

Belarus - Asia: the Vector of Partnership

Countries of Asia are traditionally an important area of Belarus's multi-vector foreign policy course and promotion of Belarusian interests in the "far arc" regions. The states of the continent now claim to be compared with the locomotive of global economic development, as evidenced by the calculations of the International Monetary Fund. They show that the countries of Asia will show the fastest growth in 2018. The continent, whose population exceeds 62 percent of all people living on the planet, generates more than 46 percent of the gross world product. In the future, Asia's share of the population and its share of output will only increase due to higher rates of population and economic growth. Recall that of the 12 countries with a population of more than 100 million people, seven already account for the Asian continent: China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan and the Philippines. All of these facts objectively actualize Belarus's interest in Asia as a capacious, promising and rapidly expanding market for Belarusian goods and services, as well as a promising donor of investments in the Belarusian economy. How does the Belarusian side master the Asian market? This study is about that.



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Chronicle of mutually beneficial cooperation

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Table of contents

Table of contents	1
The Asian vector: potential and prospects	2
Belarus-ASEAN: cooperation with a view to use the positive potential	15
Belarus-Vietnam: prospective cooperation and media	28
Belarus - India: large-scale interaction and media	38
Belarus-Indonesia: Future-Oriented Cooperation and Media	47
Belarus-Bangladesh: from preconditions of growth to full-fledged cooperation	56
Belarus-Pakistan: Mutual complementarity formula	65
Belarus-Georgia: new initiatives and areas for cooperation	76

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The Asian vector: potential and prospects

Countries of Asia are traditionally "an important direction of Belarus' multi-vector foreign policy course and promotion of Belarusian interests in the 'far arc' regions"¹. This can be explained by a number of circumstances, the most significant of which are several.

First, the states of this continent now claim to be the locomotive of global economic development, as evidenced by the calculations of the International Monetary Fund. They suggest that "Asia will show the fastest growth in 2018, and in some cases the growth rate will exceed 5%."² The continent, whose population now exceeds 62 percent of all people on the planet, already generates more than 46 percent of the gross world product. Looking to the future, "in the future, Asia's share of the population and its share of output will increase due to higher rates of population and economic growth"³. It is pertinent to recall in this regard that of the 12 countries with a population exceeding 100 million, seven are already on the Asian continent. These are China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan and the Philippines. And soon they will be joined by Vietnam.

Secondly, the continent's development prospects are eloquently complemented by the fact that a significant portion of the world's oil and gas, tin and tungsten reserves are concentrated here. More specifically, "Asia is adequately endowed with all kinds of natural resources compared to other regions of the globe, as it contains more than 41% of the world's fuel and energy resources,"⁴, as well as almost one third of the arable land, one fifth of all pastures, almost two thirds of the irrigated area and more than half of the global livestock population. Perhaps for this reason, too, the role of agriculture is great on the continent, employing more than half of the active population. Suffice it

¹ Review of the results of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2017 [Electronic resource]. - 2018 . - URL:

<http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/a8a5169b6e487b3b.html>

² McKinnon, N. Perspectives on Asian Economies / N. McKinnon // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL:

<https://1prime.ru/experts/20171101/828086356.html>

³ Asia's role in the global economy [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://popecon.ru/otrivki/889-rol-azii-v-mirovoi-ekonomike.html>

⁴ Natural Resources of Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2009. - URL: <http://mirovaja-ekonomika.ru/prirodnye-resursy-azii/>

to say that at the beginning of this century the continent was already producing more than half of the world's agricultural products.

