAEU [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkooperatsijahttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkooperatsija-.prodbezopasnost-golovchenko-o-kljuchevyh-zadachah-caesimportozameschenie-prodbezopasnost-golovchenko-o-kljuchevyh-zadachah-eaes-486890-2022/>

³ Belarus expects to increase food supplies to China with the launch of the Eurasian AgroExpress [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:
[https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarushttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-.narastit-postavki-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-s-zapuskom-evrazijskogo-agroekspressa-486858-2022/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarushttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-.narastit-postavki-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-s-zapuskom-evrazijskogo-agroekspresarasschityvaet-narastit-postavki-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-s-zapuskom-evrazijskogo-agroekspressa-486858-2022/)

⁴ Brylo, I. Sustained demand at home and abroad: Belarus increases food supplies to all regions of the world / I. Brylo // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:
<https://www.belta.by/interview/view/ustojchivij-spros-v-sttane-i-za-rubezhom-belarus-naraschivaet-postavki-prodovolstvija-vo-vse-regiony-mira-8088/>

implementation of the Eurasian AgroExpress project. The Central Asian country was granted observer status in the EEU in December 2020. And "in 2016-2021, Uzbekistan's total trade turnover with EAEU member states increased by more than 2.5 times: from \$4.5bn to \$11.6bn"⁵.

As for Belarus, agriculture is one of the most promising areas in the development of bilateral trade and economic cooperation with Uzbekistan. Suffice it to say that "in 2019, agricultural products and foodstuffs worth \$35 million were supplied to the Uzbek market from Belarus, which more than doubled the level of 2018"⁶. The positive dynamics of mutual trade continued in the following years. Thus, in 2021 the Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover exceeded \$300 million and "increased by 7.8% compared to the level of 2020, exports - \$245.4 million (growth of 3.3%). The balance is positive - \$188.9 million."⁷. Meat and meat products, milk powder, cheese, and cottage cheese were among the main Belarusian export items.

Certainly, the current dynamics of bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in the supply of food and agricultural products suggests that the joint Eurasian AgroExpress project of the EAEU countries may become a very timely and effective tool for Minsk and Tashkent to diversify their export supplies.

⁵ Pivovar, E. Eurasian Intergovernmental Council supported the expansion of Uzbekistan's participation in EEU projects / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022 .

URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/evrazijskij-mezhpravsovet-podderzhal-rasshirenie-uchastie-uzbekistana-v-proektah-eaes-486888-2022/>

⁶ Zalessky, B.L. Belarus - Uzbekistan: priority of cooperation - agriculture / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVI International scientific and practical conference "Modern European science - 2020", June 30 - July 7, 2020: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 9.

⁷ Golovchenko: there are prerequisites for increasing trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-est-predposylki-dlya-naraschivanija-tovarooborota-mezhdu-belarusju-i-uzbekistanom-486939-2022/>.

CHAPTER 2

Eurasian Economic Union: export development as a tool to intensify economic interaction

One of the most important development areas of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) until 2025 is the intensification of economic cooperation with foreign countries and international organisations. "In doing so, the international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as export development..."⁸. The beginning of 2022 shows that the EAEU has taken this task quite seriously. Suffice it to say that in January this year, the volume of foreign trade of the Union's countries increased by more than 60 percent and exceeded \$76 billion. An important detail: "Exports of goods to countries outside the EEU in January 2022 increased by 76.5 percent compared to January 2021 to \$50.8 billion. The growth in exports to foreign markets is due to an increase in exports from Kazakhstan by 94.1 percent, Russia by 76.8 percent, Armenia by 59.5 percent and Belarus by 41.5 percent. The main buyers of goods exported from the EAEU were the countries of the European Union (their share was 48.2% of export supplies) and APEC (25.5%)"⁹.

The achievement of such high performance is facilitated by the development of already established cooperation mechanisms with third countries, regional integration associations and international organisations, as well as the creation of conditions for successful interaction with potential prospective partners. Thus, as early as March 2022, the EAEU extended the temporary free trade area agreement with **Iran** and agreed to intensify the preparation of a permanent agreement, which should ensure the transition to a full-fledged free trade regime with that country. As a reminder, the interim agreement leading to a free trade

⁸ Zalessky, B. Format of Eurasian integration. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 51-52.

⁹ Pivovar, E. Foreign trade in EAEU in January grew by 62.6%, domestic - by 17.3% / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vneshniaia-torgovlia-v-eaes-v-j-anvare-vyrosla-na-626-vnutrennjaja-na-173-491806-2022/>.

zone between the EEU and its member states, on the one hand, and Iran, on the other, was concluded on 17 May 2018 and is effective from 27 October 2019. As a result, "the EAEU's turnover with Iran in 2021 was \$5.037bn, up 73.5% compared to 2020. At the same time, exports grew 2.1 times, and imports by 28.8%."¹⁰.

Other promising EEU partners include **the United Arab Emirates** (UAE). Back in November 2021, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) received a request from the UAE, which contained an interest in concluding a comprehensive free trade agreement, the potential of which the parties have yet to unlock. The fact is that even without that document, "trade turnover between EEU states and the UAE in 2021 reached a record high of USD 5.4 billion. US DOLLARS"¹¹. In February 2022, the parties agreed to conclude a memorandum on cooperation, which should systematize the achieved level of partnership and create additional infrastructure for trade and economic cooperation. This document envisages the creation of a working group, a dialogue platform to intensify contacts between experts and the business community to develop partnerships and promote increased trade turnover. Interaction with the UAE is also promising in terms of developing the EAEU's trade and economic ties with integration associations of which the country is a member. In particular, we are talking about the League of Arab States and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Persian Gulf.

Another country with which the EAEU intends to actively develop interaction in the near future is **Ecuador**. In 2021, trade turnover between the parties exceeded two billion dollars, which is almost 20 percent higher than in 2020. "At the same time, EAEU exports have doubled from \$237.6 million to \$475.4 million.

¹⁰ Pivovar, E. EEU and Iran extend temporary agreement on free trade zone / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eaes-i-iran-prodlili-www.belta.by/economics/view/eaes-i-iran-prodlili-_vremennoe-soglashenie-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-491161_-2022/.

¹¹ The EEU and the UAE are considering a memorandum of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-uae-rassmatrivaют-https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-uae-rassmatrivaют- vozmozhnost-zaklyucheniya-memoranduma-o-sotrudnichestvevozmozhnost-zaklyucheniya-memoranduma-o-sotrudnichestve/>

USD"¹². To deepen cooperation and mutual opening of markets, the two sides agreed in March 2022 to intensify the work of the Joint Committee established under the Memorandum of Understanding and Trade and Economic Cooperation of 24 November 2017.

