

Time for concrete solutions

The Republic of Belarus envisages a significant strengthening of the policy of rational import substitution for the next five years, taking into account the production of new high-tech and export-oriented goods. In April 2022, the Belarusian government adopted a comprehensive plan to support the economy, which contains five blocks of measures, the implementation of which will contribute to the normal operation of exporters. Production cooperation and production of import-substituting products will receive additional incentives. Under these conditions, regions, industries and specific companies are already developing a common vision of what has to be done, what steps have to be taken to prevent loss of efficiency in today's difficult conditions and to make the most of investment, innovation, manufacturing and export potential in order to promote sustainable and dynamic development of the Republic of Belarus. What opportunities are offered by the policy of international economic cooperation pursued by Belarus in the post-Soviet space, as well as in the countries of the far arc - the Asian and African continents? Answers to these and a number of other questions can be found in the proposed study.



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Chronicle of International Cooperation

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CHAPTER 1

Commonwealth of Independent States: free trade in services, innovation, science, education

The presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which is based on the principles of continuity and aims to implement the long-term elements of the development strategy of this integration association in the post-Soviet space in various areas, will end in 2022. The measures taken in 2021 under the auspices of the Belarusian chairmanship combined with the efforts of the states at the national level have made it possible to raise the most important macroeconomic indicators in the CIS in January-August. "Thus, industrial output grew by 4.3%, cargo transportation (excluding pipeline transport) by 5.2%, retail trade turnover by 8.5%"¹. The CIS free trade zone, which provides favourable conditions for the development of the economies of its members, has contributed greatly to these positive trends.

In 2021, thanks to Belarus' chairmanship of the CIS, active work continued with other states on a draft **agreement on free trade in services**, which is designed to provide additional opportunities for sustainable economic development in the post-Soviet space. An important detail here is that "work on the preparation of this agreement has been going on for nine years, since 2012"². The result of this work should be the signing of this document in May 2022. Its particular relevance lies in the fact that trade in services now accounts for about half of the CIS countries' gross product. Lifting barriers in this area will further boost economic cooperation in the post-Soviet space where integration links have been steadily restored. "Thus, in the first half of this [2021] year, mutual trade grew

1 Roman Golovchenko: Belarus has always advocated the development of the CIS and aims to develop regional integration [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10051>

2 Lebedev: CIS free trade in services agreement may be signed in May 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/lebedev-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-uslugami-v-sng-mozhet-byt-podpisano-v-mae-2022-goda-469260-2021>

by almost 27%, foreign trade turnover by more than a quarter, the gross domestic product volume in the whole Commonwealth increased by almost 4.5%, cargo transportation and industrial production are growing"³.

Another very important document developed during the presidency of Belarus in this international organization is **the Complex Action Plan for 2021-2025** to implement the CIS Interstate Innovation Cooperation Program until 2030, which was approved by the CIS Council of Heads of Government in November 2021. Here it is appropriate to recall that the October (2021) meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government adopted a Statement on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Commonwealth, in which, considering trade and economic interaction as a key factor in further deepening economic integration and sustainable development of the CIS member states, the leaders of the said states declared the need to "direct efforts towards stable economic growth through the development of green economy, digitalization, industrial cooperation, broad application of innovations..."⁴.

As a reminder, the year 2020 saw the completion of **the Interstate Programme for Innovation Cooperation of CIS countries**, which was approved in October 2011 and in which the main task was to "create an interstate space uniting the capabilities of national innovation systems, giving a sustainable systemic character to innovation development, promoting the effective use of scientific and technological developments and inventions"⁵. During its implementation, certain results have been achieved. These include the formulation of a functioning mechanism for the implementation of interstate projects, the creation of a legal framework for successful interaction between the participants, and the formation of an innovation infrastructure.

3 Mishustin: a free trade agreement on services will stimulate economic cooperation in the CIS [Electronic resource]. 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mishustin-soglashenie-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-uslugami-prostimuliruet-ekonomicheskoe-vzaimodejstvie-v-sng-469224-2021/>

4 CIS Heads of State adopted a Statement on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Commonwealth [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/glavy-gosudarstv-sng-prinjali-zajavlenie-v-svjazi-s-30-letiem-sodruzhestva-464684-2021/>

5 Interstate Programme for Innovation Cooperation of CIS Member States for the period until 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/19142cis.minsk.by/page/19142>

With respect to the participation of the Republic of Belarus in the implementation of the provisions of the completed programme, Belarusian organizations have become executing agencies in nine out of ten inter-State projects. Among the most significant of them is the development and implementation of an integrated information system for aerospace forecast monitoring of natural emergencies, which makes it possible to reduce damage from such situations and the cost of dealing with their consequences by up to 20 per cent through timely measures. Another interesting example in this context is the development of a highly sensitive test system for the detection of hepatitis E in humans, wild and domestic pigs, rabbits and deer, on the basis of which Belarus has developed a system of anti-epidemic measures for the population.

A continuation of systematic work in this area was the adoption in November 2020 at a meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of Government of a decision on **the Interstate Programme of Innovation Cooperation of CIS Member States for the period until 2030**. This document is a "system of measures interconnected in terms of objectives, resources and timeframe, which takes into account the accumulated experience. In particular, much attention is paid to attracting extra-budgetary sources of financing for inter-state innovation projects."⁶ . The main task of the new program is organization of large-scale production of knowledge-intensive competitive goods and perspective developments in the common Eurasian innovative space. One of the innovations that distinguish the new document from the previous one is that the new program has become more flexible in its implementation. Whereas previously there was a strict condition that at least three Commonwealth countries participate in an innovation project, now it "envisages the possibility of launching projects involving two CIS member states, and other interested

⁶ On the outcome of the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/page/3758/89205/>

countries can join later"⁷. The focus on measures to increase the efficiency of innovative activity is dictated by the fact that, in the period until 2030, world economic processes will be characterized by increased uncertainty and instability, even possible radical changes under the influence of geopolitical factors. But the most important trends, which in the next decade can really affect the development of world processes, will remain new technologies, innovative solutions in the economy, creation of a large number of own high-tech industries.⁸ And in this respect, the Commonwealth still has a lot to do in order to get rid of those obstacles in the field of innovations, which even today the CIS member states continue to face, where there is still "a certain inertness, the time factor is not taken into account, the level of strategic planning in the spheres of innovative development and international scientific and technical cooperation is low, measures to support small and medium, including youth, scientific and technical and innovative entrepreneurship are ineffective. Successful implementation of the provisions of the new programme would help to achieve the anticipated effect in 14 directions at once, including: increasing the number of breakthrough technologies, discoveries and promising developments by providing promotion of research results in the market; building capacities within the CIS to increase the number of companies - world technological leaders; expanding scientific, technological and innovation cooperation as a basis for creating joint competitive products, including in third countries' markets.

As for the approved Comprehensive Plan of Measures for 2021-2025, which contains specific activities, initiatives and projects with responsible performers and deadlines, they are structured into five main directions concerning normative-legal, organizational, informational, financial and personnel support of the program implementation. Successful implementation of this plan is expected to strengthen the CIS position in the new architecture of the global

7 The CIS innovation cooperation programme has become more flexible and adaptive - Shumilin [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/programma-innovatsionnogo-sotrudnichestva-stran-sng-stala-bolee-gibkoj-i-adaptivnoj-shumilin-421456-2020/>

8 Interstate Programme for Innovation Cooperation of CIS Member States until 2030. - M., 2020. - C.8.

economic system as well as create conditions for achieving such results as "development of interstate innovation cooperation, creation of scientific-technical and technological reserves to organize large-scale production of knowledge-intensive competitive goods and services within the common innovation space of the Commonwealth"⁹. Complementing these provisions, this integration association is also expected to develop a programme for the development of industrial complexes until 2025, which will be another step in the development of the CIS.

Another priority objective of Belarus' presidency of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 2021 was to achieve a synergetic effect from the cooperation of its member states in various areas in the post-Soviet space in order to involve the widest possible range of participants in the deepening of integration, while respecting the principle of multi-level and multi-speed integration. In the area of **science and technology**, the aim has been to "create effective mechanisms to coordinate the efforts of CIS member states in science, technology and innovation, to strengthen the innovation component of economic growth through the creation of national innovation systems and the implementation of inter-state innovation projects."¹⁰. One of the practical steps was the organization in Minsk during the last decade of November 2021 of several important events aimed at strengthening links and expanding contacts between the community of scientists and scientific organizations of the CIS countries, including the 3rd Forum of Scientists, the 9th Meeting of the Council for Cooperation in Fundamental Science and the 29th session of the Interstate Council for Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation.

The 3rd CIS Scientists Forum brought together over 150 participants - heads and leading scientists from academies of sciences, major scientific and research centres, educational organizations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan,

⁹ The CIS has approved a five-year action plan for innovative cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-utverzhdzen-plan-meroprijatij-na-pjatiletku-po-innovatsionnomu-sotrudnichestvu-469337-2021/>

¹⁰ Concept of the Presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/19314>

Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Its main objectives were to: 1) intensify scientific and technical cooperation among Commonwealth states; 2) stimulate new collaborative research; 3) propose ways of developing innovation policy in the post-Soviet space; and 4) form an "international mobility system for scientists and young specialists in the professional community"¹¹. At three round tables - "Status and Prospects of Basic Science", "Improvement of Scientific Cooperation in the Digital Age", "Innovative Scientific Research" - it was noted that in the context of transition to digital economy model of Commonwealth countries the importance of science increases dramatically, where interaction is based on strategy of mutually beneficial and equal cooperation and where the following principles are basic 1) preservation and further development of historical and cultural ties of the peoples of the CIS countries; 2) joining efforts to implement national interests in the implementation of scientific programs and projects; 3) formation of mutually beneficial partnerships of scientific organizations of the Commonwealth countries; 4) flexibility of collective cooperation formats and decision-making mechanisms in the implementation of joint scientific research. The Declaration "Science in the Context of Global Challenges", adopted at the end of the 3rd Forum, notes that "the scientific and technical policy pursued by the Commonwealth countries is aimed at uniting the efforts of scientists of the CIS countries in the search for new forms of interaction in the field of scientific research to solve problems in modernizing national socio-economic systems and increasing the level of well-being and quality of life of people"¹².

The 9th meeting of the CIS Council for Cooperation in Fundamental Science noted the increasing role of fundamental science in the development of society as the basis of prosperity and well-being of future generations of our

¹¹ CIS scientists to adopt a declaration on cooperation in science [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/uchenye-stran-sng-primut-deklaratsiju-o-sotrudnichestve-v-nauchnoj-sfere-471428-2021/>

¹² Representatives of the CIS scientific community adopted a declaration in the context of global challenges [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/predstaviteli-nauchnogo-soobschestva-stran-sng-prinjali-deklaratsiju-v-kontekste-globalnyh-vyzovov-471791-2021/>

countries and proposed to develop a two-year cooperation plan in this area concerning areas of particular interest to the CIS scientific community - ecology, space exploration, biotechnology, digitalization, and aimed at addressing existing problems of interaction in the scientific sphere on "One of them is the lack of centralized funding for scientific development"¹³. In December 2021, a draft list of promising research projects corresponding to the priority areas of basic research of the CIS countries was finalised and sent to the Commonwealth states for completion of intra-state coordination. "Six states are involved in the work on the draft list: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan"¹⁴. The agreed draft includes research in such areas as physical, mathematical and chemical sciences, information and communication technologies, new substances and materials, biological, agricultural and medical sciences, biotechnology and genetic engineering, environmental management and protection, nuclear, alternative and renewable energy, mechanical engineering and instrumentation, socioeconomic and human sciences, and space exploration.

At the 29th meeting of the Interstate Council for Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation, a draft concept of scientific-technical and technological cooperation between the CIS countries was announced, which envisages addressing such tasks as "development and introduction of new breakthrough technologies in priority directions of scientific and technological activities, as well as creation of new high-tech industrial enterprises to produce knowledge-intensive and innovative products"¹⁵. The system for training highly

13 The CIS intends to develop a plan for cooperation in the basic sciences [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-namereny-razrabotat-plan-sotrudnichestva-v-oblasti-fundamentalnyh-nauk-471803-2021/>

14 CIS experts have finalised the list of projects in priority areas of basic research [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/eksperty-sng-dorabotali-perechen-proektov-po-prioritetnym-napravlenijam-fundamentalnyh-issledovanij-473644-2021>

15 The CIS has prepared a draft concept for scientific and technical cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-sng-podgotovili-proekt-kontseptsii-nauchno-tehnicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-471701-2021/>

qualified scientific and engineering personnel will also undergo significant changes in the near future.

The concept of Belarus' presidency in the CIS in 2021 also assumed that one of the priorities of the presidency in this international organization would be further strengthening of humanitarian ties and expansion of contacts in education and science. In this case, it is about the continuation of work on the development of the legal framework aimed at the formation of a **common educational space** of the Commonwealth, promotion of "partnership relations between educational organizations of the CIS member states, implementation of joint educational projects and programs"¹⁶.

It should be recalled that **the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Education** between the Commonwealth Member States was signed in May 1992 in Tashkent. In this document, the parties agreed to support joint scientific research, "to facilitate in every possible way the maintenance and development of direct educational partnerships between the territories and educational institutions of the member states"¹⁷. Five years later, in January 1997, the normative-legal basis of cooperation in this field was supplemented by **the Agreement on Cooperation in forming a Common (Common) Educational Space of the CIS**, in which the parties, pursuing the task stated their intention to create "a mechanism of coordination of integration processes in the field of education, training and attestation of scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel"¹⁸, and the **Council for Cooperation in the Education** of the CIS Member States was created. Since then, at the initiative of this coordinating body, about forty documents have been adopted in the CIS. Among them: the decisions on the concepts of development of adult education (2006) and distance learning (2007); agreements on the coordination of work in the field of

16 Presidency of the Republic of Belarus in the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2021 [Electronic resource]. 2020. - URL: <https://www.mfa.gov.by/multilateral/belaruscischairmanship2021/>

17 Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Education [Electronic resource]. - 1992. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/7570>

18 Agreement on Cooperation to Form a Common (Common) Educational Space of the Commonwealth of Independent States [Electronic resource]. - 1997. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/7552>

informatization of educational systems (2007), on professional development of teachers of educational organizations (2007), on mutual recognition of documents on higher/higher professional education (2013); the Regulations on the Congress of teachers and education employees (2018). In addition, within the Commonwealth 17 institutions of higher education have been given the status of basic organizations in various areas of educational activities, including Belarusian universities: Sakharov International State Environmental Institute of the Belarusian State University - basic in the CIS in environmental education; the Republican Institute of Professional Education - basic in training, retraining and professional development in vocational and technical and secondary education systems.

Another interesting project in the Commonwealth's educational sphere is **the CIS Network University**, which was created in 2009 by a consortium agreement signed by the rectors of 11 leading universities of the Commonwealth with the aim of training highly qualified personnel and developing a common CIS educational space. Initially, it was planned to train personnel in the humanities and social disciplines. However, in 2010, the technical vector began to develop, and such areas as oil and gas engineering and construction began to appear. The essence of training specialists here is that "when students from Commonwealth countries study at a network university, they have an opportunity to obtain a bilateral education document, and this automatically improves their competitiveness in the labour market"¹⁹. We note that from 2010 to 2019, 1,100 Master's students have studied here. And today 38 universities from 9 CIS member states "participate in this project"²⁰, including two domestic universities - Belarusian State University and Belarusian National Technical University. In particular, undergraduates of Belarusian State University study

19 . More than 800 people were trained at the CIS Networking University [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-800-chelovek-proshli-obuchenie-v-setevom-universitete-sng-337497-2019/>

20 Information on the activities of the Council for Cooperation in the Field of Education of the Commonwealth of Independent States to Form a Common Educational Space in the CIS [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/cooperation/3063/79383/>

international law in the fields of "Management", "Economics", "Philology" and "International relations". And "upon successful passing the state examination and defending a master's thesis a graduate receives two diplomas: Russian and Belarusian"²¹.

In May 2020, during the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government, the Agreement on the Establishment and Operation of the CIS Network University was signed, which effectively legalised at the governmental level the interuniversity project that had existed for more than ten years. In December 2020 the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus ratified this document, which should give a new impetus to the development of educational interaction in the Commonwealth. The entry into force of this agreement, signed in order to improve the quality of training in higher education institutions, to implement priority joint scientific and scientific-technical projects, to support the study of languages, culture and traditions of the peoples of the CIS member states, "will create the necessary conditions for the expansion and deepening of contacts between the countries in the humanitarian and educational sphere"²², will strengthen cooperation and inter-university relations in the field of higher education in Eurasia. As a result, it will facilitate the implementation of the task of creating a common CIS educational space.

Among the concrete steps that have been taken in 2021 to promote the formation of a common Commonwealth educational space is the **6th Congress of CIS Teachers and Education Workers**, which was held in late October in Dushanbe and brought together representatives of the education system from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with its main theme being 'The Commonwealth of Independent States Education Space - a Strategic Resource for Sustainable Development'. We should say at

21 CIS Network University [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://ums.bsu.by/ru/am/cis-net-university>

22 Deputies ratified the agreement on the establishment and functioning of the CIS Network University [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/deputaty-ratifikatsirovali-soglashenie-ob-uchrezhdenii-i-funktsionirovanii-setevogo-universiteta-sng-420406-2020/>

once that holding such an event is a unique phenomenon in world practice, as 'in no other region of the world is there interstate cooperation in the field of education, covering the entire spectrum of educational services, from childhood to vocational guidance for young people, higher vocational education and adult education'²³.

The Fifth Congress was held in Bishkek in October 2018. The three years that have passed since then have shown that the national education systems of the Commonwealth countries have been successfully developing in a number of areas: from improving management and updating the content of education, introducing innovative information technologies to forming a modern educational environment, increasing the professional competence of teaching staff, and developing an inclusive approach in education. One of the positive trends of this period is the "activation of interaction between the CIS countries on the basis of bilateral and multilateral agreements on education"²⁴. In particular, over the past period, the Belarusian education authorities have concluded 10 cooperation agreements and treaties, including an agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan on cooperation in secondary vocational education.

Among other projects implemented by the Belarusian side in the period between the Congresses, we should mention a few more. In terms of the implementation of modern approaches in the field of education in Belarus, a series of manuals "Competence-based approach" for grades 1-9 in all curricula has been published. In 2019, a scientific study "Development of scientific and methodological support for the formation of supraprofessional competencies of specialists for innovative industries in the process of continuous professional education" was carried out. Speaking about formation of common approaches to assessment of results of competence-based education and development of state and

23 Congress of Teachers and Education Workers of the CIS Member States [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://cis.minsk.by/page/show?id=7774>

24 The CIS countries intend to intensify cooperation in the field of education [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/strany-sng-namereny-aktivizirovat-vzaimodejstvie-v-obrazovatelnoj-sfere-467074-2021>

independent systems of education quality assessment, it should be noted that the World Bank project "Modernization of Higher Education in the Republic of Belarus" planned to create a new national agency for education quality assurance and to join the European Association of Quality Assurance Agencies. And at the beginning of December 2021, "the government agreed on the establishment of a National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education by the Ministry of Education" .²⁵

Developing the digital infrastructure and technologies in education management, Belarus has been developing a Unified Information and Educational Resource for Software and Methodological Support of the Educational Process, and, as of September 1, 2020, the resource Profile Learning for Educational and Methodological Support of Studying Academic Subjects at Advanced Level in Grade 10 has started to function. In pre-school education, tools are being developed for the evaluation of its quality in the context of the competence-based approach, as well as scientific and methodological support for the development of a national system for the evaluation of the quality of education at the pre-school, general secondary and special education levels. It is expected that, on the basis of the results obtained, a national system for the evaluation of the quality of preschool education will be created in the country by 2030.