Thirdly, at the same time Asian countries were "characterized by innovation activity, which can explain the record GDP growth rates in the region, which on average are 10 times higher than the global average"⁵. How not to recall that since the second half of the last century, "East, South-East and South Asia have become the most important centers of the development of the world economy"⁶. It was then that everyone started talking about the "Japanese economic miracle", about the "Asian tigers" - South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, a little later Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia were added to them. The beginning of the new century is the time when the "Asian dragon" - China, the "Indian economic miracle", and the "new Asian tiger" - Vietnam - entered the world stage. Is it any wonder that the center of global economic growth is shifting to Asia, which we are witnessing today? And as a result, "Growth in emerging and developing Asia in 2018-2019 will be around 6.5 percent, broadly the same as in 2017. The region still accounts for more than half of global economic growth."⁷

Fourth, the aforementioned trends in the development of Asia's potential objectively actualize Belarus's interest in this continent of the planet as a capacious, promising and rapidly expanding market for Belarusian goods and services, as well as a promising donor of investments in the Belarusian economy. The more so because "the Asian market is considered one of the most promising not only in terms of selling goods at low prices, but also as a platform for exports. This is why many companies from Belarus and the CIS countries strive to find regular buyers there"⁸. The fact that the countries of the continent import a very wide range of products that are manufactured in Belarus and are already successfully sold there is evidenced by the figures. For example, in 2014 alone, "the trade turnover with Asian countries was about \$4 billion"⁹

⁵ Gorokhov S.A. Modern Asia / S.A. Gorokhov [Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: http://geo.1september.ru/view_article.php?ID=201001202.

⁶ Namkhanova M.V. Asian vector of Eurasian integration / M.V. Namkhanova, O.A. Kaurova, O.A. Osodoeva // Vestnik Zabaikalskogo Universiteta. - 2015. - №8. - C. 131.

⁷ Perspectives on the global economy. January 2018. [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.imf.org/ru/Publications/WEO/Issues/2018/01/11/world-economic-outlook-update-january-2018>

⁸ Exports to Asian countries [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.postavki.by/export-asia/>.

⁹ Review of the results of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of

. And this, of course, is not the limit. Obviously, the Asian market still remains underutilized by Belarusian exporters in terms of promoting many types of their products there, including those manufactured by mechanical engineering, electronic and petrochemical industries. We are talking about the existing high growth prospects of supplies of Belarusian trucks, tractors, machine tools, bearings, chemical fibers, electronic and medical devices to this region of the world.

Furthermore, the Asian direction is one of the priorities for the Belarusian military-industrial complex, which has a considerable technological reserve, but does not always have the necessary funds to develop the available know-how. Creation of joint ventures with partners in Asia "enables the Belarusian military industrial complex not only to get access to the local market, but also to get the funds necessary for research and development activities"¹⁰. This is why today we can confidently predict scientific and production cooperation in the military and technical sphere, which is already developing along several vectors of interaction: "First, it is the development by Belarusian manufacturers of equipment to meet the requirements of Asian customers. <...> Secondly, it is investment cooperation, foreign companies joining the ranks of owners of Belarusian manufacturers of military equipment. <...> Thirdly, it is the provision of services for modernization of Soviet-made military equipment at the facilities of the Belarusian military-industrial complex <...>. Fourthly, it is joint development of new equipment. <...> Fifth, it is a direct transfer of foreign technologies to Belarus"¹¹.

It should be noted that in recent years, the Belarusian side has been trying to actualize quite a variety of tools to intensify cooperation with Asian partners. Thus, in 2016 alone, there were "11 meetings of intergovernmental commissions, committees and working groups on economic cooperation with the countries of the region, some of

Foreign Affairs in 2014 [Electronic resource]. -2015 . - URL:
<http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/a2973e28e4b86261.html>

¹⁰ The Asian vector can help the development of the Belarusian military-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://belarusinfocus.info/by/mizhnarodnyya-adnosiny/aziatskiy-vektor-mozhet-pomoch-razvitiyu-belorusskogo-vpk>