In the Americas, another country with plans to intensify business cooperation with EAEU partners is **Cuba**. It should be recalled that in December 2021, the parties signed a joint action plan until 2025, "which covers 34 areas of cooperation. For Cuba, the document is important in the context of implementing the country's National Economic and Social Development Plan 2030 and the Economic and Social Strategy to stimulate the economy and overcome the global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic"¹³. And in February 2022, discussions have already begun on the creation of joint cooperation projects using the possibilities of the Cuban Special Development Zone (SDZ) Mariel, where there are interesting prospects for the organisation of a separate EAEU industrial park. It should be noted that this SEZ was established in November 2013. It is "located in the north of Artemisa province, 45 km from Havana. There are currently 61 institutions from 21 countries and 11 multinational companies operating in the Mariel OZR"¹⁴. It offers a set of special regimes and incentives, which makes the MPA very attractive not only to national but also to foreign investment. Thus, the emergence of residents from the EEU member states on this territory is quite realistic in the near future.

¹² Prospects for trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and Ecuador were discussed by EEC Collegium Chairman Mikhail Myasnikovich and Ecuadorian Ambassador to Russia Juan Fernando Holguín Flores [Electronic resource] : <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/perspektivny-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-eaes-i-ekvadora-obsudili-predsedatel-kollegii-ee/>

¹³ Zalessky, B.L. Eurasian Integration and International Cooperation / B.L. Zalessky // Materials for XVIII International Scientific Practical Conference, Present Investigations and Development - 2022, 17 - 25 January 2022: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG", - C. 16.

¹⁴ The EEU and Cuba are considering joint cooperation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-kuba-rassmatrivaютhttps://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-kuba-rassmatrivaют--realizatsii-sovmestnykh-kooperatsionnykh-proektovvozmozhnost-realizatsii-sovmestnykh-kooperatsionnykh-proektov/>

CHAPTER 3

Belarus: from modernisation to maximum localisation of production and import substitution

As early as the Programme of Activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for 2018-2020 outlined the task to create conditions for the implementation of a policy of rational import substitution and development of import-substituting industries, including by using the potential of small and medium companies to improve the trade balance of the country in order to eventually reach "an annual increase in the production of import-substituting products of at least USD 600 million"¹⁵. Note that in Belarus the main objective of import substitution, which is understood as a state policy aimed at rationalization of imports of goods and services through stimulation of domestic producers, including with participation of foreign capital to organize the production of products that were previously imported, is formulated as "not mechanical substitution of imported goods, but development of competitive national production"¹⁶. The Belarusian Ministry of Economy estimates that the share of import-substituting products in the country has already approached 40 per cent, or \$20 billion in monetary terms. At the same time, "the share of export sales of import-substituting products has increased to 50%. This suggests that it is not only competitive in the domestic market, but also in demand abroad"¹⁷.

Among economic entities of Belarus that have been quite successful in solving import substitution issues in recent years are enterprises of the Bellesbumprom Concern. In 2019, they increased the output of such products by almost 10

¹⁵ Programme of Activities of the Government of the Republic of Belarus for 2018-2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL:

<http://http://www.government.by/upload/docs/file253cf6b5b538838e.PDF>

¹⁶ Ideas for import substitution [Electronic resource] . -2020. - URL:
<http://www.economy.gov.by/ru/idei/importozames-ru/>

¹⁷ The share of import-substituting products in Belarusian industry is approaching 40% [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dolia-importozameschaischei-produktsii-v-promyshlennosti-belarusi-priblizhaetsia-k-40-379006-2020/>.

percent and produced more than \$530 million worth of them. More specifically, import-substituting products were produced by 26 enterprises in 38 commodity items, including pulp, fibreboard and chipboard, plywood, uncoated paper and cardboard, corrugated and uncoated cardboard, paper sacks, newsprint paper and hygienic paper. In particular, "in 2019 Svetlogorsk CKK produced 145,000 tonnes of pulp, 5.6 times more than in 2018"¹⁸. Another interesting example in this context is JSC Rechitsadrev. A few years ago, a synthetic resin plant started operating in Rechitsa. One of the uses of this resin is the production of decorative film from ordinary paper used in the manufacture of laminated wood boards. The result: while furniture makers previously had to buy synthetic resin abroad, they have now started to export the surplus themselves. And in 2019 alone, this generated around three million euros for the company. Overall, "the production of their own resin has saved them around €10 million over the entire period"¹⁹.

The secret of the success of the Group's companies is the modernisation of the basic woodworking plants, which has enabled the range of products to be significantly expanded and their high quality to be ensured. The result: over the past five years, when new plants started operating, the volume of import-substituting products has more than doubled. Continuing to develop this topical priority of activity, the Bellesbumprom Concern sees such promising directions as expanding the range and increasing the output of various types of paper packaging as an alternative to polyethylene packaging, as well as producing high-quality coated cardboard, which is used in significant quantities in the printing, food, pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries. As a result, "in 2020, the Concern's enterprises plan to increase the output of import-substituting

¹⁸ Enterprises of Bellesbumprom increased production of import-substituting products by 9.3% in 2019 [Electronic resource]. -2020 .- URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatiya-bellesbumproma-v-2019-godu-uvelichili-proizvodstvo-importozameschajushei-produktsii-na-379049-2020/>

¹⁹ Kapba, E. In the objective - "OJSC Rechitsadrev". Successful import substitution / E. Kapba // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: http://dneprovec.by/companynews/2020/02/14/25_898

products by 30 million dollars to 560 million"²⁰.

Interesting experience in the development of import substitution has also been accumulated at the Energokomplekt production association in Vitebsk, where in 2019 "86% of the total volume worth \$112 million was exported. The Vitebsk enterprise accounts for 70% of all cable products manufactured in Belarus"²¹. It is pertinent to add that the association, founded in 1992 and now a resident of the free economic zone Vitebsk, employs 650 people, providing innovative products to both domestic and foreign consumers.

A number of examples of successful implementation of the import substitution policy can also be observed at enterprises of the Gomel region. In particular, "one of them is the activity of the Turov Dairy Plant to produce traditional Italian cheeses for sale in the national Belarusian market"²². All these examples show that import substitution policy in Belarus, although it is developing, still has a huge potential that many market players have to master, focusing on the best practices already available in the country.

This is why the Programme of Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025, adopted in mid-2021, envisaged the strengthening of the policy of rational import substitution, taking into account the production of new high-tech and export-oriented goods, including within the Eurasian Economic Union. This document states that production of import-substituting products in the country will "increase to USD 22.3 billion by the end of the five-year period, with a total output increase of USD 4 billion"²³.

²⁰ Igor Lyashenko guides Bellesbumprom to more active production of import-substituting products [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/9267.government.by/ru/content/9267>

²¹ Bogacheva, O. Import substitution issues should be paid more attention - Anfimov / O. Bogacheva // [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/voprosamhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/voprosam-importozameschenia-neobhodimo-udeliat-bolshe-vnimaniia-anfimovimportozameschenia-neobhodimo-udeliat-bolshe-vnimaniia-anfimov-378866-2020/>.

²² Shumel K.V. Development of import-substituting industries in the context of the concept of innovative development of the Republic of Belarus / K.V. Shumel // Women Scientists of Belarus and Kazakhstan : Proceedings of the International Scientific and Practical Conference, Minsk, 1-2 March 2018 / ed. I.V. Kazakova [et al]. - Minsk : RIVSH, 2018. - C. 553.

²³ Programme of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025. - Minsk. 2021. - C. 28.