In Belarus, additional education programmes for children and young persons are supported in the following areas: technology, sports and technology, tourism, local history, ecology and biology, physical education and sports, art, socio-economic, socio-pedagogy, culture and leisure, military patriotism, natural and mathematics, and social and humanitarian issues. A special type of educational institution, the National Children's Technology Park, is being established in the country in order to work with gifted children and young people on a systematic basis. The integration of education and science in the CIS has been actively pursued over the past three years, including through cooperation between

25 The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education will be created in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/natsionalnoe-agentstvo-pobespecheniju-kachestva-obrazovanija-sozdatut-v-belarusi-473393-2021>

scientific institutions and universities. For example, Belarusian participants have interacted particularly effectively and will expand these partnerships with institutions and organizations in Azerbaijan, Russia and Uzbekistan in the framework of agreements on scientific, scientific-technical and innovative cooperation.

The resolution adopted by the Sixth Congress outlines a detailed programme of action for the development of the Commonwealth's common educational space, where much attention is paid to issues of international cooperation. In particular, it provides for 'expanding the range of educational programmes, including joint programmes, to develop the import and export of educational services in the CIS Member States'²⁶ . All this will make it possible to form a common educational space here at all levels: preschool, school, secondary and higher professional, postgraduate and academic.

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26 Resolution of the VI Congress of Teachers and Education Workers of the Commonwealth of Independent States (28-29 October 2021, Dushanbe) [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://e-cis.info/cooperation/3173/96167/>

CHAPTER 2

Commonwealth of Independent States: on the way to the first forum of the regions

In December 2021, the tenth meeting of the Council for Interregional and Border Cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was held to discuss preparations for the first CIS Forum of Regions. Due to the unfavourable epidemiological situation, the forum will be held in 2022. The draft programme of the forum envisages four panel sessions, an exhibition of agricultural products and achievements of CIS regions. The sessions will focus on the development of regional cooperation in industry, transport and transit, agriculture and entrepreneurship. The focus of the Council on this topic is explained by the fact that "it is inter-regional cooperation which is the basis for further development of mutual trade and entails cooperation in the market of production, investment and labour resources"²⁷. The following figures show how relevant this issue is for the Republic of Belarus. More than 800 documents on trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian cooperation with partners in the CIS countries are in force in Belarusian regions. In January-October 2021 the foreign trade turnover with these countries increased by 36 per cent and came close to 40 billion dollars. This interaction is particularly active with the regions of Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In particular, **Russia accounts for** about 80 per cent of all inter-regional cooperation documents, and one of the most successful forms of developing these partnerships has been the holding of bilateral regional forums. The eighth such forum took place in 2021, during which contracts in the real sector worth \$800 million were signed, facilitated by the fact that "there are about 80 regions involved in this interregional cooperation on the Russian side"²⁸. One of the

27 Strahar: Interregional cooperation is the basis for the development of mutual CIS trade [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/strahar-mezhregionalnoe-sotrudnichestvo-javljaetsja-bazisom-dlja-razvitija-vzaimnoj-torgovli-v-sng-474946-2021/>

28 Zalessky, B.L. From forum of regions - to the expansion of cooperation / B.L. Zalessky // Materials of the XVII International scientific and practical conference "Proceedings of academic science - 2021", August 30 - September 7, 2021: Sheffield. Science and education LTD. - C. 16.

leaders on the Russian side is **Moscow**. Over ten months of 2021 trade turnover between the Republic of Belarus and Russia increased by 27 per cent at once and exceeded \$3.7 billion, with a surplus of over \$1.2 billion for the Belarusian side. This was due to deliveries from Belarus of cars, footwear with natural leather uppers, non-alloy steel bars, railway and tram cars, cheese and cottage cheese, hosiery, dried, salted and smoked fish, butter, furniture and parts thereof. It is also a fact that "some 20 per cent of the Russian capital's food imports come from Belarus, especially dairy products. <...> A lot of Belarusian-made motor vehicles are used by the city's public utilities and services, and the population especially appreciates modern eco-friendly electric transport..."²⁹. It should be assumed that all these positive trends will be preserved and continued in the new cooperation programme of the parties for 2023-2025, which will be developed in 2022.

As for **Kazakhstan**, its regions interact with Belarusian partners under some 20 documents on interregional cooperation. A good example in this regard is demonstrated by the **Kostanay** and **Grodno** regions, which signed a cooperation roadmap for 2022-2023 at the end of September 2021. For the Belarusian region, this Central Asian country is generally one of the five largest foreign economic partners, with trade turnover having increased by half over the last five years. At the same time, "now Grodno Region supplies its products to 13 regions of Kazakhstan. The main commodity positions include meat and dairy products, woodworking and mechanical engineering products. In the first six months of 2021, exports to Kostanay Region totaled \$3.1 million."³⁰. It is believed that the adoption of the road map, which deals with the intensification of cooperation in investment and trade and economic spheres, as well as in agriculture, tourism, culture, healthcare and education, will give new impetus to

29 Industry, Transport, Humanitarian Sphere: Minsk Discussed Areas of Cooperation between Belarus and Moscow [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/promyshlennost-transport-gumanitarnaja-sfera-v-minske-obsudili-napravlenija-sotrudnichestva-belarusi-s-474907-2021/>

30 Grodno and Kostanay regions have signed a road map for cooperation development [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/dorozhnuju-kartu-po-razvitiu-sotrudnichestva-podpisali-grodnenskaja-i-kostanajskaja-oblasti-462339-2021/>

this interaction and lead to new supplies of products from Grodno Region enterprises and possible organization of joint assembly production in Kostanay Region.

The capitals of **Minsk** and **Bishkek** remain the flagships in the development of cooperation between the regions of Belarus and **Kyrgyzstan**. In November 2021, the twin cities reached new practical arrangements in the implementation of the partnership. The fact is that the Kyrgyz capital needs about 1,200 units of urban public transport today. Both CNG buses and electric buses are needed. A number of Minsk enterprises have already expressed their willingness to provide necessary assistance to their partners from Bishkek. All the more so because "several watering cars manufactured in Belarus" have recently appeared there³¹, which the capital's residents liked. As a result, Minsk discussed not only supplies of certain vehicles from the Belarusian capital, but also establishment of joint ventures in Bishkek to service and assemble them. In this regard, we would like to remind you that "an assembly facility for BELARUS tractors has already been set up in Bishkek. Machines for the needs of the municipal sphere can also be assembled there. The site is ready, there are qualified specialists, a service centre. To start production, we need to solve the issues related to the supply of components"³².

The partnership ties between the regions of Belarus and **Uzbekistan** developed in an interesting way in 2021. Specifically, in May, the Belarusian **Gomel Region** and the Uzbek **Navoi Region** outlined the main areas for the development of bilateral cooperation in trade and economic and investment, education, tourism, and agriculture, as well as in the operation of technology parks and the creation of favorable conditions for the development of the IT industry. These agreements were a logical continuation of the agreement on

31 Mayor of Bishkek: we are interested in buying Belarusian machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2021. URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mer-bishkeka-my-zainteresovany-v-zakupke-belorusskoj-tehniki-469870-2021/>

32 Bishkek plans to purchase machinery from MTZ for street cleaning [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bishkek-planirujut-zakupit-u-mtz-tehniku-dlja-uborki-ulits-470601-2021/>

cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian spheres, which the two regions signed in 2019 at the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan. Now, the Gomel and Navoi regions have expressed their intention to significantly intensify their partnership.

Gomel residents are developing cooperation with other Uzbek partners, cooperation agreements with which were signed at the First Forum of Regions of the two countries. Back in July 2020, an online forum of representatives of business circles of the Gomel and **Fergana regions** was held, with Belarusian business entities such as Gomel Meat and Milk Holding Management Company OJSC, Gomeloblprom state enterprise, and Sozh Trading House OJSC among its participants. The participants of the forum constructively considered "the issues of bilateral cooperation in terms of trade of fruits and vegetables, textile, meat and dairy products, construction materials, agricultural machinery and equipment. The sides also discussed the possibility of opening a trade house of Ferghana region in Gomel"³³. In particular, Uz-Segang JV LLC, one of the major exporters of fruit and vegetable products in Ferghana Region, suggested collaborating with partners in Gomel Oblast by setting up a single distribution centre for Uzbek vitamin products. Gomeloblprom applied to textile company A. Akbarali Ltd. Akbarali to establish supplies of cotton yarn to the Belarusian region.

Khorezm Region is Gomel Region's third Uzbek partner. The cooperation agreement signed by the parties in July 2019 named "trade and economic, scientific and cultural spheres, tourism, and healthcare" among promising areas for cooperation³⁴. At the same time, Gomselmash entered into a cooperation agreement with Urgenchkormmash, a joint-stock company from Khorezm Region, a forage harvester plant. All in all, in preparation for the First Forum of

33 Uzbek companies are interested in cooperation with partners from the Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/uzbekskie-kompanii-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-s-partnerami-iz-gomelskoj-oblasti-398194-2020/>

34 Gomel region will sign three agreements with Uzbekistan at the First Forum of Regions [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/gomelskaja-oblast-podpishet-tri-soglasheniya-s-uzbekistanom-na-i-forume-regionov-356296-2019/>

Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, Gomel Oblast companies signed contracts with their Uzbek partners worth nearly 1.5 million dollars.

All of these facts suggest that the Uzbek market is very promising for enterprises in the Gomel region. In 2020, the trade turnover of the Belarusian region with this Central Asian country grew by almost 65 percent and exceeded 17 million dollars. "Polymers, dairy products, wallpaper, screws, hardware, timber are exported to Uzbekistan. Among the exporters are KolorMaster JLLC (polyvinyl chloride), Svetlogorsk Welding Electrode Plant LLC (mechanical devices, machine tools), Milkavita OJSC, Kalinkovichi Dairy Plant UE (milk powder), SvetlogorskHimvolokno OJSC (chemical yarns)"³⁵.

Obviously, the aforementioned First Belarus-Uzbekistan Regions Forum, which was held in Minsk in July 2019 and opened "new horizons of cooperation in such areas as industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, food industry, as well as in the cultural, humanitarian, information and communication, and scientific fields," contributed significantly to boosting cooperation between specific regions of the two countries³⁶. The forum was attended by over two hundred participants from Uzbek regions such as Andijan, Bukhara, Dzhizak, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana and Tashkent. The forum's impact is borne out by the fact that 26 direct agreements between the regions were adopted at the forum. In addition to the three documents of Gomel Oblast, agreements on cooperation in trade, economic, scientific, technical and humanitarian spheres were signed by the regions of Grodno with Samarkand and Andijan, Vitebsk with Namangan, Brest with Bukhara and Syrdarya. Similar documents have been signed between the Mogilev, Andijan, and Dzhizak regions. Minsk Oblast Executive Committee has agreed on cooperation in the social sphere with Tashkent Oblast. An action plan has been signed for 2019-

35 Gomel Region and Navoi Region of Uzbekistan intend to develop cooperation in IT-industry [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/gomelskaja-oblast-i-navoijskij-region-uzbekistana-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-v-it-otrasli-440395-2021/>

36 Forum of Regions opens new horizons for Belarus and Uzbekistan in many areas - Safaev [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/forum-regionov-otkrylye-novye-gorizonty-dlja-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-vo-mnogih-oblastjah-safaev-356612-2019/>

2020 to implement the agreement between the Tashkent Khokimiyat and the Minsk City Executive Committee on trade, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation"³⁷ .

The growing importance of Uzbek partners for the Belarusian regions as a whole is evidenced by these figures already for 2021. According to the results of the first quarter, the volume of mutual trade between Belarus and Uzbekistan increased by another quarter to \$67.5 million. An important detail: "The export of Belarusian goods during this period rose by 37.4% to \$58.7 million <...>. The balance of Belarus' foreign trade in goods was positive and totaled \$49.8 million"³⁸ . This happened due to the increase of supplies of chilled and frozen beef, medicines and polymers, tractors and trucks to the Uzbek market. Without the most committed involvement of Belarusian regions, it would have been extremely difficult to achieve such results.

Tajikistan is also among those countries in Central Asia whose trade and economic relations with the regions of the Republic of Belarus have been developing particularly intensively over the past year and a half. Thus, while in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between them increased "almost threefold and exceeded \$111 million"³⁹ , in January-August 2021 alone the trade turnover came close to \$110 million, "including Belarusian exports - \$107.5 million"⁴⁰ . Supplies from Belarus such as tractors and tractor trucks, sugar, motor vehicles designed to carry ten or more people, oil products, insulated wires, cables, paper and cardboard stationery and tyres played a major role in achieving those figures. The fact that there are already "about 20 dealers of Belarusian

37 A package of interregional cooperation agreements signed at the First Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/paket-mezhregionalnyh-soglashenij-o-sotrudnichestve-podpisan-na-i-forume-regionov-belarusi-i-356632-2019/>

38 Belarus-Uzbekistan trade turnover in the first quarter increased by 25.3% to 67.5 million [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tovarooborot-mezhdu-belarusju-i-uzbekistanom-za-i-kvartal-uvlechilsja-na-253-do-675-mln-440482-2021/>

39 Ambassador: Belarusian projects in Tajikistan are not justified, they have an economic impact. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/posol-belorusskie-proekty-v-tadzhikistane-ne-prosto-obosnovany-a-dajut-ekonomicheskij-effekt-459969-2021/>

40 Trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: https://tajikistan.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/belarus_tajikistan/trade_economic/

manufacturers - in Tajikistan - speaks volumes. We are talking about assembly of tractors, Bobruiskagromash and Gomselmash machinery. Joint projects in the dairy industry are also being prepared,"⁴¹ , in each of which cooperation between specific regions of the two countries should play a decisive role.

It should be reminded that the theme of intensifying interregional cooperation was discussed back in April 2021 at the 14th meeting of the Tajik-Belarusian intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation, where "topical issues of cooperation in industry and production cooperation, agriculture and transport, health and education, investment and information technology" were considered⁴² . An important detail: today such regions of Tajikistan and Belarus are developing trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural ties within the framework of the signed agreements on cooperation: Sughd region - with Vitebsk, Minsk and Mogilev regions, Khatlon and Gomel regions, the cities of Minsk and Dushanbe, Khujand and Mogilev, Yavan and Uzden districts.

Minsk Region is one of the most active participants in Belarus-Tajikistan interregional cooperation, whose foreign trade turnover with Tajikistan more than tripled and exceeded USD 22 million in the first eight months of 2021. Implementation of the cooperation agreement with **Sughd Region**, signed in 2014, played a key role in achieving such indicators. At the same time, the parties do not intend to rest on their laurels, outlining new plans for mutually beneficial partnerships. In particular, at a meeting between regional leaders A. Turchin and R. Ahmadzoda in early November 2021, they discussed a number of new promising areas of cooperation. One of the obvious priorities is the Belarusian light industry, which can use Tajik cotton as its raw material. Belarus also expressed its interest in establishing joint ventures to process cotton in

41 Denisenko: the friendship of the leaders of Belarus and Tajikistan is a good basis for all-round cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/denisenko-druzhba-liderov-belarusi-i-tadzhikistana-horoshaja-osnova-dlja-vsestoronnego-sotrudnichestva-460655-2021/>

42 Zalesky, B.L. In the Course of Positive Dynamics of Cooperation / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Efektivni nastroje modernich ved - 2021". Volume 5: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 13.

Tajikistan. As for the Tajik partners of the Belarusian capital region, they are interested "in supplying vegetables and fruits to Belarus, as well as receiving high-quality Belarusian potato seeds. Within 3-4 years, the region plans to increase its potato output to 1 million tonnes"⁴³. Overall, the two sides plan to seriously expand their bilateral ties in the near future. This is evidenced by the fact that at a business meeting in November 2021, "representatives of over 30 Tajik and Belarusian companies held talks on possible cooperation in mechanical engineering, healthcare, woodworking, food and processing industries"⁴⁴. The memorandum on cooperation between the cities of Zhodino and Gulistan, signed in November 2021, should also help expand cooperation between the two regions.

Mogilev Region also intends to actively develop partnerships with Sughd Region. The parties signed a cooperation agreement in 2017. And in the three quarters of 2021, trade turnover between them increased by almost a third more. And in this case we are talking about an active search for new opportunities for cooperation. One of the priorities is to set up joint production facilities. Given that Mogilev is home to Mogotex, the largest Belarusian textile producer, Mogotex is seriously interested in supplying cotton from Tajikistan. And the Tajik partners, who annually increase the cultivation area of this crop, have their own interest: to set up a joint venture with the Belarusian side to process cotton. "This will make it possible to create several thousand new jobs here [in Sughd Oblast]."⁴⁵. Mogilevliftmash is also planning to set up joint production of lifts in the Tajik region. This is just a part of the proposals voiced in November 2021 at a business meeting in Mogilev, during which the cooperation agreement was

43 Cotton, fruit, potato seeds: Minsk region plans to increase cooperation with Tajikistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/hlopok-frukty-semena-kartofelja-minskaja-oblast-planiruet-naraschivat-sotrudnichestvo-s-tadzhikistanom-467756-2021/>

44 Enterprises of Minsk and Sughd regions are interested in industrial cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-minskoj-i-sogdijskoj-oblastej-zainteresovany-v-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-promyshlennosti-468050-2021/>

45 Zayats: Mogilev Region and Sughd Region of Tajikistan are interested in close cooperation and implementation of projects [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/zajats-mogilevskij-region-i-sogdijskaja-oblast-tadzhikistana-zainteresovany-v-tesnom-sotrudnichestve-i-467893-2021/>

signed by the Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Sughd Oblast Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Besides, "Mogilev plant Strommashina OJSC and Nord Asia Metal CJSC have agreed to sign a letter of intent for the implementation of the project on production and supply of technological equipment for the production of asbestos-cement sheets"⁴⁶. And representatives of other Mogilev enterprises from a number of industries have established contacts for trade in finished products and raw materials. And this is encouraging.

As we can see, the links between the regions of the post-Soviet space are gradually being filled with concrete projects, stimulating integration processes in the Commonwealth today and demonstrating the relevance of holding the First CIS Forum of Regions in 2022.