¹¹ The future of the Belarusian military-industrial complex largely depends on successes in Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <https://belarusinfocus.mfo/by/p/7303>

which were held for the first time (China, Pakistan, Cambodia, Korea, Iran, Vietnam"¹² . And in November 2017, an investment forum "Belarus Invites Asia" organized by the Belarusian side was held in Singapore, aimed at developing cooperation of our country with the states of the Asian region in the financial and investment sphere. Representatives of the leading Asian trade and investment companies and financial institutions took part in the forum. The format of this forum provided a good opportunity to discuss "the issues of establishing cooperation between Belarusian and Asian companies, the interest of regional investors in the placement of Belarusian debt instruments in the Asian stock markets"¹³ . Let's hope that concrete agreements reached within the framework of this Belarusian Investment Forum in Singapore will soon appear in the form of real joint mutually beneficial projects, filling with new content the statement of the head of of the Belarusian state that "one of the priorities in the foreign policy of the country <...> is still the Asian vector"¹⁴ .

Belarus and Southeast Asia:

In Search of New Niches for Bilateral Partnership

Southeast Asia is a region of the world that actively participates in the processes of economic integration, where foreign trade is one of the leading factors of socio-economic development. "Even the lagging economies of Southeast Asia are characterized by a medium degree of openness"¹⁵ . And there is every reason to believe that in the near future this region "will become one of the most important global economic centers"¹⁶ . Belarus' obvious and promising economic interests in Southeast Asia are the huge and fast-growing market for its products and opportunities for

2016. - URL:

¹² Review of the results of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2016 [Electronic resource]. -2017 . - URL:

<http://mfa.gov.by/publication/reports/ea444d5sceb4798d.html>

¹³ Vasily Matyushkevsky makes a working visit to Singapore [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL:

<http://www.government.by/ru/content/7634>

¹⁴ Presentation of credentials [Electronic resource]. <http://president.gov.by/ru/news ru/view/vruchenie-veritelnix-gramot-13766/>.

¹⁵ Zavarukhin A.V. Foreign trade of Southeast Asia as a reflection of integration processes in the Asia-Pacific region / A.V. Zavarukhin // Southeast Asia: Current Development Issues. - 2012. - № 18. - C. 50.

¹⁶ Andreev, A.V. Economic integration within the CIS: directions and problems / A.V. Andreev // Russian Foreign Economic Bulletin. - 2011. - № 7. - C. 75.

providing services in education and science. This is confirmed by figures: from 2007 to 2011, trade turnover between Belarus and the countries of the region increased "2.3 times, including Belarusian exports - \$523.9 million (3.6 times growth). In 2011, the balance of foreign trade with the countries of Southeast Asia was positive at \$218.2 million."¹⁷ . This may be the reason why Minsk considers that "good opportunities have been created to expand old and find new niches in trade and innovative cooperation with the countries of South-East Asia"¹⁸ . **Cambodia** and **Laos** are among such "new niches" - Southeast Asian countries, with which Belarus has considerably intensified its engagement in recent years.

When speaking of **Cambodia**, it is usually emphasized that it is one of the poorest countries in the world, where natural resources are poorly explored, but there are reserves of iron ore, gold, precious stones, copper, tin, manganese, and bauxite. Even hydrocarbon reserves have been found on the continental shelf of the Gulf of Thailand; companies from China, Vietnam, Australia and the Republic of Korea are particularly active in their exploration. From the political aspect, Cambodia became a fully sovereign state after the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement on October 23, 1991. And in 1993, under the auspices of the United Nations, general national elections were held, after which the coalition government was formed and the new Constitution of the country was adopted. These events enabled Cambodia to break its international isolation and economic blockade. Since then, "its foreign policy has been oriented to friendly relations with all countries of the world on the basis of mutual respect, territorial integrity and sovereignty."¹⁹ And over the past twenty-plus years the country "has achieved sustainable political stability, regained territorial integrity, successfully integrated into the regional and global economic space, achieved high economic

¹⁷ Belarus' trade turnover with Southeast Asia in January-September increased by 10% to \$655 million

[Electronic resource], - 2012. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Tovarooborot-Belarusi-so-stranami-Jugo-Vostochnoj-Azii-v-janvare-sentjabre-voztros-na-10-do-655-mln-i-616535.html

¹⁸ Our historical choice is an independent, strong and prosperous Belarus. Report of President A.G. Lukashenko at the Fourth All-Belarusian People's Assembly / SB - Belarus Today. - 2010. - 7 Dec.