In December 2021, the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, while considering the problems of uninterrupted supply of the required components and materials faced by domestic manufacturers, set the objective to maximize the localization of Belarusian production, including through cooperation with Russia and other countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, given the positive trends observed in the work on import substitution. Indeed, over a five-year period - from 2016 to 2020 - the output of import-substituting products in Belarus increased by about a third, from \$13.6 billion to \$18 billion. Over the same period, its share in total industrial output rose from 34.2 percent to 38 percent. And now "more than 53 per cent of import-substituting products are not only used within the country, but are also exported. The foreign trade balance in goods under the approved import substitution scheme has improved by \$412 million over the past five years"²⁴.

Among the measures to encourage businesses to substitute imports at the meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers were: increasing localisation, developing technological chains, processing local raw materials, attracting small and medium-sized businesses. And "some 170 import-substituting projects worth a total of nearly Br13 billion investments have already been proposed"²⁵. The Ministry of Economy has chosen 47 most significant projects with investments worth about eight billion Belarusian rubles, which will make it possible to produce import-substituting products worth over nine billion Belarusian rubles.

A busy action plan for the development of import-substituting production for 2022 is again formed in Concern Bellesbumprom, which "defines a target for the production and sale of import-substituting products worth \$876.1 million (which

²⁴ In the context of sanctions, it is necessary to increase the localisation of production [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<http://http://www.government.by/ru/content/10092>

²⁵ Cherviakov: Import substitution takes on particular importance as a tool to counter sanctions [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherviakovhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/cherviakov-importozamescheme-priobretaet-osoboe-znacheme-kak-msstument-protivodeistviia-sanktsiiamimportozamescheme-priobretaet-osoboe-znacheme-kak-msstument-protivodeistviia-sanktsiiam-473567-2021/>.

is 31% higher than the national target plan)²⁶. The concern intends to accomplish this task based on the development of new production facilities in the woodworking and pulp-and-paper industries. Today 26 enterprises in Bellesbumprom manufacture products for 50 product lines, "which include cellulose, chipboard, fibreboard (MDF), plywood, uncoated paper and cardboard, corrugated cardboard and boxes made of it, paper sacks, uncoated cardboard, newsprint and sanitary paper, products made of it. In 2021 the growth rate of import-substituting products in the concern is 163% by 2020"²⁷. Interesting import substitution measures were also implemented in 2021 at Krichev cement shifer OJSC, one of the largest Belarusian enterprises for the production of building materials. In particular, sandy cement was actively used there for this purpose. In January-October 2021, the supplies of sandy cement increased four times, to 270 thousand tons, compared to 2020. Instead of foreign slag, local "river sand with high silica content was added to this cement. Cement grade and quality remain at the same level, but the prime cost of the product drops substantially"²⁸. In other words, at the same capacity, the company has increased the profitability of each ton of cement at the expense of cheap domestic sand.

Another interesting example in this context is the opening at the end of December 2021 at Medplast OJSC in Gomel of a site for the production of vacuum tubes for venous blood sampling. This product "is an import substitute - it has not been produced in the country so far, and the needs of medical

²⁶ Import substitution and cost reduction: chairman of Bellesbumprom on tasks for the year [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/naraschivaniehttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/naraschivanie-importozameschenia-i-snizhenie-zatrata-predsedatel-bellesbumproma-o-zadachah-na-godimportozameschenia-i-snizhenie-zatrata-predsedatel-bellesbumproma-o-zadachah-na-god-485290-2022/>.

²⁷ Enterprises of Bellesbumprom increased exports by 48.2% in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: [https://www.belta.bv/economics/view/predpriatiia-bellesbumproma-v-2021-godu-uvvelichili-eksport-naeksport-na-482-485259-2022/](https://www.belta.bv/economics/view/predpriatiia-bellesbumproma-v-2021-godu-uvvelichilihttps://www.belta.bv/economics/view/predpriatiia-bellesbumproma-v-2021-godu-uvvelichili-eksport-naeksport-na-482-485259-2022/).

²⁸ Evmenkova, Y. "Krichev cement shifer" exported almost 40% of production for 10 months / Y. Evmenkova // . [Electron resource]. -URL : <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/krichevsementnoshifer-eksportiroval-za-10-mesjatsev-pochtihttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/krichevsementnoshifer-eksportiroval-za-10-mesjatsev-pochti-40-produktiiproduktii-470044-2021/>

institutions were met by import supplies. State-of-the-art equipment has been installed at the station. In line with all sanitary norms, 121 different kinds of test tubes of various sizes and volumes will be produced here.²⁹ . An important detail: Belarus is the fourth country in the world after the USA, China, and Turkey to have full-scale production of such medical products.

The enterprises of the Belarusian Ministry of Industry are now facing particularly demanding tasks in this area as well. In 2022 they will have to produce import-substituting products worth four and a half billion dollars, which is almost 20% more than in 2021. "The solution to this task requires a significant increase in exports - up to 70 percent of the output of goods (\$3.19 billion). Organizations of the Ministry of Industry must master the production of almost 400 new products"³⁰ . It should be noted that in the current economic situation many enterprises not only acknowledge the emerging problems, but also see them as relevant impulses for technological advancement to open new directions and master new niches of development.

For example, Mogilevliftmash produced the first batch of gearless winches at the electric motor production site in March 2022. "Previously, the company purchased such winches in Spain, but because of sanctions restrictions there are interruptions with the import of winches"³¹ . Now the company plans to increase the output of these components and completely abandon imported purchases, as well as to start selling them to other companies. Zenit is also actively working

²⁹ Production of vacuum tubes for venous blood collection opened in Gomel [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvodstvo-vakuumnyh-probirok-dlya-zabora> https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proizvodstvo-vakuumnyh-probirok-dlya-zabora-venoznoj_krovi-otkryli-v-gomele-47-krovi-otkryli-v-gomele-477229-2021/

³⁰ Parkhomchik, P. Belarusian industry in the conditions of sanctions / P. Parkhomchik // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belorusskaja-promyshlennost-v-uslovijah> [https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belorusskaja-promyshlennost-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-ministr-o-borbe-s-novymi-vyzovami-planah-po-proizvodstvu-i-8121/](https://www.belta.by/interview/view/belorusskaja-promyshlennost-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-ministr-o-borbe-s-novymi-vyzovami-planah-po-proizvodstvu-isanksij-ministr-o-borbe-s-novymi-vyzovami-planah-po-proizvodstvu-i-8121/).

³¹ "Mogilevliftmash has mastered the production of new components and intends to completely abandon import purchases [Electronic resource]: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mogilevliftmash-osvoil-vypusk-novyh-komplektujuschihi-nameren-polnostju-ujiti-ot-importnyh-zakupok-494830-2022/>

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

There are such enterprises in the Belneftekhim Concern as well. In particular, the framework agreement on further modernization of the enterprise, signed in November 2021 in the framework of the investment forum "Success Mill" held in Mogilev, is intended to update the work on import substitution in OJSC Mogilevkhimvolokno. The fact is that "a company with Turkish capital, BelEmsa, operates in Mogilev. In its production it uses spunlace, which is produced from "Mogilevkhimvolokna" yarns, but in the Rostov region. Then this raw material goes back to Mogilev"³². As a result of the agreement reached with BelEmsa, the spunlace will now be moved from one end of Mogilev to the other.