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46 The Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Sughd Region of Tajikistan signed a cooperation agreement [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mogilevskoe-otdelenie-beltp-i-tpp-sogdijskoj-oblasti-tadzhikistana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-468065-2021/>

CHAPTER 3

Eurasian Economic Union: to build on what has already been created cooperation mechanisms

The Strategic Framework for Eurasian Economic Integration until 2025, approved in December 2020, lists among the main objectives the further formation of the Eurasian Economic Union's (EAEU) contractual and legal framework with third countries and their integration associations to create preferential trade regimes for the development and comprehensive deepening of trade and economic cooperation. In fact, the intensification of economic cooperation with foreign countries and international organisations over the next five years should become one of the most important areas of the EAEU, which "will allow coordinated work on the integration processes in the Eurasian space"⁴⁷.

In December 2021, a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council approved the main directions of the EAEU's international activities for 2022, which deal with the development of already established cooperation mechanisms with third countries, regional integration associations and international organisations, as well as identify potentially promising partners. In particular, "cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the European Union (EU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum... will be a priority for the EAEU in 2022"⁴⁸. At the same time, the international activities of this association will be focused on solving such urgent tasks of Eurasian economic integration as export development, transport and energy infrastructure, industrial cooperation,

47 Zalessky, B.L. Eurasian integration in the context of the great partnership on the continent / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowi-praktycznej konferencji "Naukowa myśl informacyjnej powieki - 2021", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C.24.

48 The EEU approved the main directions of international activities for 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eacunion.org/news/v-eaes-utverdili-osnovnye-napravleniya-mezhdunarodnoj-deyatelnosti-na-2022-god/>

introduction of new technologies, as well as creating conditions for joint entry of member states' enterprises into third countries' markets, including states of South-East Asia, the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific region, North Africa, the Latin American continent.

In 2022, the presidency of the EAEU passed to Kyrgyzstan, which intends to focus primarily on achieving the goals laid down in the strategic directions of Eurasian economic integration until 2025.⁴⁹ An indisputable priority in this regard is international cooperation, which is "important to develop both the dialogue format of cooperation and trade and economic relations with third countries by signing trade agreements in order to enter new promising markets..."⁵⁰, so that producers from countries in this integration entity, including Belarus, "receive the most favorable conditions when exporting their products to foreign markets and consumers receive safe, high-quality and inexpensive goods" xml-p

As a reminder, by early 2022, the EAEU had already concluded preferential agreements on free trade zones (FTAs) with Vietnam, Serbia, Singapore, and an interim agreement with Iran. An agreement on trade and economic cooperation with the People's Republic of China has also entered into force. Regarding the search for potential partners, "negotiations for a FTA with Egypt and Israel are at an active stage, work is underway to prepare the first round of negotiations with India, and negotiations have begun to prepare for a full free trade agreement with Mongolia and Indonesia."⁵¹ And intensive work continues on identifying and negotiating new partners.

49 Zalesky, B.L. Vectors of Eurasian integration - Indonesia, Chile, Egypt / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XV Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka konference "Vedecky prumysl evropskeho kontinentu - 2019". Volume 6: Praha. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 11.

50 Address by President Sadyr Japarov to the Heads of the EEU Member States on the occasion of Kyrgyzstan's Presidency of the Union in 2022 [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eacunion.org/news/obrashhenie-prezidenta-sadyra-zhaparova-k-glavam-gosudarstv-%E2%80%933-chlenov-eaes-po-sluchayu-predsedatelstvovaniya-kyrgyzstana-v-organakh-soyuza-v-2022-godu/>

51 Gorelik, Y. Without industrial lockdowns and reduction of export activity / Y. Gorelik // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bez-promyshlennyh-lokdaunov-i-snizheniya-eksportnoj-aktivnosti-predstavitel-mid-o-vneshnetorgovoj-477276-2021/>

Thus, in December 2021, following the Second Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)-Latin America and the Caribbean (LACB) Forum: Removing Barriers and Building Bridges for Business Cooperation", the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) signed a joint statement with the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System, in which the parties reaffirmed their commitment to developing and strengthening all-round cooperation, noting the strategic importance of relations between the two regions. Note that for the EAEU, the Latin America and Caribbean region is strategically important. This is evidenced by the fact that the dynamics of trade between the parties "reached a peak in 2018 of \$17.6 billion. USD 17.6 BILLION. Agricultural products, fruits and nuts, oilseeds and fruits, meat and fish remain the main imports. The EAEU countries in turn export to LACB fertilizers, ferrous metals, mineral fuels, cereals and other goods"⁵² . Recently, cooperation in such areas as pharmaceuticals, mechanical engineering, and information and communication services has started to grow. Bioengineering, green technology and services such as tourism and education could be new areas of cooperation. Among the main reasons for the still insufficient level of trade and economic cooperation in the joint statement were "low level of awareness of the subjects of economic relations about the needs and opportunities of business in the EAEU and the LEC, <...> lack of modern trade and economic agreements between the countries and the integration associations of the EAEU and the LECB"⁵³ . As a result, an agreement was reached to move from agreeing on general areas of cooperation to substantive negotiations involving interested business representatives. Possible areas of cooperation included post-commodity and green economy, economic methods of combating climate change, ensuring

52 The EAEU and Latin American countries aim to reach pre-crisis trade performance in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eaes-i-strany-latinskoj-ameriki-namereny-vyjti-na-dokrizisnye-pokazateli-torgovli-po-itogam-2021-goda/>

53 ECE and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System declare the move to substantive negotiations on trade and economic cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/cek-i-postoyannyj-sekretariat-latinoamerikanskoj-ekonomicheskoy-sistemy-zayavili-o-perehode-k-predmetnym-peregovorom-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskom-sotrudnichestve/>

sustainable and inclusive growth, and expanding the participation of small and medium-sized businesses in foreign trade.

The EAEU's 2025 Joint Action Plan with Cuba, signed in December 2021, which covers 34 areas of cooperation, appears to be a kind of complement to the development of relations with the LACB. For Cuba, the document is important in the context of implementing the country's National Economic and Social Development Plan until 2030 and the Economic and Social Strategy to stimulate the economy and overcome the global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, "the Cuban side has shown a particular interest in strengthening the sectoral dialogue, in particular in the areas of technical regulation and the regulation of the circulation of medicines in the EAEU"⁵⁴.

Other international organisations with which the EEU plans to intensify mutually beneficial cooperation in the near future include the International Sugar Organisation (ISO), which now brings together 87 states and promotes international cooperation in terms of sugar production, consumption and circulation. In December 2021, the EEC and the ISO signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which sets out the main directions and activities for cooperation to take the two organisations to "the horizon of practical cooperation <...> to develop effective measures to develop a common market for sugar and sugar-containing products"⁵⁵.

When it comes to the development of EAEU cooperation with partners on different continents, at the end of 2021 its structures were particularly active in interacting with such Asian countries as China, Iran, Mongolia and Bangladesh. Thus, in December 2021, at the 2nd meeting of the Joint Commission for the Implementation of the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the EAEU and the PRC it was noted that the volume of mutual trade in 2021 would exceed the pre-pandemic level and reach a record \$165 billion,

54 The EEU and Cuba signed a plan of joint actions until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eacunion.org/news/caes-i-kuba-podpisali-plan-sovmestnyh-dejstvij-do-2025-goda/>

55 ECE and the International Sugar Organisation signed a Memorandum of Understanding [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eacunion.org/news/cek-i-mezhdunarodnaya-organizatsiya-posaharu-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii/>

demonstrating high intensity and mutual complementarity of trade relations. Discussing the progress of the roadmap for the implementation of the EAEU-China agreement, which entered into force in 2019, the parties highlighted the development of digital transport corridors as the main section of this document, as "the digitalisation of railway transportation can have a cumulative effect"⁵⁶. Green trade and green investment were not left out, with the Chinese side suggesting that interaction between the PRC and the EAEU on the global climate agenda should be strengthened, as well as prospects for cooperation in three areas that "relate to smart customs, smart customs borders and smart interconnectivity"⁵⁷. At the same time, the Chinese side expressed its willingness to share its experience in implementing the concept of the "three smart spheres", which is based on modern technology with the application of new methods, systems and equipment, for the purpose of intelligent customs control and management.

As for Iran, a temporary free trade agreement with it entered into force in October 2019. Thanks to this document, "the list of goods for which exporters of EEU countries, including Belarus, received preferences includes meat and oil products, certain types of confectionery and chocolate, electronic and mechanical equipment, as well as metals and cosmetics"⁵⁸. In December 2021, this temporary agreement was extended until 2025. The past two years have shown that the cooperation between the parties is developing at an exceptional pace. For instance, in the first half of 2021 "exports of the union's member states

56 Andrey Slepnev: "EAEU-PRC cooperation is gaining momentum, it organically complements the bilateral relations of our states". [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/andrey-slepnev-sotrudnichestvo-eaes-knr-nabiraet-oporoty-ono-organichno-dopolnyaet-dvustoronnie-otnosheniya-nashih-gosudarstv/>

57 Single Window and Smart Customs discussed by EEC and China [Electronic resource]. - 2021. -

URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/formirovanie-%C2%ABedinogo-okna%C2%BB-i-intellektualnuyu-tamozhnyu-obsudili-predstaviteli-eek-i-kitaya/>

58 Zalessky, B.L. Vectors of Eurasian integration - Serbia, Iran, China / B.L. Zalessky // Materiały XV Międzynarodowej naukowej-praktycznej konferencji "Perspektywiczne opracowania sa nauka i technikami - 2019", Volume 6. Przemysl: Nauka i studia. - C. 20.

increased by almost 47% to \$1.35 billion and imports by 34% to \$825 million"⁵⁹, which shows great prospects for this cooperation.

Another promising EAEU partner in Asia is Mongolia, with which a memorandum of cooperation was signed back in 2015. In December 2021, the 4th meeting of the joint working group on cooperation between the EEC and the Mongolian government was held, at which it was noted that in 2020 the volume of mutual trade between the parties was one and a half billion dollars. And "in the first nine months of this year [2021] the trade turnover between the EAEU countries and Mongolia increased by 23%, while the potential of mutual trade is clearly not fully exploited"⁶⁰. To maintain this positive trend, it was decided to update the plan of joint activities to implement the aforementioned Memorandum until 2025. The sides have identified intensification of contacts between business circles and business associations as a key reserve for the development of trade and economic ties. To this end, the Mongolian side has proposed that a business forum be held in Ulaanbaatar in 2022.

Also in December 2021, the first meeting of the joint ECE-Bangladesh Government Working Group on the Implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation, signed in May 2019, took place. It was noted that the volume of trade between the two sides has increased sixfold in the last ten years. In 2020, it continued to grow by another 11 per cent to more than two and a half billion dollars. And "in January-September this year [2021], trade turnover between the EAEU and Bangladesh increased one and a half times to \$2.2 billion. USD 2.2 BILLION"⁶¹. The parties are now considering increasing this figure to three billion dollars as a realistic goal. There are reserves for this: agricultural

59 Pivovar, E. Validity of temporary free trade agreement between EEU and Iran extended until 2025 / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/dejstvie-vremennogo-soglashenija-o-svobodnoj-torgovle-mezhdu-caes-i-iranom-prodleno-do-2025-goda-474217-2021>

60 EEC and the Government of Mongolia discuss plans for cooperation until 2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/cek-i-pravitelstvo-mongolii-obsuzhdayut-plany-vzaimodejstviya-do-2025-goda/>

61 EEU countries and Bangladesh have the potential to increase trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/strany-caes-i-bangladesh-imeyut-potentsial-dlya-dostizheniya-tovarooborota-v-3-mlrd-dollarov-ssha/>

products, machinery, equipment, vehicles, pharmaceuticals, as well as other types of products with a relatively high share of added value.

Among the international organisations with which the EAEU plans to actively develop cooperation in 2022 - the European Union (EU) should also be mentioned. In particular, we are talking about the development of dialogue between the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and the European Commission (EC), including interaction with specialised EU bodies, "in the areas of technical regulation, application of sanitary and veterinary measures, circulation of medicines and medical products, competition, some aspects of trade policy, as well as in other areas of the Union's activity"⁶².

The relevance of the European vector of EAEU international cooperation is already explained by the fact that 'the European Union continues to be the key trade and economic partner of the Eurasian Economic Union, accounting for 35.5% of EAEU imports'⁶³. EU member states are the main buyers of goods exported from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. In 2021, trade between them increased by another 40 percent or so, and "is expected to reach about \$330 billion. US\$330 BILLION."⁶⁴. And this is far from being a limit if a number of pressing issues in trade between the parties are resolved. Many of these were discussed in December 2021 during the 8th round of technical dialogue between the EEC and the EC, where the parties addressed the difficulties businesses face in their operations. In particular, they talked about the registration of medicines and medical devices in the EEU countries, as well as the operation of the technical regulation "On the safety of alcohol products". Topics of technical regulation in the field of railway transport in the EU

62 . Strategic directions for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025. - M., 2020. - C. 53-54.

63 Sergey Glazyev: "Strategy-2025 meets the interests of both Eurasian and European business". [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sergej-glazev-%C2%ABstrategiya-2025-otvechaet-interesam-kak-evrazijskogo-tak-i-evropejskogo-biznesa%C2%BB/>

64 The management of the Eurasian Economic Commission's trade bloc met with the Association of European Businesses [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/sostoyalas-vstrecha-rukovodstva-torgovogo-bloka-evraziyskoy-ekonomicheskoy-komissii-s-associaciyevropeyskogo-biznesa/>

countries, e-commerce, development of the "single window" mechanism as a tool to simplify trade procedures were discussed. An important detail: having been convinced of the usefulness of the technical dialogue, "both sides plan <...> to continue interaction in this format in 2022, as well as to consider the possibility of holding specialised webinars on topical topics"⁶⁵.

The same December 2021 meeting with the Association of European Businesses discussed in practical terms issues related to free trade agreements, responses to climate change, labelling, e-commerce, rules for the import of certain types of goods, and determination of customs values.⁶⁶ A meeting was also held at the EEC with executives and representatives of the Russian-German Chamber of Commerce, the Franco-Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Association of Italian Industrialists in Russia, the Working Group on the Common Economic Space from Lisbon to Vladivostok to discuss a wide range of issues relevant to European business communities, including "intellectual property, taxation, labour migration, regulation of pharmaceuticals circulation". Among the individual EU member states with which the EAEU intends to seriously intensify interaction in the near future is Portugal. In November 2021, the 4th Russian-Portuguese Innovation Forum "New Opportunities and Challenges in Innovation" addressed the promotion of high-tech products, as well as the promotion of diversification of trade and economic relations between the EAEU and Portuguese-speaking countries. It was stressed that "the business community of Portugal and Portuguese-speaking countries is building its commercial strategies, taking into account the factor of Eurasian economic integration and opportunities associated with them."⁶⁷ As a result, the forum

65 The EEC and the European Commission hold consultations on topical issues of business operations [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/eeek-i-evrokomissiya-proveli-konsultacii-po-aktualnym-voprosam-raboty-biznesa/>

66 Ruslan Beketaev: "Direct dialogue is an effective tool of interaction between EEC and European entrepreneurs and investors". [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/ruslan-beketaev-%C2%ABpryamoi-dialog-%E2%80%93-effektivnyi-instrument-%20vzaimodejstviya-eeek-s-evropejskimi-predprinimateljami-i-investorami%C2%BB/>

67 Gohar Barseghian: "Portuguese business captures new opportunities in the EEU market".

[Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/goar-barseghian-%C2%ABportugalskij-biznes-fiksiruet-novye-vozmozhnosti-na-rynke-eaes%C2%BB/>

participants were able to consider promising cooperation projects in such areas as information and communication technologies, bioenergy, agriculture, healthcare, transport infrastructure and interregional cooperation. In the same line of promising partners of the EAEU in the European direction, German business, whose representatives in September 2021 became participants of the seminar held by the EEC, can also be mentioned. The exchange of views focused on such areas of cooperation as "digital agenda, green economy, customs cooperation"⁶⁸. One of the outcomes of this event was the consolidated opinion of its participants on the importance of continuing the dialogue between the EAEU and German business in various formats in order to promote mutual trade and facilitate the foreign economic activities of business entities, as well as to create a dialogue mechanism for resolving contentious issues.

It is clear that all these measures aimed at expanding foreign markets and diversifying exports of the EAEU member countries are extremely important for Belarus, which is taking a very active part in all the systemic work to create free trade zones with third countries and interact with international organizations.

68 The EEC held a seminar for German businesses on the regulation of foreign economic activity in the EEU [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: [https://eec.eacunion.org/news/cek-provela-seminar-dlya-germanskogo-biznesa-po-voprosam-regulirovaniya-vneshneekonomicheskoy-deyatelnosti-v-eaes-/
/](https://eec.eacunion.org/news/cek-provela-seminar-dlya-germanskogo-biznesa-po-voprosam-regulirovaniya-vneshneekonomicheskoy-deyatelnosti-v-eaes-/)

CHAPTER 4

Eurasian Economic Union: Agroexpress as a tool Diversification of export supplies

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. Regularity of shipments will allow to form competitive tariffs in terms of sea freight, as well as reduce delivery time (up to 10-14 days to China and 4-7 days to Uzbekistan)"⁶⁹.

This is primarily a matter of deliveries of oil and fats, dairy, meat, fruit and vegetables, and ready-to-eat foodstuffs. 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 Eurasian AgroExpress project for food exports"⁷⁰, hopes to use it to increase food supplies, primarily to China. The fact is that today the carriers of products

69 Pivovarov, E. EEU Prime Ministers Approved Eurasian AgroExpress Project on Accelerated Food Delivery / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/premier-ministry-eaes-odobrili-proekt-evrazijskij-agroekspress-po-uskorennoj-dostavke-prodovolstvija-486781-2022/>

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

from Belarus "are mostly Chinese companies"⁷¹. 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"⁷². 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 EAEU in four areas of mutual interest was approved: issues of the climate agenda; digitalization of freight rail transportation; e-commerce; and implementation of the Eurasian AgroExpress project. This 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"⁷³.

71 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/belarus-rasschityvaet-narastit-postavki-prodovolstvija-v-kitaj-s-zapuskom-evrazijskogo-agroekspressa-486858-2022/>

72 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-strane-i-za-rubezhom-belarus-naraschivaet-postavki-prodovolstvija-vo-vse-regiony-mira-8088/>

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

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"⁷⁴. 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."⁷⁵. 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.

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

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

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

CHAPTER 5

Eurasian Economic Union: Export development as a tool for intensifying 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..."⁷⁶. 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%)"⁷⁷.

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 zone between the

⁷⁶ Zalessky, B. Format of Eurasian integration. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 51-52.

⁷⁷ Pivovarov, E. Foreign trade in the EAEU in January grew by 62.6%, domestic - by 17.3% / E. Pivovarov // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vneshnjaja-torgovlja-v-aeas-v-janvare-vyrosla-na-626-vnutrennjaja-na-173-491806-2022/>

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%."⁷⁸ .

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"⁷⁹ . 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 business communities to develop partnerships and promote growth in trade turnover. Cooperation 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. USD"⁸⁰ . To deepen cooperation and mutual opening of markets, the two sides

78 Pivovar, E. EEU and Iran extend temporary agreement on free trade zone / E. Pivovar // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/caes-i-iran-prodlili-vremennoe-soglasenie-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-491161-2022/>

79 The EEU and the UAE are considering a memorandum of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/caes-i-oae-rassmatrivayut-vozmozhnost-zaklyucheniya-memoranduma-o-sotrudnichestve/>

80 Prospects for trade and economic cooperation between the EAEU and Ecuador were discussed by EEC Collegium Chairman Mikhail Myasnikov and Ecuadorian Ambassador to the Russian

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 engagement 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"⁸¹. 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"⁸². 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 EAEU member states on this territory is quite realistic in the near future.

Federation Juan Fernando Holguín Flores [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/perspektivy-torgovo-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-eaes-i-ekvadora-obsudili-predsedatel-kollegii-ee/>

81 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.

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

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.⁸³ . 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"⁸⁴ . 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

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

84 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-tovarooborot-belarusi-i-kazachstana-v-2021-godu-vpervye-prevysil-1-mlrd-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."⁸⁵ . 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 manufacture 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 LLP"⁸⁶ . 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"⁸⁷ . And in October 2021, the parties had already discussed the establishment 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"⁸⁸ .

85 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-beisenbaevym-razvitie-sotrudnichestva-mezhdu-minskoj-oblastiju-i-kazahstanom-486296-2022/>

86 Potylitsyn, S. Process of regular evolution / S. Potylitsyn // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <https://kazpravda.kz/n/protsess-zakonomernoy-evolyutsii/>

87 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/>

88 Belarus and Kazakhstan may launch joint production of fire-fighting equipment in the Karaganda Region [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - https://primepress.by/news/kompanii/belarus_i_kazahstan_mogut_zapustit_sovmestnoe_proizvodstvo_pozharnoy_tekhniki_na_territorii_karagan-38483/

Apparently, this interaction can be further expanded, as the region is interested in attracting 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"⁸⁹.

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 Kazakhs then showed great interest in the Belarusian experience in building dairy complexes. "By handing over a package of standard projects of agricultural facilities to the Pavlodar people, representatives of the Belarusian capital region expressed their readiness not only to advise them on the subject, but also to build dairy and cattle complexes there on mutually beneficial terms."⁹⁰. 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 of their fellows, which already two years are operated at the cyclic-flow stripping sites of the surface mine, having deserved at Ekibastuz miners a reputation of reliable and highly

89 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>

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

productive mine machines"⁹¹ . As we can see, the range of links between the Minsk and Pavlodar regions could still be very wide.

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91 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

Belarus - Armenia: cooperation projects as a partnership development tool

In November 2021 the 15th session of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Armenian Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation was held, where the parties considered ways to strengthen the positions of Belarusian and Armenian exporters in each other's markets, expand the commodity distribution network, and cooperate in agriculture, science and technology. A characteristic feature of the partnership between the two countries is the fact that trade turnover between them is growing annually. "So, while in 2016 it was a little over \$32 million, in 2020 it already exceeded \$82 million. The growth in trade turnover was also recorded in the first nine months of this year [2021], it exceeded \$62 million."⁹² . Dairy products, furniture, computers for automatic data processing and medications made up the bulk of Belarusian exports to the Armenian market. This made it possible to reach a surplus in mutual trade exceeding \$32 million in 2020. Another positive trend observed today in the relations between the two former Soviet republics is the increase in Armenian investments in the Belarusian economy. In the first half of 2021, they came in at over ten million dollars. All in all there are 46 companies with capital from Armenia operating in Belarus, including 11 joint ventures and 35 foreign enterprises.

When discussing the prospects for partnership development at the meeting of the intergovernmental commission, the sides noted that there are significant reserves for increasing the volume of mutual trade. One of them is that "the economic path of trade development through increased supplies of traditional commodity

92 Belarus and Armenia increase trade turnover by 2.5 times in 5 years [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-armenija-za-5-let-uvlechili-tovarooborot-v-25-raza-471337-2021/>

groups is outdated and it is necessary to enter into cooperation projects"⁹³ , which will ensure long-term and fruitful cooperation that is less dependent on various market fluctuations. The sides are already making certain practical steps in this direction. For instance, as part of the programme for modernising the lift sector in Yerevan, Mogilevliftmash supplied five hundred sets of lift equipment to Armenia. And the issue of creating a joint assembly facility for production of lifts in Armenia is already being worked out. There are great opportunities for Belarusian companies to participate in the implementation of other Armenian government infrastructure and industrial development programmes.

The Belarusian side sees another reserve for increasing its trade with Armenian partners in the active use of the trade fairs and exhibitions that take place in that South Caucasus country. Thus, the high interest of Belarusian manufacturers in the Armenian market was eloquently demonstrated by the Made in Belarus exhibit at the 20th universal regional trade and industrial forum Armenia Expo, which was held in Yerevan in September 2021. It is enough to say that 17 enterprises of the Belgospisheprom Concern are exhibitors at one of the largest fairs in the Caucasus: "Krasny Pestrovik, Kommunarka, Krasny Mozyryanin, Spartak, KF Slodych, Malorita KOSK, Gamma Vkusa, Mashpischeprod, Minsk Sparkling Wine Factory, Slutsk Sugar Refinery, Gorodeisky sugar refinery, Minsk Kristall - managing company of Minsk Kristall Group Holding, Krinita, Minsk Margarine Plant, Lidapischekontsentraty, Belkofe, Interferm. Their presence at this business forum in Yerevan can be explained by the fact that "practically all the products of the Concern's organizations are supplied to Armenia. In January-July 2021, exports to this country amounted to \$640,700 or 215.4% of the same period last year"⁹⁴ .

93 Drozha: Belarus and Armenia have reserves for increasing mutual trade [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/drozhzha-u-belarusi-i-armenii-est-rezervy-dlja-naraschivanija-vzaimnoj-torgovli-471650-2021/>

94 "Belgospisheprom presented its products at the Armenia Expo exhibition in Yerevan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belgospisheprom-predstavil-produktsiju-na-vystavke-armenia-expo-v-erevane-460163-2021/>

Having demonstrated the best samples of their products at the exhibition, Belarusian exporters are planning to significantly expand their presence in the Armenian market. A good example in this regard was demonstrated by the Kalinkovichi Dairy Plant, which signed a contract for USD 55,000 to supply skimmed milk powder for ice cream production during the exhibition. "The enterprise has also reached an agreement to sign another contract for the supply of products for the production of ice cream"⁹⁵. The Slutsk Cheese Factory will considerably increase the supplies to the Armenian market, as it has demonstrated in Yerevan the products of the "Yas Belous" brand - cheese, milk powder and butter, which together with cream and cottage cheese dominated the export of Belarusian products to Armenia in 2020. Belarusian agricultural machinery manufacturers also see good prospects here - Gomselmash, whose two Palesse-branded machines have been operating in the fields of this country since 2020, and Grodnooblselkhoztech Holding Management Company OJSC, which produces tillage, forage, postharvest machinery and milking machines, as well as Gomel Electromechanical Plant OJSC, producer of railway locomotives and rolling stock. All of them attracted much attention from visitors to the Armenia Expo international exhibition. And there is every reason to believe that new contracts with Armenian partners will not be long in coming.

On the whole, as it was pointed out at the 15th session of the Intergovernmental Commission, the potential for cooperation between Belarus and Armenia is still quite extensive, i.e. joint ventures, cooperation, agriculture, humanitarian and interregional cooperation.

95 Kalinkovichi Dairy Plant signed a \$55,000 contract at the Armenia Expo. [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kalinkovichskij-molochnyj-kombinat-na-armenia-expo-zakljuchil-kontrakt-na-55-tys-460231-2021/www.belta.by/economics/view/kalinkovichskij-molochnyj-kombinat-na-armenia-expo-zakljuchil-kontrakt-na-55-tys-460231-2021/>

CHAPTER 8

Belarus-Uzbekistan:

Participation in trade fairs as a promotion tool for foreign markets

In 2021, Belarusian enterprises participating in exhibitions and forums organized by Belinterexpo, an exhibition company of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, signed 86 agreements and contracts worth over \$80 million. At the same time, "agreements and contracts worth \$15 million were signed within the framework of national expositions"⁹⁶. Among the most effective in terms of the amount of signed contracts is the national expositions organized within the framework of the exhibitions in Uzbekistan - **"INNOPROM. The national expositions organized within the framework of exhibitions in Uzbekistan - INNOPROM and UzProdExpo/UzAgroExpo.**

Speaking about the first of these, it should be noted that the **"Great Industrial Week in Uzbekistan"**, held in April 2021 in Tashkent, was the largest event in this Central Asian country after a break caused by the pandemic. The exhibition then brought together "over 200 companies working in the fields of mechanical engineering, metallurgy, energy, pharmaceuticals, chemical industry and medicine from Armenia, Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and the EAEC countries and Central Asia"⁹⁷. The Belarusian pavilion included 65 companies and organizations exhibiting engineering, metallurgy, chemical, pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, scientific developments and consumer goods. One of the concrete results of their participation in this exhibition was "signing of a letter of intent by a subsidiary of Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan, MAZ-Tashkent LLC, to supply chassis and vehicle assembly kits to the Uzbek market

⁹⁶ Domestic enterprises signed contracts worth \$80 million at Belinterexpo forums and exhibitions [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-forumah-i-vystavkah-belinterekspo-otechestvennyye-predpriyatija-podpisali-kontrakty-na-80-mln-476100-2021/>

⁹⁷ More than 20 Belarusian enterprises took part in a major industrial exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-20-belorusskih-predpriyatij-prinjali-uchastie-v-krupnoj-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-436286-2021/>

for \$10 million. Also a contract was concluded with a private Uzbek company to supply 50 MAZ vehicles for the total amount of \$3 million"⁹⁸. It is interesting that in April 2022 the Uzbek exhibition will be held under a new name - **"INNOPROM. Central Asia"** and will include six thematic sections: mechanical engineering, metallurgy, energy, chemicals, industrial automation, pharmaceuticals and medicine. A plenary session on 'Central Asia. Territory of Technological Breakthrough' and specialized sessions on infrastructure projects, logistics, financial instruments, and education. One should assume that Belarusian participation in this business forum will be even more representative due to the fact that "exports of Belarusian goods to Uzbekistan have grown sixfold in five years. Machinery from Belarus (tractors and tractor units, trucks), chemical products, foodstuffs, ferrous and nonferrous metals, energy resources, and oil products are in the highest demand. In total, Belarus supplies 360 commodity items of all industries to Uzbekistan"⁹⁹.

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

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

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

artesian water on the basis of national cereals - rye, wheat, barley malt"¹⁰⁰ . Scientific developments in agro-industrial and food spheres, including technologies for rehabilitation of damaged soils, methods of production of innovative fermented milk drinks, cosmetics, have been demonstrated to numerous visitors of the exhibitions by Belarusian State University, Belarusian National Technical University, Belarusian-Russian University and Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies. Minsk Automobile Plant and Lidselmash also brought innovative equipment to the Uzbek capital - a specially designed dump truck MAZ-65012K for the Uzbek market, "with a metal body, which tilts using a hydraulic mechanism, and is designed for transportation of loose materials, including agricultural purposes"¹⁰¹ , and new modifications of a cultivator for cotton cultivation - the most popular crop in this Central Asian country. A concrete result of the work at these exhibitions was "an agreement between the official distributor of the Minsk automobile plant in Uzbekistan the company MAZ-Tashkent and the enterprise Nurafshon Maxsus Texnika on the delivery of machinery products to the amount of \$1 million"¹⁰² . At the Uzbekistan-Belarus agrarian forum, agreements were reached on construction and reconstruction of a dairy complex using Belarusian technologies on Uzbek soil.

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

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

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

CHAPTER 9

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 from the Uzbek side alone "over two hundred representatives of such regions as Andijan, Bukhara, Djizak, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana and Tashkent regions", contributed significantly to boosting this interaction.¹⁰³

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."¹⁰⁴ . 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.

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

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

In 2021, Belarus' trade with Central Asia exceeded USD 12.5 million, with Vitebsk's export reaching almost USD 10 million, including medicines, cattle meat, dried milk and whey, butter, cheese, as well as polyethylene, plastic and fiberglass products, and fiber optic cables. In addition, a joint venture of the Marko leather and footwear holding company has been launched on Uzbek soil. Other manufacturing cooperation projects are on the horizon. In particular, since 2020 the Vitebsk Oblast has been holding talks on opening a joint venture with BelVitunifarm in Uzbekistan, which will initially sell drugs and later will start manufacturing them. A representative office of the Belarusian manufacturer of veterinary drugs was opened in Tashkent in December 2021. And already "financing issues of the project are being worked out in order to reach the sales of drugs in the amount of \$2 million per year"¹⁰⁵.

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,

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

exhibitions and fairs with the participation of representatives of entrepreneurial and business circles"¹⁰⁶ .

The agreement on cooperation between the administrations of free economic zones (FEZ) Vitebsk and Cosonsoy-Pharm, signed at the same time, is also intended to expand possible areas of trade, economic and investment cooperation between the Belarusian and Uzbek regions, which not only creates a basis for sharing experience and promoting partnerships between FEZ residents, but also forms the basis for the parties to pool their capacities in conducting joint activities. Note that Cosonsoy-Pharm was among seven pharmaceutical FEZs established in May 2017 in six Uzbek regions. In addition to it, "Nukus-Pharm appeared then in Karakalpakstan, Zomin-Pharm in Jizzak oblast, <...> Sirdaryo-Pharm in Syrdarya, Boison-Pharm in Surkhandarya and Bustonlik-Pharm and Parkent-Pharm in Tashkent oblast"¹⁰⁷ . 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 FEZs"¹⁰⁸ . 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.

106 Namangan region will cooperate with Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

https://nampravda.uz/ekonomika/namanganskaya_oblast_budet_sotrudnichat_s_vitebskom.html

107 Seven pharmaceutical FEZs are being established in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2017. -

URL: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2017/05/05/pharm/>

108 FEZ Vitebsk and Uzbek Cosonsoy-Pharm will develop investment cooperation [Electronic

resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-uzbekskaja-kosonsoj-farm-budut-razvivat-investitsionoe-sotrudnichestvo-352766-2019/>

CHAPTER 10

Belarus - Asia:

there are opportunities for interaction, we have to use 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,"¹⁰⁹, 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"¹¹⁰. 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 understanding are in the final

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

110 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-belarusiju-462939-2021/www.belta.by/economics/view/pakistan-zainteresovan-v-ukreplenii-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-462939-2021/>

stages of negotiation"¹¹¹ . 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"¹¹² . 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"¹¹³ . Attraction of Pakistani capital to implement projects aimed at modernization of Belarusian textile companies, development of joint ventures in the agricultural industry and joint projects in science and technology with access to the production cycle is also very important today. The project to establish a university of applied technologies in Pakistan is also relevant, in order to use it to reach a qualitatively new level of professional and technical training of Pakistani specialists using Belarusian educational technologies.

111 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/>

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

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

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 idea of setting up an assembly factory of Belarusian tractors on Pakistani soil was discussed at the fifth meeting of the Business Council. "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,"¹¹⁴.

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 considerable potential here "primarily in such areas as agriculture, woodworking, metallurgy and petrochemistry."¹¹⁵. 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"¹¹⁶. 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 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

114 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-sozdanija-sborohnogo-proizvodstva-belorusskih-traktorov-462934-2021/>

115 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-belarusju-cherez-ploschadku-butb-462927-2021/>

116 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/>

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..."¹¹⁷, 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"¹¹⁸. 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"¹¹⁹.

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-

117 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/

118 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/>

119 Chervjakov: 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/>

renowned Emaar company"¹²⁰ . 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 - Tsnyanskoe Reservoir. The cost of the project is four billion dollars. The complex will include "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"¹²¹ .

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..."¹²² . The interest of Brest Region companies in the Emirati market is reflected in the fact that leaders and leading specialists of about ten leading companies from the region are expected to come to Dubai in January 2022 to participate in 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

120 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>

121 Construction of the exhibition centre in the Severnyy 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/>

122 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/vneshnetorgovyj-oborot-mezhdu-brestskoj-oblastju-i-oae-vyros-v-15-raza-479871-2022/>

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"¹²³

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 project demonstrated 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"¹²⁴. Potential investors are offered to set up enterprises here with pure manufacturing 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.

123 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/>

124 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/>

When it comes to the relations between the Republic of Belarus and **the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**, one should remember that 2022 will mark the 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"¹²⁵. 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"¹²⁶.

¹²⁷As 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 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 of 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

125 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/>

126 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>

127 Political cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: https://uae.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/KSA/politics/

meeting of the joint intergovernmental committee.¹²⁸ . 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"¹²⁹ . The second session of the intergovernmental committee considered a wide range of cooperation issues in economy, 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"¹³⁰ . At the forum, the Saudi partners were offered a much wider range of machinery products, including special machinery, as well as high-tech goods 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"¹³¹ .

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

128 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/>

129 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>

130 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-produktsii-narynke-saudovskoj-aravii-193602-2016/>

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

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),¹³². 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"¹³³. 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 22 countries. "There are also plans to ship dried milk to Saudi Arabia in the near future"¹³⁴.

All these facts suggest 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.

132 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/www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-naraschivanii-postavok-prodovolstvija-v-saudovskuju-araviju-krupko-441447-2021/>

133 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.

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

CHAPTER 11

Belarus - Asia:

Growth points deliver 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"¹³⁵ . 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"¹³⁶ . 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"¹³⁷ . And in terms of development of industrial cooperation in the province of Hung Yen "key Belarusian-Vietnamese projects are being implemented, including assembly production of MAZ trucks (JV Maz-Asia LLC) and production of

135 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>

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

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

dairy products from Belarusian raw materials (Au Viet Milk)"¹³⁸. 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"¹³⁹ was important in this connection. And the supply of Belarusian tractors to work in Vietnam's rice fields and quarry machinery of the Belarusian Automobile Plant is under development. In addition, Vietnam is interested in organizing the production of fire-fighting equipment and protective clothing for firefighters using Belarusian technologies. Specifically, in April 2022, the two sides already discussed "practical steps for cooperation in the organization of joint production of Belarusian special-purpose machinery in Vietnam, as well as the manufacture of outfits for Vietnamese firefighting services"¹⁴⁰.

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.

The collective stand of the Belgospisheprom concern at the 31st international exhibition Vietnamprom, 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

138 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/>

139 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>

140 Belarus and Vietnam are working on the possibility of joint production of firefighting equipment. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-i-vjetnam-prorabatyvajut-vozmozhnost-sovmestnogo-proizvodstva-ekipirovki-dlja-pozharnyh-sluzhb-494398-2022/>

Asian country will be in the near future. The following 13 enterprises of the Concern "presented their products in Hanoi: Krinita, Belsolod, Spartak, Minskkrystall, Minsk Sparkling Wine Factory, Slodych, Kommunarka, Krasny Pospelik, Mashpischeprod, Lidapischkontsy, Malorit cannery, Minsk Margarine Factory and Pinsk Winery"¹⁴¹. And not just presented. For example, Belsolod OJSC even signed a contract to supply light malt with the Trust & Future Viet Nam Joint Stock Company.