The multifaceted efforts to replace imported supplies are also characteristic of the Belarusian energy sector, where there are great opportunities for organisations of the peat industry. Let us remind you that about two million tonnes of peat are extracted in Belarus annually. The priority here is given to the production of peat fuel, which makes it possible to replace the use of imported natural gas and hard coal. At the same time "a special attention is paid to increasing the supplies of this product to the organisations of the cement industry and the housing and communal services. For example, over the past five years, consumption of cut peat in boiler houses in the housing and utilities sector has increased 2.5 times: from 25.9 thousand tonnes in 2016 to 75.3 thousand tonnes in 2021"³³. By the end of 2025, these volumes are expected to

³² About 600 jobs will appear in the Mogilev region thanks to new investment projects [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/blagodarja-novym-investproektam-v-mogilevskoj-oblasti-pojavitsja-okolo-600-rabochih mest-468164-2021/>

³³ Karankevich, V. The Ministry of Energy's organisations have stepped up work on import substitution in the face of sanctions / V . Karankevich // [Electronic resource]. -2022 . - URL:

increase to 160 thousand tons. And the use of peat in the cement industry after the implementation of the peat drying combustion project has increased its consumption from 80 thousand tonnes in 2015 to 358 thousand tonnes in 2021. Production of peat products for non-fuel purposes is also growing. In particular, the Brest Oblast is now working on the issue of creating a new type of it - cover material for the cultivation of mushrooms. "The total volume of the domestic market of this product in the country is estimated at about 50,000 tonnes a year. Most of this volume was previously imported. Given the availability of our own raw material base, there are opportunities to substitute for these imports"³⁴.

The Brest Oblast is also working on the development of other areas to replace imported products with domestic ones. In particular, an appeal was sent to the Academy of Sciences on the need to finalize technologies for beneficiation of refractory clay for OJSC Berezastroymaterialy and quartz sands in the Stolin district. Another interesting example concerns small and medium-sized businesses ready to produce import-substituting products. For instance, a private investor plans to produce raw materials "from granitoids at RUP "Granit" in exchange for Ukrainian basalt raw materials for the Gomel enterprise, which produces mineral wool. Domestic producer of polymer products Riona LLC is ready to expand production of polypropylene disposable tableware. To this end, meat and dairy companies are attracting €3 million in investments from the Development Bank"³⁵.

Note that the appeal to the private sector in this context is very relevant. Suffice it to say that in 2021, "637 small and medium businesses [were] involved in the implementation of import-substitution projects in the republic. They produced \$2.5 billion worth of products, or almost 36% of the country's import-

<https://www.belta.by/interview/view/organizatsii-minenergo-usilili-rabotu-po-importozamescheniju-v-uslovijah-sanktsiji-8135>

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Shuleika told the deputies of the Brest Regional Council about the main directions of import substitution [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/shuleiko-rasskazal-deputatam-brestskogo-oblsoveta-ob-osnovnyh-napravlenii-importozamescheniya-492478-2022/>.

substituting output."³⁶. So the potential here lies quite significant. In 2022, this interaction between the public sector and small- and medium-sized enterprises will be significantly expanded, so that entrepreneurs will be able to organically integrate into cooperative technological chains to replace foreign suppliers who have left the market. Work is being carried out on several fronts at once.

In particular, Belarus has already launched a 24/7 operational contact centre on the basis of the National Agency of Investment and Privatisation. In addition, the Belarusian Fund for Financial Support to Entrepreneurs has created a nationwide contracting information resource to facilitate the search for organisations interested in cooperative cooperation as much as possible. Finally, another important element of all this work, according to the Belarusian Ministry of Economy, is to make "every producer, even the smallest one, aware of this area of cooperation. <...> it is necessary to painstakingly 'manually' promote this idea to every entrepreneur, explain the benefits and advantages of participation in cooperative chains"³⁷. And such work is already underway in Belarus.

For example, in March 2022, Minsk Automobile Plant, for which import substitution is an important factor of "strategic security that contributes to the rhythmic operation of the plants of the entire Belavtomaz holding and dozens of other Belarusian enterprises"³⁸, held an exhibition seminar for small and medium businesses. The event was attended by over a hundred representatives from 63 organisations, which might be involved in the cooperation with the flagship of Belarusian automotive industry. The company is confident that mastering new positions by entrepreneurs will certainly require both time and investment, but the import substitution products resulting from this interaction will be in demand not only at Minsk Automobile Plant, but also by other

³⁶ Rusinovich, O. On the development of import substitution and production cooperation under sanctions / O. Rusinovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:
<https://www.belta.by/comments/view/o-razvitiu-importozameschenij-a-i-proizvodstvennoj-kooperatsii-uslovij-ah-sanktsij-8115/>.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Kravchenko: sanctions restrictions intensify work on import substitution of components for MAZ [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kravchenko-sanktsionnye-ogranichenija-aktivizirujut-rabotu-po-importozamescheniju-komplektujuschih-492137-2022/>.

participants of the automobile market both in Belarus and Russia, and in other countries of the Eurasian Economic Union.

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

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CHAPTER 4

Belarus: new residents - new projects

The results of 2021 show that residents of six free economic zones (FEZs) operating in Belarus were able to generate up to 70 percent of investments, up to half of exports of goods and a third of industrial production of their regions. And this despite the fact that "at the beginning of 2022, 432 economic entities were registered in free economic zones, projects involving investments from more than 30 countries were implemented with a total declared investment of about \$7.5 billion. During 2021, 25 new residents were added to FEZs with a total declared investment of \$441 million, one third of them - with foreign capital (\$401 million)"³⁹.

In particular, four companies engaged in the chemical industry were registered as residents in **the Grodnoinvest FEZ in 2021**,

metalworking and logistics industries. For example, Portela, a company with Portuguese investment, is implementing a project to build a transport and logistics centre in the Grodno district. One more resident, Unis Trade, is busy organizing the production of metal structures in Grodno, where "a manufacturing and warehouse complex will be built and modern equipment for manufacturing various metal structures will be purchased. Production is planned to start by the end of 2022"⁴⁰. The company OV-PlastSnab is also planning to produce a wide range of synthetic polymer products at the Aulsa site. Finally, in December 2021, the ServicePromPack Group Ltd. registered in the FEZ with an investment project to create a high-tech enterprise for the production of a wide range of polyolefin packaging for export and other FEZ residents, to be implemented in the Grandiče district.

"The first batch of products is planned to be launched in the second quarter of

³⁹ FEZ residents in 2021 generated a fifth of the republic's key indicators [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/rezidenty-sez-v-2021-godu-sformirovali-piatuui-chast-osnovnyh-respublikanskih-pokazatelej-485111-2022/>

⁴⁰ Logistics, Chemistry and Metalworking: FEZ Grodnoinvest will add 4 new residents in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/logistika-himiia-i-metalloobrabotka-sez-grodnoinvest-v-2021-godu-popolnili-4-novyh-rezidenta-481367-2022/>.