An important detail: the Belarusian national exposition received the "Special Guest" status at this exhibition, which "implies central placement in the exhibition hall, active advertising and information support and large-scale congress events, including the Belarusian-Vietnamese business forum"¹⁴² 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 oncological diseases of internal organs¹⁴³. 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

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

142 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/>

143 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/>

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,"¹⁴⁴ . 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"¹⁴⁵ .

By developing interaction on the principles of equality, trust and respect, the parties have been able to achieve an annual turnover of more than half a billion dollars in 2019-2021. But "as in any relationship, there are areas that are not fully developed. This is especially true of trade and economic relations"¹⁴⁶ . 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

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

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

146 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/>

its export potential"¹⁴⁷ . 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"¹⁴⁸ . In 2022, the parties put into practice the issue of resuming the production of Gomel harvesters for Indian agriculture. A separate topic is the partnership in the field of education, which already has a history of its own. The fact is that the first Indian graduate graduated from the Gomel State Medical University (GSMU) in 2005. Since then only 178 Indians have graduated from the university. In 2022 another 51 graduates will join them. A total of 290 students from South Asia are currently enrolled at the SMMU. In the near future, the Gomel State University named after Francysk Skaryna plans to engage more actively in this cooperation.

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

147 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/>

148 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-medsina-indija-i-gomelskaja-oblast-gotovy-razvivat-novye-sfery-492016-2022>

included synthetic filaments, medicines, footwear parts, and parts for internal combustion engines. And there is every reason to believe that this list of mutual supplies will only expand. In particular, Technolit CPRC successfully cooperates with the Indian market producing parts and spare parts for various equipment. The company receives "Indian blanks", which are processed at a very high precision equipment and then exported to other countries. More than 30 countries can be exported <...>. Besides, discussions have already started about supplying Technolit's finished products to the Indian market"¹⁴⁹. Another interesting example of cooperation in the field of innovative technologies is Energitechgrin LLC operating in Mogilev with Indian capital, registered in August 2021. "The main area of activity is environmentally friendly innovations. It deals with the recovery (regeneration) of all types of batteries used in road, rail and river transport, special machinery, industry and communications, wind turbines and solar batteries"¹⁵⁰. The FEZ Mogilev, which signed agreements with two companies from India at the World Expo 2020 in Dubai in March 2022 on the implementation of investment projects in the FEZ, is also significantly intensifying cooperation with the Indian side.

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

149 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>

150 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>

developing along its sustainable path, which was reflected in the supplies of hundreds of Belarusian trucks to the Syrian market and a thorough study of the project for the assembly of Belarusian automotive equipment. Due to the complication of the domestic situation in Syria in 2011, these plans had to be put on hold. However, even at the most difficult time for Damascus, the Belarusian side expressed its confidence in the successful resolution of the crisis in Syria and its interest in further development and strengthening of bilateral relations in all areas.

The highest level of Belarus-Syria interaction was registered in 2008, when the volume of bilateral trade reached \$85.5 million. Five years later, due to the well-known events in that country, this figure dropped almost tenfold to USD 8.9 million. However, 2014 has already shown the dynamics of starting to overcome the crisis on Syrian soil, which awakened hopes in Minsk to restore the previously existing level of bilateral cooperation. This was immediately reflected in the rapid growth of Belarusian exports to Syria to USD 32.2 million, while the total turnover amounted to USD 33.8 million. Belarusian semi-finished non-alloy steel products, instrumentation, pharmaceuticals, and liquid crystal devices began to find their niche in the Syrian market. Amid the apparent revival of trade and economic ties in 2015, Minsk and Damascus began to actively seek new areas for engagement in order to "not only restore the previous level of trade turnover in the best years, but also surpass it many times over"¹⁵¹. 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

151 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.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b49e0d253459ccba.html

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"¹⁵². Belarus was one of those countries, which even back then saw significant opportunities for stepping up engagement with its Syrian partners across the full range of bilateral relations, which were based on the contractual and legal framework comprising a dozen and a half documents. These include agreements on trade, economic and technical cooperation; on promotion and mutual protection of investments; on avoidance of double taxation; on military-technical cooperation; on cooperation in education, science and culture; on air communication; on scientific and technical cooperation; on international 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, therefore, sees two areas for further development of the bilateral Belarusian-Syrian engagement. First, it is necessary to organize framework or umbrella agreements at the level of the governments, to determine the basic schemes for the organization of joint work. The second level is the level of business, which should build mutually beneficial and safe schemes for their implementation on the basis of these agreements"¹⁵³.

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

152 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/vozobnovljena-prorabotka-proekta-sozdanija-v-sirii-sborohnogo-proizvodstva-belorusskoj-avtotehniki-155561-2015/>

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

commodity items, but also for engineering products, passenger, agricultural, freight, construction equipment, as well as "for the construction of high-quality and comfortable housing"¹⁵⁴. 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 of the work is estimated at \$540 billion. In this regard, the country needs a wide range of materials, services and technologies"¹⁵⁵.

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.

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

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

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."¹⁵⁶ .

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"¹⁵⁷ , 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 building.

Another important aspect in the context of this topic is information relations between Belarus and Syria, which are based on the provisions of the relevant

156 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-belorusskoj-ekonomiki-462466-2021/>

157 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/>

agreement of 11 March 1998, as well as the Agreement on cooperation between the National State Television and Radio Company of Belarus and the General Organization of Syrian Television and Radio Broadcasting of 12 November 2007 and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Belarusian Telegraph Agency and the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) of 27 November 2008. These documents note "the importance of objective information support for interstate cooperation. At the same time, the role of mass media in fostering mutual understanding between the countries and the peoples is especially emphasised."¹⁵⁸ . 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"¹⁵⁹ . In this regard, the task of journalists is to comprehensively reflect these trends in the media sphere.

158 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/>

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

CHAPTER 12

Belarus-China:

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, listed the stepping up of trade, economic, financial, investment cooperation and expansion of interregional ties among the priority objectives until 2025. As part 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...".¹⁶⁰

It should be noted that a number of specific measures to achieve this objective were taken at Velikiy Kamen back in 2021. In particular, during 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 resident products and services increased by more than 16% and is carried out to 20 countries of the world"¹⁶¹. An important detail: if "at the end of 2020 [in the park] there were 68 companies from 14 countries registered"¹⁶², then by mid-November 2021 there were already 81 companies from 15 countries registered as residents. The work to expand Great Stone, on the other hand, continues.

160 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.

161 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/>

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

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"¹⁶³ 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"¹⁶⁴, which gives good reasons to hope for the sales of this product not only in the domestic market, but also in Russia and the European Union countries.

Among the new residents is the Belarusian LLC InKata, which was previously registered as an investor in Velikiy Kamen to build facilities to support subjects of innovation activities of the industrial park here. "The project will provide design, prototyping and technical documentation services, as well as provide jobs and equipment"¹⁶⁵. Another Great Stone resident in November is the Sino-Belarusian Centre for Innovative Bioengineering Technologies LLC, which intends to cooperate closely with the National 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"¹⁶⁶, which are supposed to

163 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/>

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

165 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/>

166 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-dagnostiki-zabolevanij-471849-2021/>

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"¹⁶⁷. Thanks to the opportunities that the industrial park offers to innovators, the young specialists' development 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"¹⁶⁸.

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 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.

167 Great Stone's new company will create simulators to practice manual 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/>

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

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"¹⁶⁹.

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 clear advantages in treating critically ill patients, so that the mortality rate in severe cases has dropped from 21% to 5%"¹⁷⁰. 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,

169 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/>

170 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/>

China, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Russia, and the USA"¹⁷¹ . 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"¹⁷² . In particular, the production of Linlan Yiqing, aimed at effectively treating coronavirus infection, will be set up. In 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 medical services to the industrial park's residents and its Chinese and foreign employees, as well as interact with research institutions and healthcare institutions in 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

171 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-ispytanij-v-zdravoohraneni-i-park-velikij-kamen-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-441421-2021/>

172 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-meditiny-433283-2021/>

medicine. <...> a medical centre for diagnostic services is expected to follow. This area is already in the works"¹⁷³. 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. We should also remind you that in the package 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"¹⁷⁴. 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 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."¹⁷⁵. The main exporters are RUE Bellesexport, Best Meat Company, Meat and Dairy Company, Mobiora, Integral. The basis of Minsk supplies to Belarus 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 electrical values, ready-made media for sound recording. It is important in terms of consolidating this trend in the future to intensify ties between the Belarusian capital and China's

173 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>

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

175 Kukharev 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/>

twin cities, of which Minsk has four - Changchun (1992), Shenzhen (2014), Beijing (2016), and Shanghai (2019).

Changchun, the administrative centre of Jilin Province in northeast 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-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"¹⁷⁶. 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"¹⁷⁷.

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"¹⁷⁸. And it

176 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>

177 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>

178 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/>

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 mutually beneficial cooperation, expanding and deepening contacts, including among young people"¹⁷⁹. 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"¹⁸⁰.

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"¹⁸¹. 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

179 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/>

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

181 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-razvivat-biznes-sotrudnichestvo-47498-2014/>

in the Chinese city, "memorandums of cooperation with Chinese partners were signed by Kommunarka Joint Stock Company, Minskhhlebprom KUP, Zapadnaya Wholesale Base KUP, Belryba OJSC, Minotel OJSC"¹⁸². 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 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 friendly relations by signing an "agreement on the establishment of twinning relations, which provides for increased cooperation in the economic, social and cultural spheres"¹⁸³.

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 exceeded \$100 million in January-November [2021]. The main export items to China include wood pulp, timber, wool, meat, dairy and confectionary products"¹⁸⁴. 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

182 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-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-turizma-i-kultury-250871-2017/>

183 Zalessky, B.L. Gomel Region: Chinese Vector of Partnership / B.L. Zalessky // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Efektivni nastroje modernich ved - 2021". Volume 5: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 16.

184 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-uvelichila-eksport-v-kitaj-v-20-raz-481090-2022/>

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 cooperation for quite some time. In particular, back in September 2015, Chongqing Zongshen-Homel Agricultural Machinery Enterprise LLC was established in Hebei province 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.¹⁸⁵ THE AMOUNT OF MACHINERY COMPONENTS 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 Industry JV. 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."¹⁸⁶ . In June 2019, a new contract was signed to supply another batch of forage harvesters to China for

185 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.

186 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-hebei-237889-2017>

more than a million and a half dollars. And by mid-2019, "the company had produced 500 harvesters"¹⁸⁷.

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

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"¹⁸⁹. 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.

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

188 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/>

189 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/>

CHAPTER 13

Belarus-Vietnam: aim to expand technological cooperation

In March 2022, the 15th meeting of the Belarus-Vietnam intergovernmental commission on trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation 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"¹⁹⁰.

¹⁹¹The 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 co-founders of the Belarusian-Vietnamese Innovation

190 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>

191 Zalesky, B.L. From trust and respect to joint economic projects / B.L. Zalesky // 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.

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 the design and methods of research, having scientific and practical importance" have been implemented¹⁹². Among them are "Creating a composition of cellulolytic strains effective for degradation of plant residues", "Investigation of possibilities to obtain new fermented products from vegetable raw materials of Vietnam", "Cross-cultural differences in 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), which by spring 2022 had "jointly implemented over 100 projects and published about 150 scientific papers"¹⁹³. 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 research of mutual interest. The 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

192 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/belvietnam-centre/

193 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>

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 parties 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"¹⁹⁴. 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.

194 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/>

CHAPTER 14

Belarus v Indonesia: action plan targets for maximum 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"¹⁹⁵. 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"¹⁹⁶.

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"¹⁹⁷. 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 that "the government's goal to reach \$1 billion in

195 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

196 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/>

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

mutual trade turnover between Belarus and Indonesia is quite realistic for the near future"¹⁹⁸ .

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"¹⁹⁹ . 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 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

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

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

Ministry of Religious Affairs concerns cooperation in the field of quality assurance of halal products and readiness of the Belarusian partners "to demonstrate the infrastructure of quality halal products created in Indonesia to their colleagues from Indonesia, to confirm the possibility of implementing Indonesian requirements for halal products and conduct necessary conformity assessment procedures in Belarus"²⁰⁰ . 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"²⁰¹ . And this is immediately reflected in the results of Belarusian-Indonesian bilateral trade in 2021. The company Bellakt OJSC is ready to "work on the issues of product supplies to Indonesia, as well as expand the product range and work on the supply of baby food"²⁰² , as well as Milkavita OJSC, Glubokoe Dairy Factory OJSC and some other enterprises that participated in the third Belarusian-Indonesian video conference on business and trade, held in December 2020 and dedicated to promoting export of dairy products from Belarus to Indonesia. Halal product exporters from Belarus should now become

200 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>

201 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>

202 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/>

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."²⁰³ . The development of partnership relations between the regions of the two countries has great potential in this regard. The more so since "interaction has already been established between the Brest region and West Sumatra province, Mogilev region and South Sumatra province, Minsk region and East Kalimantan and East Java provinces as well as the cities of Minsk and Jakarta"²⁰⁴ . With the help of regional branches of chambers of commerce and industry, interaction with such provinces as Central Java, North Sumatra, West Nusa Tenggara, the special district of Yogyakarta, where they see considerable potential for development of trade and economic cooperation, educational and tourist exchanges with Belarusian partners, is also established. For example, the Brest Region and the province of West Sumatra announced their intention to establish close contacts back in November 2015. Such areas as "fish farming, processing industry, tourism, healthcare, pharmacy" were named as promising for mutually beneficial cooperation then²⁰⁵ . Some other

203 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-ekonomicheskoy-sotrudnichestve-426979-2021/www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-indonezija-podpisali-memorandum-o-torgovo-ekonomicheskoy-sotrudnichestve-426979-2021/>

204 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/belarus-i-indonezija-i-belarus-ot-hloristogo-kalija-i-belazov-do-ozhivleniya-turisticheskogo-rynka-473916-2021>

205 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/>

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"²⁰⁶, where vehicles from Belarus with payload capacity from 45 to 130 tons were already in operation. The parties plan to actively continue this collaboration.

A logical continuation of cooperation between the Belarusian and Indonesian regions is developing partnerships in the educational sphere, where cooperation is based on signed agreements: on cooperation - between the Brest State Technical University and the Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology; on mutual understanding - between the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy and the Bogor Agricultural Institute; on exchange of students - between the Minsk State Linguistic University and the Grodno State 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

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

students"²⁰⁷ . And BSU students were offered free tuition for the Sura-Bali Community Immersion Program 2020, which involved studying Indonesian culture and tourism activities in the provinces of East Java and Bali. Note that this university is one of the oldest in Indonesia. It was founded in 1954 in Surabaya. There are 14 faculties: from medical and law, to sea, fishery, nursing and veterinary medicine. Nearly forty thousand students have got higher education. On a side note, the BSU has already had experience of cooperation with Indonesian partners. In particular, since 2016, Unitechprom BSU has been fulfilling a contract to supply medical equipment - spirometers - to Global systech medika from Jakarta.

In 2022, a number of other Belarusian universities signed documents on cooperation with Indonesian partners, which indicates further expansion of these relations. Thus, a cooperation agreement was signed in January 2022 by Minsk State Linguistic University (MSLU) and Veteran National Development University in Yogyakarta, outlining in this document the main directions of cooperation development: "opening of Center of Indonesian language and culture on the basis of MSLU; opening of Center of Belarusian culture and Russian language on the basis of UNR "Veteran"; teaching Indonesian language on an elective basis in MSLU; teaching Russian language and lecturing about Belarusian culture in UNR "Veteran"; conducting cultural events on the basis of Center of Indonesian language and culture in MSLU"²⁰⁸ . Here it is appropriate to add that UNR "Veteran" is one of the state universities in Indonesia. It is a patriotically oriented university actively building up its educational base. It has established the Faculties of Mineral Technology, Industrial Engineering, Agriculture, Economics and Business, and Social and Political Sciences. The educational institution is active in research and broadcasts its civic position.

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

208 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>

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".²⁰⁹ [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 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)"²¹⁰.

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

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

210 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-proektovscience.bsuir.by/ru/konkursy-i-granty/konkurs-belorussko-indoneziyskikh-proektov>

October 2029, thereby confirming the agreement that "this document will contribute to building an effective infrastructure for the development of trade and economic cooperation."²¹¹ . 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, 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"²¹² .

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.

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

212 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/>

CHAPTER 15

Belarus-Africa:

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"²¹³. 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"²¹⁴. 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, the Sudan, South Sudan and Zambia, as well as over two hundred Belarusian enterprises, 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 of global labor, a huge

213 Zaleskiy, B. Vectors of the far arc. Opportunities for sectoral cooperation / B. Zaleski. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing: Saarbrücken, Deutschland / Germany, 2018. - C. 17.

214 Belarus and Africa and the Middle East [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

https://www.mfa.gov.by/countries_regions/africa_middle_east/

undeveloped market"²¹⁵. 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."²¹⁶. 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 encompasses 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 between MTZ and the Sudanese company MIG Agricultural Co. Ltd., which began back in 2003,

215 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/>

216 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>

thanks to which more than two and a half thousand BELARUS tractors are already in operation in the Sudanese fields.

In addition, Minsk Tractor Works in Africa has created a certain reserve for the future in the form of a cooperation road map signed back in February 2020 with the Ministry of Defence Industry of Egypt, which provides for the organization of the 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. ²¹⁷

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"²¹⁸ .

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. By the end of this year [2020] another 370 tractors, 20 combine harvesters and 138 seeders will

217 MTZ triples its exports to Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-vtroe-uvlichil-eksport-v-afriku-416304-2020/>

218 BMZ has increased sales of rebar to Africa by almost 20% [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bmz-uvlichil-prodazhi-armatury-v-afriku-pochti-na-20-407746-2020/>

arrive by sea"²¹⁹ . 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 "machinery will be provided to Zimbabwean farmers as part of the government's agricultural mechanisation programme for the country"²²⁰ . Also. There will soon be a significant increase in efforts to establish ties between Belarus and Namibia, which in November 2020 announced their intention to focus on "the development of the legal framework and establishment of a joint intergovernmental committee for trade and economic cooperation"²²¹ . 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. On the Belarusian part, 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. Minsk described the forum as an important dialogue platform aimed at further strengthening and development of bilateral and multilateral relations of Belarus with African countries, expanding trade, economic and cooperation relations, increasing mutual trade turnover. Suffice it to say that "in the three years following the first Belarusian-African forum, mutual trade

219 Zimbabwe launches a joint programme with Belarus to provide farms with agricultural machinery. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-zimbabwe-zapusचना-sovmestnaja-s-belarusiju-programma-obespechenija-ferm-selhoztehnikoj-408853-2020/>

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

221 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-sotrudnicestvu-417026-2020/>

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."²²² . 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."²²³ . 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."²²⁴ .