2022. It is planned that 45 jobs will be created⁴¹.

Seven new enterprises with investments not only from Belarus, but also from Russia, Italy, Romania, and Bulgaria appeared in **the Minsk FEZ** in 2021. "Foreign direct investment on a net basis amounted to \$58.1 million. More than a thousand jobs were created at the enterprises of the free economic zone "Minsk" in 2021"⁴². And exports of goods by FEZ residents to 85 countries grew by almost 40 percent and reached a record \$2 billion. It is noteworthy that registration of new residents will be an active process in 2022. Thus, in January the first resident registered in the FEZ "Minsk" in 2022 became "3D Paperco" Ltd, a company with Chinese investment, which will implement here the project for the production of environmentally friendly packaging made of cardboard. The new resident will "produce all kinds of disposable cardboard packaging for fast food outlets. The project is oriented both to supply the Belarusian market and to export"⁴³.

In **the Brest free economic zone** the first resident registered in 2022 is Soyuz Greenhouse Complex LLC, an enterprise with Belarusian-Polish capital, which in January this year was allocated a land plot of about 60 hectares near Brest airport. "A hi-tech greenhouse complex with the capacity of over 30 thousand tons of vegetables a year is due to appear there in three years. Annual production volume will be around €33m."⁴⁴. The new resident plans to invest €75 million in the project, and create 450 new jobs. Some 80 per cent of vegetable production is expected to be shipped to the Eurasian Economic Union and other

⁴¹ High-tech chemical production will be created by a new resident of FEZ Grodnoinvest [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vysokotehnologichnoe-himproizvodstvo-sozdast-novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-477539-2021/>.

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

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

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

foreign markets. The second resident of this free economic zone was registered in March 2022 - LLC "Dalmio", which will implement an investment project related to production of processing equipment, lines and components for the food industry. In this connection, "the enterprise has acquired unused production areas on the territory of the free economic zone. The new resident intends to invest at least Br1.5 million over three years. The project envisages expanding production, increasing the number of jobs"⁴⁵, as well as increasing exports and solving import substitution tasks.

In February 2022, the first resident with Iranian capital, BRR Arshie Eco Health LLC, an enterprise producing biodegradable tableware and packaging, was registered in **FEZ Vitebsk**. "Implementation of the project aims to gradually reduce the use of polymer packaging and replace it with environmentally safe packaging, which is defined as one of the priorities of social and economic development of Belarus"⁴⁶. It is expected that by the end of 2022, the new resident will have solved all design issues of the production site in the Zhurzhevo sector on the outskirts of Vitebsk, and in 2023 will already start construction of the facility, where about 25 new jobs are expected to be created. All these facts show that even in the current difficult conditions FEZs continue to be an effective tool for the accelerated development of territories "where successful business can be built today"⁴⁷ and effectively address urgent issues of development of the Belarusian economy.

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

⁴⁶ The first resident with Iranian capital is registered in FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervyyi-rezident-s-iranskim-ka-pitalom-zaregistrirovan-v-sez-vitebsk-484100-2022/>.

⁴⁷ Zalessky, B.L. Amendments to the law as an incentive for investors / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XVIII Miedzynarodowej naukowi-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej dzialnosci - 2022", Volume 1. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - C. 7.

CHAPTER 5

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: Asian vector as a promising area for e-commerce

The results of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) in 2021 showed that the application of the exchange mechanism increasingly contributes both to the creation of equal and competitive conditions for doing business within the country and to the improvement of efficient procurement and expansion of markets for Belarusian products. We would remind you that "By the end of 2021, over 27,500 business entities from 69 countries had already been registered on the BUCE. <At the same time, the geography of new participants of trading sessions continued to expand steadily on the BUCE"^{48 49}. In this regard, one of the main tasks of the exchange in 2022 is to help domestic enterprises to promote their goods for export. To this end, "special attention should be paid to realising the potential of the exchange platform in the area of foreign trade. First of all it is diversification of export of Belarusian goods with the focus on the People's Republic of China and other Asian countries..."¹⁹. And, it must be said, the BUTB is already taking energetic measures to address the above tasks.

Particularly with regard to the Chinese direction, in February 2022, China Merchants CHN-BLR Commerce and Logistics Company (CMCB), part of the Gitina Merchants Group corporation, expressed its willingness to become a logistics operator for the Belarus-Belarusian exchange to actively facilitate the development of the Belarusian-Chinese exchange trade. The fact is that this company has many major clients that would like to buy lumber and other products in Belarus, and it is known that almost all major Belarusian exporters

⁴⁸ Zalessky, B.L. From expanding geography to deepening cooperation / B.L. Zalessky // Materials for XVIII International Scientific and Practical Conference, Present Investigations and Development - 2022, 17 - 25 January 2022: Sofia. "Byal GRAD-BG". - C. 6.

⁴⁹ MART outlines priorities for the development of exchange trading [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mart-oboznachil-priority-razvitiya-birzhevoj-torgovli-488282-2022>

are concentrated on the BUET. This is evidenced by the statistics. In 2021, "the exchange export of lumber on the BUTB amounted to about 2 million cubic meters. This year [2022], <...> this figure will exceed 3 million cubic metres"⁵⁰. All in all, in 2021 sales of Belarusian lumber products to China amounted to \$44 million. An important detail: the partnership with China Merchants will allow BUTB to offer more flexible logistics solutions to e-commerce bidders.

Speaking about the implementation of plans to diversify exchange exports by reaching end consumers in the Middle East, it should be noted that until recently, residents of Israel, Lebanon, and Egypt were the most active on the Belarusian exchange. In February 2022, the United Arab Emirates was added to the list, when the first deal for the sale of lumber products to this Persian Gulf country was made on the BUTB. During the export trade session, a company from Abu Dhabi purchased a trial batch of edged hardwood lumber from a Belarusian woodworking company. The goods were delivered to the destination country by the buyer. BUTB now sees its priority as getting a foothold in the Emirati market, increasing the number of accredited companies and the volume of deliveries. After all, this Middle Eastern country is an international trade and logistics hub. "This means that by supplying their products to Abu Dhabi, Dubai or Sharjah, Belarusian companies automatically gain access to potential buyers from Africa, Southeast Asia and other regions"⁵¹.

When it comes to promoting BUTB's interests in Central Asia, it should be noted that in March 2022 the Belarusian exchange accredited a new broker in Kazakhstan, First-KO LLP, which became a 16 m in the BUTB network of stockbrokers, representing 11 countries already. It is expected that the arrival of this broker will increase the number of bidders from

⁵⁰ The Chinese company CMCB will become the logistics operator of BUTB in Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

https://www.belta.by/economics/view/https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitai_skaja-skaja-kompanij_a-cmcba-cmcb_stanet-logisticheskim-operatorom-butb-na-aziatskom-napravleniiistanet-logisticheskim-operatorom-butb-na-aziatskom-napravlenii-486408-2022/

⁵¹ Belarusian lumber sold to the UAE for the first time through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskie-pilomaterialy-vpervye-prodany-v-aoe-cherez-butbhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusskie-pilomaterialy-vpervye-prodany-v-aoe-cherez-butb-485480-2022/>

Kazakhstan, which as of 1 March 2022 had already been accredited 85, and will also contribute to the growth of Belarusian-Kazakh trade turnover. For reference, in 2021 "the commodity turnover between Belarus and Kazakhstan amounted to about \$30 million. The Kazakh market was mainly supplied with meat and dairy products, leather goods and sugar, while Belarusian buyers were mostly interested in coal and rolled ferrous metal products.⁵² . The new broker is going to make it as easy as possible for Kazakhstani companies to operate on the Belarusian market and focus on goods for which Belarus is a leader in the post-Soviet space.