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 collaboration and diversification of mutual trade. In fact, this is why at this economic forum Belarus suggested that African countries, as far as food security assistance is concerned, should use a comprehensive systemic approach in developing partnerships, from evaluating local farming conditions to supplying a full range

222 About the Second Belarus-Africa Economic Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/dd94997d14d9eb8a.html

223 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/www.belta.by/economics/view/eksperty-svjazyvajut-razvitie-mirovoj-ekonomiki-s-afrikaj-kak-etim-mozhet-vospolzovatsja-belarus-443722-2021/>

224 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-rynках-mnogih-afrikan-skikh-stran-443820-2021/>

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"²²⁵, 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."²²⁶.

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 tourism. Belarusian partners could help the country in this matter"²²⁷. Other promising areas of mutual interest between Belarus and Uganda include oil refining, information

225 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

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

227 "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/www.belta.by/economics/view/mozhem-nachinat-rabotat-prjamo-sejchas-strany-afriki-ozvuchili-perspektivnye-sfery-sotrudnichestva-s-443755-2021/>

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 machinery and spare parts, oversized 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"²²⁸.

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"²²⁹. 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 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..."²³⁰. And in 2021, this aspiration became particularly prominent.

228 Cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the Republic of South Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: https://rsa.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/

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

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

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"²³¹. 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"²³², as well as in the development of tourism. It appears that the time has come for all these interaction plans to be realised.

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 supplies of linen products, tailoring and footwear, designers were

231 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/>

232 South Africa is interested in cooperation with the Minsk region [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/regions/view/juar-zajnteresovana-v-sotrudnichestve-s-minskoj-oblastju-417308-2020/](https://www.belta.by/regions/view/juar-zajnteresovana-v-sotrudnichestve-s-minskoj-oblastju-417308-2020/www.belta.by/regions/view/juar-zajnteresovana-v-sotrudnichestve-s-minskoj-oblastju-417308-2020/)

represented from the South African side"²³³. 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"²³⁴. 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 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 and food processing enterprises"²³⁵. Let's hope that the time has come for these regions,

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

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

235 Kuliagin, S. Mogilev region and 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/>

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"²³⁶. 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 and the subsequent establishment of an assembly facility for Belarusian tractors with an annual capacity of up to five thousand units in that African country.

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

236 About the Belarus-Kenya Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/e02ca9530a8dcc63.html>

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"²³⁷. 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"²³⁸.

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 become a launching pad for Belarusian enterprises to enter KOMECA (the integration association of East and Southern Africa) countries."²³⁹

In the Kenyan capital, enterprises of concern Belgospischeprom, JSC Holding Management Company Lidselmash, open joint-stock companies Gomselmash, MTZ, MAZ, Bobruiskagromash, Lidahleproduct, as well as 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 "more than 35% of GDP is accounted for by the agricultural sector"²⁴⁰, where in December 2017 a new programme of

237 Belarus - Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL:

http://kenya.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/

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

239 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/>

240 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/>

planned economic development of the country until 2022 was launched with a focus on the development of national production, 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".²⁴¹ . 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.

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 of national expositions of our country in Africa at least at two international exhibition forums: in the first half of the year - Kenya International Trade Exhibition in Nairobi (Kenya); in the second - Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in Bulawayo (Zimbabwe). These events,

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

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.

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CHAPTER 16

Belarus: there are incentives for investors

In December 2021, the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus approved amendments to the Law on Free Economic Zones (FEZ), which envisage the transfer of powers to change the borders of these territories from the head of state to the government. "At the same time, the president of the country will continue to approve the inclusion of agricultural and forestry territories in the boundaries of free economic zones"²⁴². This innovation is expected to shorten the time from the idea to the start of new investment projects in the territories, which are considered to be growth points in the regions, as it will encourage potential investors to invest resources in FEZs. A clear rule remains unchanged for them: FEZ boundaries can be expanded only for specific investment projects"²⁴³. It will be recalled that the law "On Free Economic Zones" itself was adopted in December 1998. In it, one of the main purposes of the emergence of FEZs is defined as "attraction of investments into creation and development of export-oriented and import-substituting productions based on new and high technologies"²⁴⁴. It should be noted that there are only six FEZs operating in Belarus. As of October 1, 2021 there were registered 429 companies with the number of employees about 137 thousand people, where projects are carried out with investments of almost seven billion dollars from more than 30 countries. The fact that FEZs are the places where it is possible to build successful businesses today is also confirmed by the statistics of 2021. In three quarters, the volume of exports here increased almost one and a half times, and the inflow of foreign direct investment was one fifth of the country's total.

242 The Council of the Republic has approved a bill on free economic zones [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/sovet-respubliki-odobril-zakonoproekt-o-svobodnyh-ekonomicheskikh-zonah-476194-2021/>

243 Nikitina: An attractive national jurisdiction boosts investment [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nikitina-privlekatelnaja-natsionalnaja-jurisdiksija-aktiviziruet-pritok-investitsij-475406-2021/>

244 Zalessky, B.L. Free economic zones and special economic zones as points of growth in the regions / B.L. Zalessky // Social and Humanitarian Studies. - 2020. - №3. - C. 64.

In particular, residents of **FEZ Grodnoinvest**, whose export volume exceeded one billion dollars in January-September, are achieving high results in 2021. The geography of these supplies is very wide: Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Germany, Denmark, Egypt, Italy, Lithuania, Great Britain, and Turkey. "Over 9 months a foreign trade surplus of \$540 million has been recorded, which is the best figure among Belarusian FEZs.²⁴⁵ . As a result, FEZ residents already account for over 43% of exports and over 30% of industrial output of the entire Grodno Region. The machine-building segment is developing especially dynamically in this FEZ. Suffice it to say that here "the export of computer, electronic and optical equipment has doubled in nine months of this year [2021]"²⁴⁶ . In total, nine companies have so far registered in Grodnoinvest in the mechanical engineering sector and another seven in metalworking. In total, there are 75 companies with investments from 40 countries that are residents of the free economic zone. They successfully implement investment projects in woodworking and furniture production, mechanical engineering and metalworking, food, chemical and light industry, agriculture and export a wide range of products, with the largest share of foreign supplies being woodworking products and furniture, food and chemical products, machinery and equipment, textile products.

It is noteworthy that new investment projects are being established in the FEZ "Grodnoinvest", which in the near future will have a very positive impact on the export component of both the FEZ itself and the entire Grodno region. In particular, at the Smorgon site of the FEZ, Europlastex Invest LLC has already taken up its second project as a resident of Grodnoinvest. The first involves the construction of a vertically integrated complex for the production of cotton yarn and cotton products. The second project is to set up a metal processing plant in

245 Exports by residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest in January-September exceeded \$1 billion [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-v-janvare-sentjabre-prevysil-1-mld-472551-2021/>

246 Residents of FEZ Grodnoinvest double exports of electronic and optical equipment [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-grodnoinvest-udvoili-eksport-elektronnoj-i-opticheskoy-apparatury-473562-2021/>

Smorgon, the total value of which will exceed five million euros. The first products are expected to be manufactured there in 2022. Most of it "will be oriented towards exports to Central Asia, Western Europe, the Middle East."²⁴⁷ . To this end, new production facilities will be built and existing ones will be modernised and state-of-the-art process equipment will be purchased for the production of steel pipes and profiles. As a result, the new investment project will create dozens of new jobs, bring unused facilities into use and partially replace imported products from abroad.

It should be noted that nine resident enterprises, including those with investments from the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and other countries, are already successfully operating on the industrial sites of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" in Smorgon district, which since 2015 have "invested over \$470 million in the creation of modern export-oriented enterprises"²⁴⁸ . This is where almost half - 48 percent - of all industrial production in the Grodnoinvest FEZ was produced in 2020. As for the other FEZ industrial sites, "the city of Grodno accounts for 29% of production and the Lidsky District for 8%. The leaders in terms of growth rate for 2020 were Smorgon (136%), Grodno (123%) and Svisloch (123%) districts"²⁴⁹ .

And there is good reason to believe that new domestic and foreign investors will soon appear here. The fact is that in August 2021 the second start-up complex of a large-scale infrastructure project to reconstruct the city's main traffic artery - Industrial Avenue, which connects the residential area with the FEZ industrial park and includes a modern four-lane road, engineering infrastructure networks, landscaping and landscaping of the adjacent territory, and lighting was put into

247 A foreign investor will set up steel pipe production in Smorgon [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/inostrannyj-investor-organizuet-v-smorgoni-proizvodstvo-stalnyh-trub-454884-2021/>

248 The second part of the infrastructure project of FEZ Grodnoinvest is completed in Smorgon [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vtoraja-ochered-infrastrukturnogo-proekta-sez-grodnoinvest-zavershena-v-smorgoni-455912-2021/>

249 Industrial production of FEZ "Grodnoinvest" residents increased by 14% [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/promyshlennoe-proizvodstvo-rezidentov-sez-grodnoinvest-vyroslo-na-14-430320-2021/>

operation in Smorgon. In 2021, the third stage of the project will be launched here, involving the creation of a roundabout, as well as the provision of the industrial park with additional electricity. All of this will make the operating conditions for both existing and potential FEZ residents even more attractive.

The FEZ industrial site in Grodno also continues to develop, with two new residents registered in 2021. The first one, the company Unis Trade, is setting up production of metal constructions in Grandichi. The second one, OV-PlastSnab LLC, was registered here in June 2021 and will set up an enterprise to produce a wide range of products from synthetic polymers. Besides exporting finished goods and import substitution, the investment project of the new resident will make it possible to form additional preconditions for development of the chemical cluster in the FEZ at the industrial site in the Auls area, where such residents as PCC Consumer Products Navigator LLC, Belagrofert LLC, Grodnoraiagroservice OJSC, PT Typhoon LLC are already successfully implementing their projects. And "the construction of a unique plant for the production of glass products has recently begun"²⁵⁰. So, the prospects for the growth of the export component are most serious here as well.

Residents of the **Free Economic Zone "Vitebsk"** have increased export supplies by more than 60 percent in the first three quarters of 2021, bringing their volume to \$623 million and cooperating with partners from 73 countries. As a result of export diversification efforts, FEZ participants managed to increase shipments of their products to the far-abroad countries by almost half, and to Great Britain, the United Arab Emirates, India, Pakistan, Israel, Brazil - by three times and more. In addition, "for the first time, fiber-optic cables were supplied to Afghanistan, gas and smoke analysers were shipped to Poland, fur skins to China, linen to Chile and insulated cables to France"²⁵¹. The more than

250 A new FEZ "Grodnoinvest" resident will create an innovative production of synthetic polymer products in Grodno [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://grodnoinvest.by/press-center/novyj-rezident-sez-grodnoinvest-sozdast-v-grodno-innovacionnoe-proizvodstvo-izdelij/>

251 Residents of the Free Economic Zone "Vitebsk" increased exports of goods by almost 62% in January-September [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

50 investment projects currently under implementation in the free economic zone are likely to be complemented in the near future by a row of new ones, as foreign investors are showing interest in setting up production of composite materials, machinery, wood processing and manufacture of wood-based materials, as well as in the production of micro-fertilizers. In particular, "a Swedish investor in cooperation with a partner from China is ready to invest about \$100 million in the construction of a plant for processing low-grade wood. Representatives of the Netherlands are looking for a site for furniture production with an investment volume of 100 million euro. <...> A German company is planning to set up the production of decking worth about \$9 million"²⁵². In addition, Chinese businessmen have already registered a legal entity in Vitebsk to implement a woodworking project with an expected investment of about \$26 million. All in all there are "about 8 more projects in the pipeline, the implementation of which will attract at least \$160 million to the economy of the Vitebsk region"²⁵³.

It is worth mentioning that currently 56 investment projects are being implemented in this FEZ in 16 sectors with participation of investors from 15 countries, including Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia, Poland, Lithuania, the UK, Israel, Cyprus and Spain. In the first quarter of 2021, three new residents registered here with projects to develop the production of special hydraulic press equipment, construction materials and modernization of facilities for the production of import-substituting components for agricultural machinery and cars. "The projects attracted \$12.2 million in foreign direct

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-v-janvare-sentjabre-uvelichili-eksport-tovarov-pochti-na-62-471298-2021/>

252 Investors from 4 countries show interest in implementing projects on the sites of FEZ "Vitebsk" [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investory-iz-4-stran-projavljajut-interes-k-realizatsii-proektov-na-ploschadkah-sez-vitebsk-472892-2021/>

253 Residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" increased production by more than 40% in 9 months [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-za-9-mesjatsev-narastili-proizvodstvo-produktsii-bolee-chem-na-40-471323-2021/>

investment on a net basis, which was more than 40% of the figure for the Vitebsk region as a whole."²⁵⁴ .

The residents of **FEZ Gomel-Raton** also exported more than half of the goods produced in January-September 2021. More than USD 1.1 billion worth of goods were shipped to the markets of 63 countries. The top five importers here are Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania and China. It is not a bad indicator if you consider that on October 1, 2021. 69 economic entities, of which 30 - the companies with foreign capital from 16 countries worked in the Free Economic Zone. In 2021 three more resident companies with about \$50 million in investments were registered here. All in all "\$76.3 million of direct foreign investment has been attracted in FEZ Gomel-Raton for 9 months for the realization of investment projects"²⁵⁵ . This is almost half of the total volume of investments in Gomel Region.

By the end of 2021, the FEZ was expected to increase production by 18.5 percent by upgrading existing facilities and registering new residents with promising investment projects. For example, "the Alkopak enterprise is building a new building in which it plans to produce new medical products. "Polikap is working on a project to produce disposable tableware made of cellulose"²⁵⁶ . Residents such as Veza-G and Multipak will also expand their production. MIRTEK-Engineering LLC, which produces energy metering devices, has already been supplying more than half of its output to foreign markets - Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and European countries. Recently, it has started outsourcing manufacturing of SMD and DIP components - a promising direction, which is relevant to all companies involved in the production of

254 Residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" increased production by more than 40% in 9 months [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-vitebsk-za-9-mesjatsev-narastili-proizvodstvo-produktsii-bolee-chem-na-40-471323-2021/>

255 Residents of FEZ Gomel-Raton increased production of industrial products by more than 42% over 9 months [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-za-9-mesjatsev-uvlechili-proizvodstvo-promproduktsii-bolee-chem-na-42-471389-2021/>

256 The residents of FEZ Gomel-Raton intend to increase output by 18.5% in 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/rezidenty-sez-gomel-raton-namereny-uvlechit-objem-proizvodstva-na-185-v-2021-godu-434576-2021/>

electronic modules and assemblies. Note that "in 2020, \$230 million of investment has been invested in the Gomel-Raton FEZ" .²⁵⁷

As for **FEZ Brest**, its potential was presented in January 2022 at the World Expo 2020 in the United Arab Emirates for the first time on the platform of the Belarusian national exposition with a separate pavilion. The numerous visitors to the world forum saw such FEZ resident-companies as Santa Bremor JV LLC, STiM group of companies, and Barhim OJSC. The very presence of FEZ "Brest" at "EKPO-2020" eloquently illustrates the growing role of this "multi-profile economic territory, where manufacturing, technological, logistical activities can develop"²⁵⁸ , for the economy of Brest region.

It should be reminded that in 2021 the residents of this FEZ accounted for one fifth of the total industrial output of this Belarusian region. "Goods worth \$936 million were delivered outside the country (growth rate - 123.9%). The share of the FEZ in the total exports of Brest Oblast was 29%, with the foreign trade surplus of \$289 million"²⁵⁹ . In December 2021 there were 72 residents, including 42 with foreign capital, and 21.5 thousand people working there. An additional 700 jobs were created in the FEZ in 2021. At the end of December 2021 the 73rd resident of Brest free economic zone was "Green-Glass" LLC with the investment project on modernization of the production of glass articles up to the full cycle. "The investor intends to invest over €500,000 in the business within three years. The product range includes processed sheet glass, tempered and multi-layered flat glass, glass mirrors, single- and double-glazed windows"²⁶⁰ .

257 FEZs are a driver of territorial development - Asluk [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-javlajutsja-drajverom-razvitiya-territorij-asljuk-434551-2021/>

258 Zalessky, B.L. Free economic zones and special economic zones as points of growth in the regions / B.L. Zalessky // Social and Humanitarian Studies. - 2020. - №3. - C. 67.

259 The investment potential of Brest FEZ to be presented at an exhibition in Dubai [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investitsionnyj-potentsial-sez-brest-predstavjat-na-vystavke-v-dubae-480588-2022/>

260 New resident registered in FEZ Brest [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogo-rezidenta-zaregistrovali-v-sez-brest-476969-2021/>

Prior to that, in October 2021, Cesar Industrial LLC, a company with Belarusian-Israeli capital, based in Kobrin and specializing in lumber, became a resident of the FEZ. The new resident has leased a plot of land and acquired ownership of the buildings on it, where, after reconstruction, production of "furniture boards made of laminated chipboard and glued laminated timber products, which have a wide range of applications, will be transferred. A large proportion of the products will be exported to foreign markets"²⁶¹. The production of these products is planned to start within three years. Kesar Industrial, s.r.o. intends to invest more than half a million euro in the first phase of this investment project. Interestingly, the new resident will be the fifth company operating in the FEZ in the wood processing sector.

It should be noted that the Brest FEZ today is characterized not only by the emergence of new residents, but also by the expansion of the activities of companies that have been operating here for a long time. The fact is that in 2016, its territory was expanded mainly due to companies that had vacant space. In five years, about 80 enterprises have been located in the unused facilities of former industrial giants, including the Electric Lamp Factory, Carpet Factory and Electromechanical Factory. In general, Brest FEZ residents are now located both in the regional centre and Brest district, and in Baranovichi, Pinsk, Kobrin and Ivatsevichi.

For example, in August 2021, Anrex FLLC, which has been a FEZ resident for a quarter of a century, bought production and administrative and household premises from Brest-based Tsvetotron OJSC and set up furniture production there. "It is planned to invest about Br60 million and create 500 jobs in the project. The first start-up complex has already been commissioned..."²⁶². As a result, the city got rid of unprofitable buildings of the former factory and got a

261 Woodworking company joins the ranks of Brest FEZ residents [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/derevoobrabatyvajushee-predpriatie-popolnilo-chislo-rezidentov-sez-brest-462782-2021/>

262 An investor on the premises of the Brest "Tsvetotron" created a furniture production [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/investor-na-ploschadjah-brestdskogo-tsvetotona-sozdal-mebelnoe-proizvodstvo-457323-2021/>

new production facility. Another example in this context is Arlait & K LLC, a company with Russian-Chinese capital, registered in the Brest FEZ in November 2015 and located in the Aeroport Industrial Zone. Over the past six years, the company has created a high-tech LED production facility here, which is used to produce LED strips and lighting devices that are in demand not only in Belarus, but also in Russia, as well as in Poland and Germany. Suffice it to say that in 2020 it shipped \$3.7 million worth of its products to foreign partners. In 2021, a new line was commissioned here, which "will double the capacity of the plant and produce up to 3,000 linear lights and 350 km of LED strip per month"²⁶³. This will make it possible to increase the number of employees to 250.

A number of other existing resident companies are also planning to expand their production facilities. Polipol Mebel Bel LLC, registered here in the summer of 2020 and the "seventh company in the FEZ with German capital"²⁶⁴, is building a large plant for the production of upholstered furniture in Ivatsevichi with a planned investment of 26 million euros. "A new line for the production of smoked sausages is going to be launched by IE "Inko-Food" Ltd. Santa Bremor JV Ltd. is investing at least \$5 million annually in the development of production"²⁶⁵. All these facts clearly show what serious investment and production potential FEZ "Brest" has today in terms of prospective development. And which, once demonstrated at the world exhibition Expo 2020 in Dubai, may get new powerful impulses in terms of further development.

In general, it remains to add that free economic zones in Belarus, as a model of economic relations in the regions, have already become an effective tool for the

263 A manufacturer of LEDs in the Brest FEZ plans to double production [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/produzvoditel-svetodiodov-v-sez-brest-planiruet-udvoit-objem-produktsii-450766-2021/>

264 Zalessky, B.L. FEZ "Brest": prospects inspire optimism / 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. 7.

265 Five new enterprises to be launched in Brest FEZ this year [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pjat-novyh-predpriyatij-zapustjat-v-etom-godu-v-sez-brest-433948-2021/>

development of the national economy. And the adoption of amendments to the law "On Free Economic Zones" will certainly only contribute to maintaining the positive development dynamics that they have already managed to achieve in the past more than 20 years since the emergence of FEZs in Belarus.

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CHAPTER 17

Belarus: plan for innovative ideas relying on local reserves

In December 2021, the Republic of Belarus approved the National Green Economy Action Plan for 2021-2025, which defines the development of a smart digital economy contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals as a strategic goal. This document envisages the development of the Belarusian green economy based on such principles as: sustainable development, inclusiveness, inter-sectorality, innovativeness, science, efficiency and sufficiency, resource conservation, waste management as resources, increasing competitiveness and strengthening the positions held in the global markets "taking into account the global trends of greening, transparency, international cooperation and responsibility"²⁶⁶. Let us remind you that the Programme of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025, approved in July 2021, stated that in the next five years "the emphasis will be placed on the introduction of tools to support the green economy. Work on the formation of a national system of carbon regulation, attraction of green investments, development of eco-innovations and creation of green jobs will be intensified"²⁶⁷.

Among the priority areas for the development of a green economy in Belarus, the national plan identifies the following: 1) introduction of sustainable consumption and production principles; 2) development of circular or closed cycle economy; 3) production of organic products; 4) ecological and agro-ecotourism; 5) formation of smart and energy efficient cities; 6) development of electric transport and its infrastructure. In other words, the plan "sets a practice-oriented trajectory, providing for the implementation of promising innovative ideas in the regions relying on local resources and creating comfortable living

²⁶⁶ Smart cities, eco-tourism and electric transport: how the green economy will develop in Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/umnye-goroda-ekoturizm-i-elektrotransport-kak-budet-razvivatsja-zelenaja-ekonomika-v-belarusi-475021-2021/>

²⁶⁷ Programme of socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus for 2021-2025 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=P32100292>

conditions for people"²⁶⁸. This should certainly include the development of electric transport and its infrastructure.

It should be noted that back in March 2020, Belarus issued a decree "On Encouraging the Use of Electric Vehicles", which contained "measures designed to stimulate demand for this environmentally friendly vehicle in the country, as well as the creation of appropriate charging and service infrastructure in the regions"²⁶⁹. At the beginning of 2021 there were already more than one thousand electric cars in our country, and by the beginning of the second half of the year more than four thousand. As for the nearest five-year period, "by 2025 Belarus may approach the mark of 100 thousand such vehicles, and by 2030 about 20% of Belarusians will have electric motors"²⁷⁰. The important tendency here is that not only citizens, but also industrial enterprises, start switching to electric cars in Belarus and get considerable savings from their operation. "This was demonstrated by Gomelenergo, which was one of the first energy supplying organisations to implement a pilot project to upgrade its vehicle fleet with electric cars"²⁷¹.

The network of fast charging stations for electric vehicles is also developing rapidly in the country. Since 2018, it has increased from 14 to 486, and by the beginning of 2022, it should already include 600 such facilities, which will make it possible to operate more than 25,000 such vehicles. In a few years, it is expected that owners of such vehicles will spend no more time at charging stations than owners of cars with internal combustion engines do at petrol

268 The National Plan for a Green Economy will strengthen the environmental and innovation segments of the 2025 programme [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsplan-po-zelenoj-ekonomike-usilit-ekologicheskij-i-innovatsionnyj-segmenty-programmy-2025-475288-2021/>

269 Zalessky, B. The key to success is cooperation. Collection of articles / B. Zalessky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 113.

270 "Belorusneft: the largest network of fast charging stations for electric cars in the EEU has been created in the country [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belorusneft-v-strane-sozdana-krupnejshaja-v-caes-set-bystryh-zarjadnyh-stantsij-dlja-elektromobilej-474986-2021/>

271 Number of electric cars in Belarus increased to 4 thousand - Karankevich [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/chislo-elektromobilej-v-belarusi-uvelichilos-do-4-tys-karankevich-450761-2021/>

stations. An important role in this regard is assigned to the Vitebsk JSC Vityaz, a diversified enterprise developing about twenty kinds of activities today. It started manufacturing electric charging stations for electric vehicles in 2017. Today, they actively cooperate with the national charging infrastructure operator RUE PA Belorusneft, to which they supply high-tech products under the Malanka brand. At the same time, the company plans to develop its own network of electric charging stations under the ISKRA brand. Here they aim to "develop the niche of the so-called slow chargers. The network facilities will be installed in residential areas, business centres and other sites where it is possible to leave a car in the car park and connect it to an electric charging station at the same time"²⁷². The first two such charging stations have already been put into test operation in Vitebsk - near the Vityaz production site. The opening of the first branded electric charging station in Minsk and several other facilities in the residential areas of the Belarusian capital are in the pipeline.

Domestic models of these eco-friendly vehicles should appear in Belarus in the near future. In particular, there are plans to supply Geometry C electric cars from BELJI CJSC to the market, where tests were completed in August 2021. This Belarusian-Chinese electric car "has many innovative solutions: from active safety systems to sophisticated design. <...> The range on a single charge is 550 km"²⁷³. If there is a demand for these vehicles, the company will already be using the corresponding plant capacities for the production of new electric vehicles in 2022. So, this innovative vehicle has a good future in Belarus. And its development will be a significant contribution to the implementation of the National Action Plan for the development of green economy in our country until 2025.

272 "Vityaz will develop its own network of electric charging stations under the ISKRA brand [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vitjaz-budet-razvivat-sobstvennuju-set-elektrozarjadnyh-stantsij-pod-brendom-iskra-473377-2021/>

273 "BELJI plans to start sales of a new electric car in the fourth quarter of 2021 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beldzhi-planiruet-nachat-prodazhi-novogo-elektromobilja-v-chetvertom-kvartale-2021-goda-454431-2021/>

CHAPTER 18

Belarus: national expositions as a tool to promote trade and economic interests

In December 2021, Belarus approved the Plan of National Exhibitions of the country in foreign countries for 2022. Its distinctive feature is the focus of the Belarusian side on the promotion of its trade and economic interests in Asia, Africa, and Latin America - Vietnam, Mongolia, South Korea, India, China, Turkey, Qatar, Iran, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Brazil. It is noteworthy that Belarusian officials will take part in a number of exhibitions for the first time, but will use their previous experience to promote their interests there. These include, in particular, **the Vietnam Expo** and **Kenya International Trade Exhibition**.

As for the **Vietnam Expo** trade fair, it has been held annually since 1990 and is one of the largest in Southeast Asia, regularly attracting hundreds of exhibitors 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 there by a national exposition, with more than 50 large enterprises with a focus on "science-intensive, complex technical products as well as goods of the agricultural group and foodstuffs"²⁷⁴. In particular, the Belarusian State University (BSU) alone exhibited some 30 scientific and technical developments in agriculture, instrument-making, chemistry, healthcare and information technologies. "In particular, the exposition included a 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"²⁷⁵. The BSU biopesticides for complex plant protection "Aurin" and "Stimul", which are used to stimulate plant growth and development and protect

274 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/>

275 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-tehnicheskije-razrabotki-na-torgovoj-jarmarke-vo-vjetname-327981-2018/>

plants from bacterial and fungal infections, were also presented here. The exhibition visitors were also interested in ultrasonic gas meters, "Agent B-602" device for remote monitoring of mobile objects, medical installation for general hyperthermia "Ptich-M", antineoplastic preparations, disinfectants, edible packaging films. The potential of the Belarusian food export was demonstrated in Ho Chi Minh City by such enterprises as Krynica, Belsolod, Spartak, Minsk Kristall - Managing Company of Minsk Kristall Group, Minsk Sparkling Wines Factory, Slodych Confectionery Factory, Kommunarka, Krasny Pestrovik, Krasny Mozyryanin, Lidapischkontsy. 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 a trade gateway to the entire region of Southeast Asia, with a population of over 600 million people"²⁷⁶. So, judging by all appearances, the Belarusian exposition at the Vietnam Expo in 2022 will be even more extensive and diverse, taking into account the experience already gained here.

Belarus's interest in the **Kenya International Trade Exhibition (KITE)** business forum can be explained by the fact that it is the largest exhibition event in East Africa. In 2019, Belarus was represented there for the first time 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, Lidakhleboproduct and Smorgon Kombinat Hleboproductov demonstrated their products in the Kenyan capital. Their participation in the exhibition gave them "new opportunities to promote Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment, fertilizers, food, and agricultural products in the Kenyan market"²⁷⁷ and pointed the way to the markets of other Eastern and

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

277 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/>

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 Pevin 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)"²⁷⁸. 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"²⁷⁹. 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 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"²⁸⁰. All of these facts speak for one thing: participation in 2022 in major trade fairs in the "far arc" countries can open up new export opportunities for Belarusian companies, the potential of which is truly enormous.

278 "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/>

279 Belarusian enterprises at FoodAgro agreed to supply agricultural machinery to Kenya [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-na-foodagro-dogovorilis-o-postavkah-selhoztehniki-v-keniju-357705-2019/](https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-na-foodagro-dogovorilis-o-postavkah-selhoztehniki-v-keniju-357705-2019/www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-na-foodagro-dogovorilis-o-postavkah-selhoztehniki-v-keniju-357705-2019/)

280 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.

CHAPTER 19

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 import substitution production of at least USD 600 million"²⁸¹. 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"²⁸². 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"²⁸³.

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 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

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

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

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

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"²⁸⁴. 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"²⁸⁵.

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 products by 30 million dollars to 560 million"²⁸⁶.

Interesting experience in the development of import substitution has also been accumulated at the Energokomplekt production association in Vitebsk, where in

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

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

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

2019 "86% of the total volume worth \$112 million was exported. The Vitebsk enterprise accounts for 70% of all cable products manufactured in Belarus"²⁸⁷. 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"²⁸⁸. 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"²⁸⁹.

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,

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

288 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.

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

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"²⁹⁰.

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"²⁹¹. The Ministry of Economy has chosen 47 most significant projects with investments worth about eight billion Belarusian rubles, which will make it possible to produce import-substituting products worth over nine billion Belarusian rubles.

A busy action plan for the development of import-substituting production for 2022 is again formed in Concern Bellesbumprom, which "defines a target for the production and sale of import-substituting products worth \$876.1 million (which is 31% higher than the national target plan)"²⁹². 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

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

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

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

cellulose, chipboard, fibreboard (MDF), plywood, uncoated paper and cardboard, corrugated cardboard and boxes made of it, paper sacks, uncoated cardboard, newsprint and sanitary paper, articles thereof. In 2021 the growth rate of import-substituting products in the concern is 163% by 2020²⁹³.

Interesting import substitution measures were also implemented in 2021 at Krichevcementoshifer OJSC, one of the largest Belarusian enterprises for the production of building materials. In particular, sandy cement was actively used there for this purpose. In January-October 2021, the supplies of sandy cement increased four times, to 270 thousand tons, compared to 2020. Instead of foreign slag, local "river sand with high silica content was added to this cement. Cement grade and quality remain at the same level, but the prime cost of the product drops substantially"²⁹⁴. In other words, at the same capacity, the company has increased the profitability of each ton of cement at the expense of cheap domestic sand.

Another interesting example in this context is the opening at the end of December 2021 at Medplast OJSC in Gomel of a site for the production of vacuum tubes for venous blood sampling. This product "is an import substitute - it has not been produced in the country so far, and the needs of medical institutions were met by import supplies. State-of-the-art equipment has been installed at the station. The plant will manufacture 121 different types of tubes of various sizes and volumes, in compliance with all sanitary standards."²⁹⁵. 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.

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

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

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

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"²⁹⁶. 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"²⁹⁷. 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 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 concern Belneftekhim 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

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

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

produced from "Mogilevkhimvolokna" yarns, but in the Rostov region. Then this raw material goes back to Mogilev"²⁹⁸. As a result of the agreement reached with BelEmsa, the spunlace will now be moved from one end of Mogilev to the other.

The multifaceted efforts to replace imported supplies are also characteristic of the Belarusian energy sector, where there are great opportunities for organisations of the peat industry. Let us remind you that about two million tonnes of peat are extracted in Belarus annually. The priority here is given to the production of peat fuel, which makes it possible to replace the use of imported natural gas and hard coal. At the same time "a special attention is paid to increasing the supplies of these products to the organisations of the cement industry and the housing and communal services. For example, over the past five years, consumption of cut peat in boiler 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"²⁹⁹. By the end of 2025, these volumes are expected to increase to 160 thousand tons. And the use of peat in the cement industry after the implementation of the peat drying combustion project has increased its consumption from 80 thousand tonnes in 2015 to 358 thousand tonnes in 2021. Production of peat products for non-fuel purposes is also growing. In particular, the Brest Oblast is now working on the issue of creating a new type of it - cover material for the cultivation of mushrooms. "The total volume of the domestic market of this product in the country is estimated at about 50,000 tonnes a year. Most of this volume was previously imported. Given the availability of our own raw material base, there are opportunities to substitute for these imports"³⁰⁰.

298 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/>

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

300 Ibid.

The Brest Oblast is also working on the development of other areas to replace imported products with domestic ones. In particular, an appeal has been sent to the Academy of Sciences on the need to finalize technologies for beneficiation of refractory clay for OJSC Berezastroymaterialy and quartz sands in the 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"³⁰¹ .

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-substituting projects in the republic. They produced \$2.5 billion worth of products, or almost 36% of the country's import-substituting output."³⁰² . 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

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

302 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-razviti-importozameschenija-i-proizvodstvennoj-kooperatsii-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-8115/>

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"³⁰³. 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"³⁰⁴, held an exhibition and seminar for small and medium businesses. The event was attended by over a hundred representatives from 63 organisations which might be involved in cooperative interaction with the flagship of the Belarusian automotive industry. The company is confident that mastering new positions by entrepreneurs will certainly require both time and investment, but the import substitution products resulting from this interaction will be in demand not only at the Minsk Automobile Plant, but also by other participants of the 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.

303 Rusinovich, O. On the development of import substitution and production cooperation under sanctions / O. Rusinovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/comments/view/o-razvitii-importozameschenija-i-proizvodstvennoj-koooperatsii-v-uslovijah-sanktsij-8115/>

304 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/>

CHAPTER 20

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)"³⁰⁵.

In particular, four companies engaged in the chemical, metalworking and logistics industries were registered as residents of **FEZ Grodnoinvest** in 2021. For example, Portela company with Portuguese investments is implementing a project to build a transportation and logistics centre in Grodno district. One more resident, Unis Trade, is busy organizing the production of metal structures in Grodno, where "a manufacturing and warehouse complex will be built and modern equipment for manufacturing various metal structures will be purchased. Production is planned to start by the end of 2022"³⁰⁶. The company OV-PlastSnab is also planning to produce a wide range of synthetic polymer products at the Aulsa site. Finally, in December 2021, LLC "ServicePromPak Group" was registered in the BMSA with an investment project on creation of a high-tech enterprise for the production of a wide range of polyolefin packaging for export and other residents of the BMSA to be implemented in the Grandiče

305 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-piatuju-chast-osnovnyh-respublikanski-pokazatelej-485111-2022/>

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

region. "Production of the first batch of products is planned for the second quarter of 2022. It is planned that 45 jobs will be created."³⁰⁷ .

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"³⁰⁸ . 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" .³⁰⁹

In **the Brest free economic zone** the first resident registered in 2022 is Soyuz Greenhouse Complex LLC, an enterprise with Belarusian-Polish capital, which was allocated a land plot of about 60 hectares near Brest airport in January this year. "In three years there will appear a high-tech greenhouse complex with the capacity of over 30 thousand tons of vegetables a year. Annual production volume will be around €33m."³¹⁰ . 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

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

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

309 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/>

310 A new FEZ Brest resident is going to produce vegetables [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novyy-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"³¹¹, 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 has been identified as one of the priorities of social and economic development of Belarus"³¹². 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 the 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"³¹³ and effectively address urgent issues of development of the Belarusian economy.

311 New resident registered in FEZ Brest [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

<https://www.belta.by/regions/view/novogo-rezidenta-zaregistirovali-v-sez-brest-490538-2022/>

312 The first resident with Iranian capital is registered in FEZ Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2022. -

URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/pervyj-rezident-s-iranskim-kapitalom-zaregistirovan-v-sez-vitebsk-484100-2022/>

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

CHAPTER 21

Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: Every vector needs attention

One of the priority objectives for the development of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) in 2021 was to increase the share in the exchange turnover of companies from the "far arc" countries - Asia, Africa, Latin America. "This can be explained by the considerable potential that exists in cooperation with these partners, the successful implementation of which promises considerable benefits to both Belarusian exporters and foreign importers"³¹⁴. By the end of 2021 more than 27.5 thousand economic entities from 69 countries had already registered at the BUTB. Most of the companies from Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Ukraine are currently operating on the exchange. As for the growth dynamics of the number of new exhibitors, in 2021 China held a leading position. At the same time, the geography of new participants in trading sessions continued to expand steadily on BUTB.

Back in mid-September 2021, one of the largest suppliers of timber products to the **Japanese** market, Shimizu Lumber, founded in 1950 and headquartered in Kobe on the island of Honshu, completed the paperwork, becoming the first accredited resident of Japan at the BUTB. "The company regards the entry into the Belarusian market as an opportunity to diversify its sources of supply of woodworking products, first of all sawn softwood lumber, which is in great demand in Japan"³¹⁵. Let us note that the firm already buys a considerable amount of raw wood and sawn timber from Southeast Asia, North America and Europe. Nevertheless, in Belarus, the company also hopes to establish long-term fruitful cooperation with local suppliers.

At the end of December 2021, the first company from **Pakistan**, Sakafat Forever, was accredited to the BUTB, which intends to work here "in both

314 Zalesky, B. The goal is a trajectory of growth. Chronicle of international cooperation / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 272.