Dairy products, potatoes, tyres and spare parts for specialised machinery. Another interesting step towards expanding the potential for exchange trading with Asian and Middle Eastern countries was taken at BUTB in February 2022, when it registered as a new broker the Belarusian Meat and Dairy Company CJSC, which is an official exporter of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus. This company represents the interests of all Belarusian exporters of meat and dairy products. Joining its efforts with the BUTB can certainly ensure more efficient work of the domestic agricultural organizations in non-CIS markets as well as facilitate expansion of the sales geography. This does not only mean intensive work on the Chinese market. From all indications, other Asian countries and the Middle East region will also be addressed. These are markets with great export potential which <...> have yet to be unlocked together with the stock exchange."⁵³ And there is every reason to believe that in the near future this engagement will be highly effective in increasing Belarusian export to the countries of the Asian continent.

⁵² BUTB has accredited a new broker in Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-akkreditovala-novogo-brokera-v-kazahstane-490807-2022>

⁵³ The official exporter of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has become a BUTB broker [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/ofitsialnyj-eksporter-minselhozproda-stal-brokerom-butb-482741-2022/>

CHAPTER 6

Belarus-Kazakhstan: focusing on regional cooperation

Belarus and Kazakhstan signed a treaty on social and economic cooperation until 2026 in November 2017. In this document, the parties outlined the implementation of a qualitatively new stage in bilateral relations. At the end of June 2021, during the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to that Central Asian country, a task corresponding to this new stage was voiced - "to reach new indicators in mutual trade in goods and services - over \$1 billion a year" by the end of the current year.⁵⁴. In February 2022, summing up the results of the last year, the parties stated at the high level that the Belarus-Kazakhstan trade turnover exceeded \$1 billion for the first time in history. To be absolutely precise, it "amounted to \$1.092.5 billion and increased by 31.9% compared to the same period of the previous year [2020], exports - \$911.8 million (25% growth). The balance is positive - \$731.1 million"⁵⁵. Belarus' deliveries were based on a variety of foodstuffs - fresh or chilled beef, condensed and dried milk and cream, cheese and cottage cheese, sausages and similar meat products, sugar, as well as parts of rolling stock, combine harvesters, furniture and parts thereof. The commodity distribution network of Belarusian enterprises in Kazakhstan includes more than 40 companies, as well as more than 170 entities of the dealer network. A number of joint assembling facilities for Belarusian machinery and equipment also operate there. The successful development of cooperation between the regions of the two countries plays a major role in the achievement of these indicators.

Among the Belarusian participants in this productive interaction is the **Minsk region**, whose trade turnover with Kazakhstan increased by another 7.5 percent

⁵⁴ Zalessky, B.L. Aimed at trade and production cooperation / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XVII Miedzynarodowej naukowi-praktycznej konferencji "Dynamika naukowych badań - 2021", Volume 6. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 21.

⁵⁵ Golovchenko: trade turnover between Belarus and Kazakhstan exceeded \$1 billion in 2021 for the first time [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-tovarоoborot-belarusi-i-kazahstana-v-2021-godu-vpervye-prevyshil-1-miln-486829-2022/>.

to \$190 million in 2021. Exports accounted for nearly \$180 million, with a growth rate of 107.2 percent. In foreign trade, there was a surplus of almost \$170 million. Foreign direct investment from Kazakhstan amounted to more than \$1.2 million, or 137.2 percent compared to 2020.⁵⁶. Karaganda and Pavlodar regions are among the active Kazakh partners of the Belarusian capital region.

For example, an agreement on cooperation between Minsk Region and **Karaganda Region** was signed back in 1996 and included measures for cooperation in industry, agriculture, healthcare and education. In June 2013, JV KazBelAZ LLP, a joint venture for overhaul of units and assemblies, production of spare parts and manufacturing of machinery of the Belarusian Automobile Plant, started its operation in this Kazakhstani region. "Production is based at the Karaganda Casting and Mechanical Plant (KLMZ), a branch of Kazakhmys Corporation LLP⁵⁷. This JV became one of the largest in the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development and was included in the Kazakhstan Industrialisation Map for 2010-2014. The first Belarusian dump truck was assembled in Karaganda in August 2013 by "Karaganda automobile engineers who were trained at the Belarusian plant"⁵⁸. And in October 2021, the parties had already discussed the creation of a joint production of fire-fighting equipment in the Karaganda region. At that time "21 joint ventures were already operating in the Kazakhstani region. Among them is the company for assembly of dump trucks, repair and maintenance of BelAZ machinery"⁵⁹. Apparently, this interaction can be further expanded, as the region is interested in attracting

⁵⁶ Turchin discussed with Beisenbayev the development of cooperation between Minsk Region and Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/turchin-obsudil-s-bejsenbaevym-razvitiye-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-minskoj-oblastj-i-kazahstanom-486296-2022/>.

⁵⁷ Potylitsyn, S. Process of regular evolution / S. Potylitsyn // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: [https://kazpravda.kz/n/protcess-zakonomemoy-evolyutsii/](https://kazpravda.kz/n/protsess-zakonomemoy-evolyutsii/)

⁵⁸ Akhmetova, A. Karaganda residents assembled the first Belarusian dump truck / A. Akhmetova // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <https://www.altyn-orda.kz/karagandincy-sobrali-pervyj-belorusskij-samosval/www.altyn-orda.kz/karagandincy-sobrali-pervyj-belorusskij-samosval/>

⁵⁹ Belarus and Kazakhstan may launch joint production of fire-fighting equipment in Karaganda Region [Electronic resource]. https://primepress.by/news/kompanii/belarus_and_kazakhstan_mogut_sovmestnoe_proizvodstvo_pozharnoy_tekhniki_na_territorii_karagan-38483/

Belarusian companies and is ready to create favourable conditions for them to "take part in agricultural projects and school construction. Cooperation in the IT sector is also possible"⁶⁰.

As for the **Pavlodar region**, the Minsk region signed an agreement with it on trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation in 2009. In 2017, the parties agreed to cooperate in agriculture. The Kazakhstani people were very interested in the Belarusian experience in the construction of dairy complexes.

"Passing a package of standard projects to the Pavlodar region agricultural facilities, representatives of the Belarusian capital region expressed their readiness not only to advise them on this topic, but also to build their dairy complexes on mutually beneficial terms"⁶¹. In addition, the free economic zones of the Pavlodar oblast invited interested companies from Minsk Oblast to participate in projects for joint use of the region's subsoil. One of them is an aluminium cluster with involvement of large companies from Germany, Poland, and Turkey. Note that the technique of the Belarusian Automobile Plant is already quite actively used in this area of Kazakhstan. In particular, in February, 2021 on an assembly platform of technological park of Vostochny surface mine of JSC "EEC" of Eurasian group (ERG) has been completed assembling of three dump trucks BelAZ with payload capacity of 130 tons which have joined this coal-mining enterprise. They have joined "seven brothers, which already two years are operated in cyclic-flow overburden sections of the surface mine, deserving at Ekibastuz miners a reputation of reliable and highly productive mine cars"⁶². As we can see, the range of links between the Minsk and Pavlodar regions could still be very wide.

⁶⁰ On the visit of the Ambassador of Belarus to the Karaganda region [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://kazakhstan.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c25b80e259079cad.html>

⁶¹ Zalessky, B. Actual media topics of Belarus-Kazakhstan interaction / B. Zalessky // International Journalism-2018: global challenges, regional partnership and media: materials of VII International Scientific and Practical Conference, Minsk, 15 February. 2018 / coauthors. B.L. Zalessky ; ed. by T.N. Dasaeva. - Minsk: Publishing Center BSU, 2018. - C. 98.

⁶² BELAZ delivers 130-tonne dump trucks to Kazakhstan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belaz-postavil-130-tonnye-samosvaly-v-kazahstan-428544-2021/>

CHAPTER 7

Vitebsk Oblast: Uzbek partnership vector

The intensification of partnership Belarusian-Uzbek regional ties is becoming one of the most important areas for the development of cooperation between the two countries in the current circumstances. The first Belarus-Uzbekistan Regions Forum, which was held in Minsk in July 2019 and opened up new opportunities for partnership in such areas as industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex and food industry, and brought together on the Uzbek side alone "over two hundred representatives of such regions as Andijan, Bukhara, Djizak, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana and Tashkent regions", contributed to a significant intensification of this interaction.⁶³

On the Belarusian side, one of the active participants in this forum was the **Vitebsk** Region, whose positive dynamics of trade and economic cooperation with its Uzbek partners has been observed over the past few years. Suffice it to say that in 2019, Uzbekistan joined the list of Vitebsk Region's key partners among the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Then the foreign trade turnover between the parties increased by more than a quarter and exceeded nine million dollars. Exports from the Belarusian region "grew by half to \$6.7 million. Food exports amounted to \$0.9 million, or 13.4% of the total. <...> Cheese and dairy products from the Postavy Dairy Plant, Verkhnedvinsk Butter and Cheese Plant, Polotsk Dairy Plant, as well as meat products from the Vitebsk meat processing plant are already familiar to Uzbek consumers and are in good demand with them".⁶⁴ In addition, baby food, a wide range of vaccines to combat pet diseases and pharmaceuticals were successfully supplied to the Uzbek market from the Vitebsk Region at that time.

In 2021, the mutual trade volume between Belarus and this Central Asian

⁶³ Zalessky, B. Sustainability as a formula for growth. Features of international cooperation based on the innovation component / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 37.

⁶⁴ Tikhonov, A. Belarus-Uzbekistan Agrarian Forum: afterword / A. Tikhonov // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://produkt.by/story/belorussko-uzbekskiy-agramyy-forum-posleslovieprodukt.by/story/belorussko-uzbekskiy-agramyy-forum-posleslovie>

country exceeded USD 12.5 million, with Vitebsk exports worth almost USD 10 million, which was based on medicines, cattle meat, dried milk and whey, butter, cheese, as well as polyethylene, plastic and fiberglass products and fiber-optic cables. In addition, a joint venture of the Marko leather and footwear holding company has been launched on Uzbek soil. Other manufacturing cooperation projects are on the horizon. In particular, since 2020 the Vitebsk Oblast has been holding talks on opening a joint venture with BelVitunifarm in Uzbekistan, which will initially sell drugs and later will start manufacturing them. A representative office of the Belarusian manufacturer of veterinary drugs was opened in Tashkent in December 2021. And already "financing issues of the project are being worked out in order to reach the sales of drugs in the amount of \$2 million per year"⁶⁵.

Other promising areas of cooperation between enterprises of the region and its Uzbek partners in March 2022 included deliveries of fruits and vegetables, meat and dairy products, as well as cooperation in such segments of the industrial sector as mechanical engineering, energy, chemical and gas industries. A significant role here should be played by the activation of partnership relations between the Vitebsk Region and a number of Uzbek regions, especially **Namangan** Region. The fact is that Vitebsk and Namangan regions signed an agreement on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural areas in July 2019 within the framework of the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, which has already been mentioned above. This document should help build mutually beneficial trade and economic ties between enterprises and organizations of the regions, provide "comprehensive support to business structures in the conclusion of mutually acceptable contracts for the supply of goods and services. It also deals with joint business seminars, exhibitions and fairs with the participation of representatives of entrepreneurial

⁶⁵ Pushnyakova, A. Uzbekistan can become a springboard for Vitebsk Oblast enterprises to supply Asia / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-mozhet-stat-dlya-predpriyatij-vitebskoj-oblasti-tramplinomhttps://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-mozhet-stat-dlya-predpriyatij-vitebskoj-oblasti-tramplinom- dlj-a-postavok-v-a-postavok-v-azij-u-49u-491940-2022/>.

and business circles"⁶⁶.

The agreement on cooperation between the administrations of free economic zones (FEZ) Vitebsk and Cosonoy-Pharm, signed at the same time, is also intended to expand possible areas of trade, economic and investment cooperation between the Belarusian and Uzbek regions, which not only creates a basis for sharing experience and promoting partnerships between FEZ residents, but also forms the basis for the parties to pool their capacities in conducting joint activities. Note that Cosonoy-Pharm was among seven pharmaceutical FEZs established in May 2017 in six Uzbek regions. Besides it, "Nukus-Pharm" appeared then in Karakalpakstan, "Zomin-Pharm" in Jizzak oblast, "Sirdaryo-Pharm" in Syrdarya, "Boysun-Pharm" in Surkhandarya and "Parkent-Pharm" in Tashkent oblast⁶⁷. They are subject to special tax, customs and currency regimes. They all specialise in the development of companies in the pharmaceutical field. Several FEZ "Vitebsk" residents are also engaged in this sphere. That is why "attraction of investments into projects on creation of production of medicines, medical products is one of the most promising directions of cooperation between the administrations of the two FEZ"⁶⁸. And there is every reason to believe that this interaction between the Belarusian and Uzbek free economic zones will further strengthen the emerging partnership between the Vitebsk and Namangan regions.

⁶⁶ Namangan region will cooperate with Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: https://nampravda.uz/ekonomika/https://nampravda.uz/ekonomika/namanskaya_obludget_sotrudnicchats_vitebskom.html

⁶⁷ Seven pharmaceutical FEZs are being established in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2017/05/05/pharm/>.

⁶⁸ FEZ Vitebsk and Uzbek Cosonoy-Pharm will develop investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-uzbekskaja-kosonoy-farm-budut-razvivat-investitsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-352766-201-farm-budut-razvivat-investitsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-352766-2019/>.