315 Belarusian lumber will be supplied to Japan through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-pilomaterialy-budut-postavljatsja-v-japoniju-cherez-butb-460335-2021/>

directions - import of goods from Belarus and export of Pakistani products to the Belarusian market"³¹⁶, not excluding trade with companies from other countries through transit transactions through the BUTB. In the Belarusian market, the Pakistani company will start with the purchase of lumber, as wood products are in high demand in this South Asian country. On the other hand, it has already started working on opportunities to sell rice and other agricultural products, which are key export destinations from Pakistan, in Belarus.

At the beginning of December 2021, the first lumber deal was made at BUTB **by an Israeli** company accredited here as a non-resident broker. "The volume of the pilot batch was 150 cbm with delivery to the port of Ashdod. The pilot deal is expected to become a starting point for regular exports of domestic [Belarusian] lumber products to the Israeli market"³¹⁷. An important detail: in parallel with the export of sawn timber, the Belarusian Steel Works is currently working on deliveries of metal products to Israel. In the first decade of December 2021, a circle of potential Israeli buyers was formed. It is expected that after their accreditation the first purchase orders will be placed at the BUTB. "The Israeli market for this commodity category is estimated at around \$4 billion, which means that virtually any volume can potentially be sold through the exchange platform. In addition, we [in Israel] now have a real construction boom, and the demand for rebar and steel structures is very high."³¹⁸.

At the end of November 2021, **Indian** manufacturers of facing materials, spare parts for agricultural machinery and industrial equipment expressed serious interest in trading their products on the BUTB. In particular, Indian manufacturers of ceramic tiles, porcelain stoneware and epoxy mortars, which

316 BUTB has accredited the first company from Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-akkreditovala-pervuju-kompaniju-iz-pakistana-477387-2021/>

317 A BUTB broker in Israel made its first transaction [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/broker-butb-v-izraile-sovershil-pervuju-sdelku-473363-2021/>

318 BUTB is working on the possibility of supplying Belarusian lumber and metal products to Israel [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-prorabatyaet-vozmozhnost-postavok-belorusskih-pilomaterialov-i-metalloproduktov-izrael-466415-2021/>

are in high demand among Belarusian construction companies, were traded on the exchange. If we take into account that in 2021 construction industry products have repeatedly become the subject of transit transactions - most often between Russian and Baltic residents - it is very likely that buyers will be found quickly in the event that Indian companies place bids for them. "In addition to construction materials, Indian companies have announced their readiness to put up bearings, thrust rings, spigots and other spare parts for tractors, cars and construction machinery at the stock exchange auctions. LED lamps and equipment for the confectionery industry are also among the promising commodity items"³¹⁹.

Another interesting example of the geographical expansion of BUTB's business cooperation is in Europe. In December 2021, an agreement was reached to develop cooperation in the field of exchange trade in agricultural products with the **Serbian** NSCOMEX commodity exchange in Novi Sad. The parties agreed to work out the matter of mutual access to the trade between Serbian and Belarusian companies. To this end, agro-industrial companies of the two countries will be given an additional tool to perform export-import operations. The BUTB sees great prospects in reaching such agreements, as "the most effective way to promote exchange services abroad is to accredit non-resident brokers, who take care of issues of attracting new companies and usually provide assistance with settlements and logistics."³²⁰. The results of this interaction between the two exchanges are not expected to be long in 2022.

In January 2022, the geography of e-transactions at BUTB expanded to 70 countries. This follows the accreditation of the first **Indian** company, Ark Packaging Solutions. In 2021, five new countries - Brazil, Gibraltar, Japan, Pakistan and South Korea - were added to the BUTB. Also "by the end of 2021

319 Indian manufacturers of building materials and promotional equipment are interested in the B2B platform BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/indijskie-proizvoditeli-strojmaterijalov-i-promoborudovanija-zainteresovalis-b2b-ploschadkoj-butb-471997-2021/>

320 BUTB and the Serbian Commodity Exchange agree on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-i-tovarnaja-birzha-serbii-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-475901-2021/>

the top ten markets for Belarusian goods include Lithuania, Germany, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Poland, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Slovakia and China"³²¹ . It is clear that various products from Belarus were supplied to different markets through the BUTB: lumber, fuel pellets, rapeseed oil, and sugar beet products to European countries; lumber products, wooden poles, stakes, and semi-finished vet-blue leather products to British buyers; milk powder, butter, cheeses, and oil-bearing products to Russian consumers. As for the People's Republic of China, "whose market is considered one of the most promising"³²² , so far lumber, rapeseed oil and sugar are in the lead. But it appears that this could change significantly in 2022.

The fact is that **China** is among those countries whose presence on the BUTB platform is growing rapidly. Suffice it to say that in 2021, the trade turnover between Belarus and China increased three and a half times. There were several reasons for that. "First, the number of Chinese companies accredited on the Belarusian exchange platform almost doubled. Two of them became brokers and are engaged in promotion of Belarusian products on the PRC market"³²³ . For reference, it should be noted that as of December 1, 2021 64 companies from the Celestial Empire were accredited on BUCE. In January 2022 Zhejiang Pinke Textile Co., Ltd. became a new BUTB broker in China. It plans to attract buyers of agro-industrial products and considers rapeseed oil and meat and dairy products the most promising products for this purpose.

The intention of the China Engineering Corporation CAMS (CAMSE), announced in January 2022, to purchase meat and other agro-industrial products using the exchange mechanism also looks promising in this context. Recall that

321 BUTB expanded its exchange trading geography to 70 countries [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirila-geografiju-birzhevoj-torgovli-do-70-stran-479981-2022>

322 Zalesky, B.L. The Far Abroad is the Benchmark of Cooperation / B.L. Zalesky // Materialy XVIII Mezinarodni vedecko-prakticka conference "Aplikovane vedecke novinky - 2021". Volume 7: Prague. Publishing House "Education and Science". - C. 16.

323 A new BUTB broker in China will focus on imports of Belarusian agricultural products [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novyj-broker-butb-v-kitae-sosredotochitsja-na-importe-belorusskoj-selhozproduksii-479109-2022/>

SAMSE is the largest shareholder in the Sino-Belarusian Industrial Park 'Great Stone'. This certainly opens up great opportunities for BUTB to cooperate in the field of logistics. "Given the existing infrastructure and location, Great Stone could become an ideal logistics hub for consolidation of containerised cargoes with goods that are sold to China via the exchange. These are primarily lumber, rapeseed oil, milk powder, meat and flax fibre"³²⁴. An important detail: a subsidiary of SAMSE purchased four million dollars worth of beef in Belarus in 2021. In 2022 it plans to further increase its purchases not only of meat, but also other agricultural products made in Belarus. It expects to expand the range of suppliers and make deals on more favorable terms with the help of the BUTB.

The next important trend is the expansion of the list of products involved in mutual trade. Previously, Chinese representatives were more interested in Belarusian lumber; now, sales of sugar and oilseed products through the BUTB are on the rise. Another important point is special trading sessions targeting the Chinese market, with delivery to the end buyer. In addition, at the end of 2021, thanks to the implementation of a set of measures to develop exchange trade with China, it became possible to specify the value of goods and pay for exchange transactions in Chinese yuan. As early as January 2022, the first such export transaction took place on the BUTB. The seller was a woodworking company from China and the buyer was a European trader, supplying lumber products to the European Union, Asia and Africa. "The transaction resulted in the sale of edged softwood lumber worth a total of CNY1.8 million, or the equivalent of \$287,000."³²⁵. It is believed that this first successful experience of settlements in the national currency will be a good example for all Chinese companies accredited at BUTB, as in this case the currency risks of the

324 BUTB is ready to ensure uninterrupted supplies of Belarusian agricultural products to China [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-gotova-obespechit-besperebojnye-postavki-belorusskoj-selhozprodukcii-v-kitaj-481488-2022/>

325 The first RMB transaction took place at BOOTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. -URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervuju-sdelku-v-kitajskih-juanjah-sovershili-na-butb-481365-2022/>

transaction participants are reduced, as well as the time of receipt of funds to the seller's account is reduced.

An interesting addition to the picture of interaction between the Belarusian exchange platform and Chinese partners is the following fact. In January 2022, the first transit transaction between Chinese residents, who decided to use this trading platform to minimize the risk of a counterparty default, was executed on the BUTB. As a result, "a Hong Kong company sold 80 tonnes of beef to a mainland Chinese company. The transaction amounted to \$354,000. Previously, such transactions had been made mainly to companies from Russia and the Baltic states in order to insure foreign trade risks.³²⁶ Of course, this fact is an eloquent testimony to the growing trust of Chinese business representatives in the Belarusian exchange market. And there is every reason to believe that the volume of transit trade involving Chinese residents on the BUCE will only increase. As well as in other areas of cooperation.

Another outcome of 2021 is that the Russian vector of cooperation continues to be a priority for the BSE, as **Russia** retained first place in terms of the amount of exchange turnover with Belarus. In addition, as of January 1, 2022, Russian companies accounted for almost half of the 5,539 foreign companies accredited on this exchange platform - 2,745. This also shows that "exchange trade is gradually becoming one of the drivers of Belarusian-Russian integration and a very promising project implemented within the framework of the Union State.³²⁷

. And, from all appearances, this positive trend will only steadily gain momentum in 2022.

In January 2022, Alor Asset Management, a company with many years of experience in brokerage services, was accredited with the third broker in the Russian market to increase exchange turnover and the number of trading

326 The first transit transaction between Chinese residents takes place on BOOTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervaja-tranzitnaja-sdelka-mezhdu-rezidentami-kitaja-sovershena-na-butb-474701-2021/>

327 Zalesky, B.L. Exchange trade as a promising integration project of interaction between regions / B.L. Zalesky // Materiały XVII Międzynarodowej naukowo-praktycznej konferencji "Wykształcenie i nauka bez granic - 2021", Volume 1. Przemysł: Nauka i studia. - C. 10.

participants from Russia on the BSE. Its partners include major trading floors such as the Moscow Exchange and the St Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange. With the help of the new broker BUTB is planning to considerably increase the inflow of clients from the neighboring country as well as to expand the list of Belarusian products sold in Russia. And this despite the fact that in 2021 the Russian market already had a fairly wide range of products through the BUTB. These included butter, dried milk, oilseeds processing products and cement, which accounted for about 80 percent of export sales. On top of this, "Russian participants regularly bought semi-finished leather "vet-blue", scrap metal, building materials and foodstuffs through the exchange"³²⁸ . The emergence of the new broker should give a new impetus to the partnership of the Belarusian exchange in Russia.

In 2022, BUTB will also prioritise a new and promising area such as the sale of Belarusian-made feed additives - L-lysine sulphate, wheat gluten and premixes - in the Union State. This will be facilitated by the BUTB's partnership with the Belarusian National Biotechnology Company (BNBK), which is now rapidly increasing the export of feed additives. In December 2021, the BNBK's cooperation with the exchange moved to a new stage. At that time, the first export transaction for L-lysine sulphate to Russia was concluded"³²⁹ . And in January 2022, the amount of BNBC's export transactions had already doubled. So the prospects here are very promising.

A clear priority for the BUTB in 2022 will be to attract potential buyers of Belarusian goods from Russian regions, although in 2021 the volume of exchange trade with Russian regions grew very significantly, for some of them many times over. For example, trade with Moscow Region, where Belarusian companies supplied butter, flour, crushed stone, and leather semi-finished products, doubled. Leningrad Oblast saw a similar growth rate. One of the

328 BUTB expands its network of brokers in Russia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-rasshirjaet-set-brokerov-v-rossii-480545-2022/>

329 BNBC increases exports of feed additives through an exchange [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bnbk-naraschivaet-eksport-kormovyh-dobavok-cherez-birzhu-482306-2022/>

reasons for this success appears to be the fact that, as of the beginning of December 2021, 296 economic entities in the Leningrad Region were "accredited to the BUTB, about a third of which regularly participate in trading. Portland cement and meat and dairy products are mainly supplied to the region through the exchange platform, while ferrous metal products and coal are purchased mainly"³³⁰. In 2022, this exchange trading range will be significantly expanded to include confectionery, packaging materials and office furniture. The Chelyabinsk Region also has a good record in this respect, with 64 representatives accredited at the BUTB, and "the amount of transactions made by them has reached \$76 million"³³¹.

There is every reason to believe that entrepreneurs from Bashkortostan will start taking an active part in bidding at the BUTB in 2022. After all, about 70 Bashkir companies engaged in ferrous metallurgy, petrochemicals, agriculture and light industry took part in a business seminar held in December 2021, where they were able to see for themselves how the active use of the exchange mechanism in cross-border trade has a positive effect on export volumes, helps diversify its structure and creates a favourable environment for strengthening business contacts.

Udmurtia is another Russian region that intends to considerably intensify cooperation with the BUTB in 2022. At the end of 2021, several Udmurt producers of agricultural products, metalware, machinery and equipment expressed their willingness to be accredited on the Belarusian exchange platform. In particular, a specific agreement on the use of BUTB as an additional sales channel for lumber and wood boards in Belarus, the European Union and Asian countries has been reached with two leading Udmurt producers of timber products - Orion LLC and Vostok-resource TPK LLC. In addition,

330 Enterprises in the Leningrad region intend to sell confectionery and furniture at the BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-leninradskoj-oblasti-namereny-prodat-na-butb-konditerskie-izdelija-i-mebel-472442-2021/>

331 The development of exchange trade between Belarus and Bashkortostan will contribute to the growth of commodity turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/razvitie-birzhevoj-torgovli-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-bashkortostanom-posposobstvuet-rostu-vzaimnogo-473580-2021/>

sales of sawn timber and board products to third countries through transit deals are considered to be another area of BUTB's interaction with enterprises of Udmurtia's timber industry. "In this respect the most promising markets are the Baltic States and China, where BUTB has already formed a circle of regular customers"³³². There are about 120 such companies in the Baltic States alone, and the total value of transactions in 2021 exceeded 300 million dollars.

The development of exchange trade as a factor contributing to the growth of trade turnover was also discussed in February 2022 at the meeting of the working group on cooperation between Belarus and Karachay-Cherkessia. The discussion pointed out that the most promising area for exchange cooperation is the segment of the agro-industrial complex, as "Belarusian companies processing grain would certainly be interested in buying those products from Karachay-Cherkessia. First of all, it is wheat, oats, buckwheat, corn. In addition, Belarus has well-developed vegetable oil production, so rapeseed, sunflower and other oilseeds are also in great demand in exchange trading"³³³. It seems that these proposals have found their way into the 2022-2024 Road Map for cooperation between the parties. And exchange trade will become another tool for Belarus and Karachay-Cherkessia to increase commodity turnover and expand the range of mutual supplies in the near future.

332 BUTB plans to trade lumber products from Udmurtia [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-planiruet-torgovat-piloproduktsiej-iz-udmurtii-476203-2021/>

333 BUTB proposes to develop exchange trade in agricultural products between Belarus and Karachay-Cherkessia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/butb-predlagaet-razvivat-birzheviju-torgovlju-selhozproduktsiej-mezhdu-belarusiju-i-karachaevu-483814-2022/>

CHAPTER 22

\The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange: The Asian vector as a promising option e-commerce destination

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. Let us remind you that "as of the end of 2021, over 27.5 thousand business entities from 69 countries have already been registered on the BIE. <...> At the same time, the geography of new participants of trading sessions held here continued to expand steadily at the BUTB"³³⁴. In this connection 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..."³³⁵. And, it must be said, the BUTB is already taking energetic measures to address the above tasks.

As far as the Chinese direction is concerned, in February 2022, China Merchants CHN-BLR Commerce and Logistics Company (CMCB), which is part of the China Merchants Group Corporation, expressed its willingness to become a logistics operator at the Belarus-China exchange to actively facilitate the development of the Belarus-China exchange trade. The point 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

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

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

are concentrated on the BUUTB. 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"³³⁶. 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."³³⁷

Speaking about promotion of BUOTB's interests in Central Asia, it should be noted that in March 2022 the Belarusian exchange platform accredited a new broker in Kazakhstan - First-KO LLP, which became the 16th in the network of BUOTB stock brokers representing already 11 countries. It is assumed that the arrival of the broker will increase the number of participants from Kazakhstan, which on March 1, 2022, had already been accredited 85, and will also

336 The Chinese company CMCB will become the logistics operator of BUTB in Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitajskaja-kompanija-cmcb-stanet-logisticheskim-operatorom-butb-na-aziatskom-napravlenii-486408-2022/>

337 Belarusian lumber sold to the UAE for the first time through BUTB [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-pilomaterialy-vpervye-prodany-v-oae-chez-butb-485480-2022/>

contribute to the growth of the Belarusian-Kazakh commodity 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."³³⁸ . The new broker intends to facilitate the work of Kazakhstani companies in the Belarusian market and focus on the goods for which Belarus is the leader in the post-Soviet space - dairy products, potatoes, tyres and spare parts for special 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."³³⁹ 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.

338 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>

339 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 23

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..."³⁴⁰. 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. For example, 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"³⁴¹. 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

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

341 "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-kubinskaja-zona-osobogo-razvitiya-mariel-budut-sotrudniczat-v-privlechenii-investitsij-426316-2021/>

Cuban pharmaceutical companies"³⁴² . 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"³⁴³ . 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 region 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... <...> will begin. Dealer and service networks in every region of Uzbekistan will also be expanded"³⁴⁴ .

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

342 "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/>

343 "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/>

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

and painting shop will be launched"³⁴⁵. 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"³⁴⁶. 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. The FEZ is intended to substantially strengthen the export component of the region, which already has "more than 80 exporting companies supplying abroad more than 50 types of products"³⁴⁷. So here too, the range of joint interests with Great Stone could be quite extensive.

345 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>

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

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

CHAPTER 24

Great Stone Industrial Park: Development with a focus on new technologies

The results of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park "Great Stone" in 2021 eloquently testify to the fact that this special economic zone in Belarus continues to develop steadily, attracting new technologies to investment projects. At the end of 2021, 85 residents were registered here. By early 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"³⁴⁸. In the last days of 2021, Belarus-based SinRubEnego 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"³⁴⁹.

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"³⁵⁰.

The 86th resident of the industrial park in March 2022 was Bel Samoed Cloud Scientific and Technical Company LLC, which "will develop digital financial

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

349 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/>

350 Yakimov, P. The 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/>

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"³⁵¹. 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"³⁵², 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."³⁵³. It is expected that 90 percent of the products produced in Velikiy Kamen by the new resident will be exported.

Finally, another Belarusian company, HomeLand Group LLC, became the 89th resident and plans to manufacture multifunctional noise-proof AeroCapsule cabins with an automated control system based on the Internet of Things - a data

351 Great Stone's new 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/>

352 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/>

353 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/>

transfer concept - in the industrial park. 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"³⁵⁴.

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"³⁵⁵. 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"³⁵⁶. So in this direction, too, we see the successful implementation of the plans outlined a few years ago.

354 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/>

355 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.

356 Yakimov, P. The 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/>

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