CHAPTER 8

Belarus-India: building on regional activism

April 2022 will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and India. Minsk views the development of cooperation with that country "as one of the priorities of Belarus's foreign policy in Asia. Today, India is a powerful modern state with developed economy, big market and serious scientific and industrial potential,"⁶⁹. And the existing experience of diplomatic relations in both multilateral and bilateral formats shows that "India is among the partner countries of Belarus in Asia, with which large-scale interaction is developing in all areas of cooperation"⁷⁰. By developing interaction based on the principles of equality, trust and respect, the parties have been able to achieve an annual trade turnover steadily exceeding half a billion dollars in 2019-2021. But "as in any relationship, there are areas that are not fully developed. This is especially true of trade and economic relations"⁷¹. 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

⁶⁹ Andreichenko: Belarus-India relations are developing on the principles of equality, trust and respect [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

[https://www.belta.by/politics/view/andrejchenkohttps://www.belta.by/politics/view/andrejchenko_-_-belarusi-i-indii-razvivajutsja-na-printsipah-ravenstva-doverija-i-uvazhenija-479047-2022/](https://www.belta.by/politics/view/andrejchenkohttps://www.belta.by/politics/view/andrejchenko_-_-belarusi-i-indii-razvivajutsja-na-printsipah-ravenstva-doverija-i-uvazhenijaotnoshenija-belarusi-indii-razvivajutsja-na-printsipah-ravenstva-doverija-i-uvazhenija-479047-2022/)

⁷⁰ Zalessky, B. International relations and media. A View from Belarus / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2014. - C. 452.

⁷¹ 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-dlj_a-belarusi-a-belarusi-davnij_drug-i--drug-i-nadezhnyj -partner-v-aziipartner-v-azii-482540-2022/](https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kochanova-indija-https://www.belta.by/politics/view/kochanova-indija-dlj_a-belarusi-a-belarusi-davnij_drug-i--drug-i-nadezhnyj -partner-v-aziipartner-v-azii-482540-2022/).

to a sustainable operation, ensure the expansion of the product range and realise its export potential"⁷². 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 pulpwood, timber, electric current control apparatus, stone products are in demand in India"⁷³. In 2022, the parties put into practice the issue of resuming the production of Gomel harvesters for Indian agriculture. A separate topic is the partnership in the field of education, which already has a history of its own. The fact is that the first Indian graduate graduated from the Gomel State Medical University (GSMU) in 2005. Since then only 178 Indians have graduated from the university. In 2022 another 51 graduates will join them. A total of 290 students from South Asia are currently enrolled at the SMMU. And the plans for the near future include

- The Gomel State University named after Frantsysk Skaryna is more actively involved 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

⁷² Pharmaceuticals, IT and Education: Grodno Region Increases Cooperation with India [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/farmatsevtika-it-sfera-ihhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/farmatsevtika-it-sfera-i-.grodnenskaja-obl-naraschivaet-sotrudnichestvo-s-indiejobrazovanie-grodnenskaja-obl-naraschivaet-sotrudnichestvo-s-indiej-485022-2022/>

⁷³ 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/innovatsionnyehttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/innovatsionnye-tehnologii-it-i-meditsina-indija-i-gomelskaja-obl-gotovy-razvivat-novye-sferytehnologii-it-i-meditsina-indija-i-gomelskaja-obl-gotovy-razvivat-novye-sfery-492016-2022>

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, Technolit CPRC successfully cooperates with the Indian market producing parts and spare parts for various equipment. The company receives "Indian blanks", which are processed at a very high precision equipment and then exported to other countries. More than 30 countries can be exported <...>. Besides, discussions have already started about supplying Technolit's finished products to the Indian market⁷⁴. 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 (regénération) of all types of batteries used in road, rail and river transport, special machinery, industry and communications, wind turbines and solar batteries"⁷⁵. The FEZ "Mogilev", which will take part in the World Expo in March 2022, is also significantly stepping up cooperation with the Indian side.

2020 in Dubai has signed agreements with two companies from that country to implement investment projects in the FEZ.

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.

⁷⁴ 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-neprostyh-uslovijah-pokazvaet-svoj-u-effektivnost-493160-2022](https://www.belta.by/regions/view/strahar-mogilevskij-tehnolit-vhttps://www.belta.by/regions/view/strahar-mogilevskij-tehnolit-v-neprostyh-uslovijah-pokazyvaet-neprostyh-uslovijah-pokazvaet-svoj-u-effektivnost-493160-2022)

⁷⁵ Agriculture, Textiles: Indian Ambassador on the need for greater cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/amp/regions/view/selskoehttps://www.belta.by/amp/regions/view/selskoe-hozajstvo-tekstilnaja-promyshlennost-posol-indii-o-neobhodimosti-rasshirenija-sotrudnichestvahozajstvo-tekstilnaja-promyshlennost-posol-indii-o-neobhodimosti-rasshirenija-sotrudnichestva-492918-2022>

CHAPTER 9

Great Stone Industrial Park: from memoranda to concrete cooperation projects

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 effective activity of its residents, attraction of new ones, active development of innovation activity, startups, cluster cooperation..."⁷⁶. The record growth of 21 residents in 2021 is evidence of how this objective is being achieved here. The park is particularly active in the production of automotive components, electronics and pharmaceuticals. The emerging cooperation between Great Stone and similar preferential economic zones in other countries is likely to further unlock the potential of these innovative areas. 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 business communities of Belarus and Cuba, as well as providing for information interaction"⁷⁷. Priority 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

⁷⁶ Zalessky, B.L. Industrial Park "Great Stone": new projects bring the future / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XVIII Miedzynarodowej naukowi-praktycznej konferencji "Kluczowe aspekty naukowej działalności - 2022", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 3.

⁷⁷ "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-kamen-i-kubinskaia-zona-osobogo-razvitiia-mariel-budut-sotrudnichat-v-privlechenii-investitsii-426316-2021/>

Cuban pharmaceutical companies"⁷⁸ . 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"⁷⁹ . 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 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, begins... <.>. Dealer and service networks in every region of Uzbekistan will also be expanded"⁸⁰ .

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

⁷⁸ "Great Stone intends to develop cooperation with Cuban pharmaceutical companies [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/velikij-kamen-nameren-razvivat-sotrudnichenstvo-s-kubinskimi-farmpredpriyatiyami-487548-2022/>.

⁷⁹ "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-sotrudnichenstvo-493658-2022/>

⁸⁰ Production of Volkswagen cars in Uzbekistan will start in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/06/26/volkswagen/www.gazeta.uz/ru/2020/06/26/volkswagen/>

and painting shop will be launched"⁸¹. This will make it possible to produce 100 thousand of those models per year, create three thousand new jobs and increase 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"⁸². 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 the building materials industry. With the help of the FEZ it is intended to significantly strengthen export component of the region, where "more than 80 exporting companies already operate, supplying more than 50 types of products abroad"⁸³. So here, too, the range of joint interests with Great Stone could be quite extensive.

⁸¹ 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-pohttps://uz.sputniknews.ru/20211022/zavod-v-uzbekistane-po-vypusku-kia-i-lada-v-2023-godu-povysit-lokalizatsiyu-do-30-2vypusku-kia-i-lada-v-2023-godu-povysit-lokalizatsiyu-do-30-21019614.html>

⁸² A new free economic zone is being created in Syr Darya [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://kun.uz/ru/94899784?q=%2Fru%2F94899784>

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