¹⁹ Sinit, S. Relations of Cambodia with the countries of Southeast Asia / S. Sinit // [Electronic resource]. - 2006. - URL: <http://cheloveknauka.com/otmosheniya-kambodzhi-so-stranami-yugo-vostochnoy-azii>

growth rates, and created a pluralistic political space"²⁰ .

As for the Cambodian economy, agriculture is the most important sector, accounting for nearly one-third of the country's gross domestic product and employing more than 80 percent of the working population. Industrial production accounts for slightly more than a quarter of GDP, with the garment industry playing a "driving role," accounting for almost 90 percent of the country's industrial product. In recent years, the Cambodian government has pursued reforms to develop new industries or potential points of economic growth, which include developing tourism and the construction sector, mining and energy, and modernizing agriculture.

In particular, the country has set a goal to increase exports of the main agricultural product - polished rice - to one million tons by 2015. Recall that in 2009 only 13 thousand tons of this product were exported. To realize such an ambitious plan, Cambodia is implementing "a set of measures to develop irrigation in this branch of agriculture, as well as to increase the efficiency of water use, seeds, fertilizers, agricultural machinery and equipment; to provide credit to farms; to improve farming systems, to reduce transport costs"²¹ . Improvement of the country's transport infrastructure - construction of roads, railroads and ports - should also contribute to achieving this goal.

Here we can state that taking into account all these factors, the Republic of Belarus seeks to build a system of bilateral relations with Cambodia, which began on January 25, 1995. But the real activation of the Belarusian-Cambodian interaction should be dated to 2012, in June of which the Chairman of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia Heng Samrin paid a visit to our country. During the meeting with the head of the Belarusian state, the sides emphasized: "The current trade turnover does not correspond to the economic potential of Belarus and Cambodia. We can have many times bigger trade turnover. But in order to increase it, first of all, we need to establish

²⁰ Tee, H. Changes in the political system of Cambodia in modern conditions / H. Tee // Bulletin of VSU. Series: History. Political Science. Sociology. - 2011. - № 1. - C. 204.

²¹ Cambodia - a new vector of Belarusian interests in Southeast Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL:

http://export.by/resources/izdaniya_i_publicacii/kambodzha_%E2%80%94%94_novii_vektor_belorusskih_intere_sov_v.html

direct trade and economic ties so that we could trade and perform economic activities directly without intermediaries."²² .

Indeed, in 2011, the volume of bilateral Belarusian-Cambodian trade totaled only \$1.858 million, with the share of Belarusian exports amounting to \$503,000. Direct exports from Belarus consisted of one commodity - tires, while Cambodia imported rubber, rice, footwear, and textiles. The situation began to change by the end of 2012, when a delegation of the Belarusian Ministry of Industry visited the Southeast Asian country and for the first time a contract was signed for direct supplies of 116 tractors to Cambodia. In early 2013, the parties announced that the Minsk Tractor Works RUE would contribute about \$8 thousand to the authorized capital of the tractor assembly plant to be established in Phnom Penh, which would be the first Belarusian tractor assembly plant in Southeast Asia. Moreover, "partners in Cambodia are offering the Belarusian side unprecedented benefits - complete exemption from duties and taxes"²³ .

At the same time, the parties stepped up their efforts to create a legal framework for bilateral relations. An interesting detail: to give a proper impetus to this process, in February 2013 the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus and the National Assembly of Cambodia signed an agreement on cooperation. And at the same time, similar documents on cooperation in the field of education and between the chambers of commerce and industry were concluded. The first of them "provides for the development of direct ties between educational institutions of the two countries, makes it possible to exchange teaching staff, students, undergraduates and postgraduates, to obtain higher and postgraduate education in Belarus by citizens of Cambodia"²⁴ . As part of the second agreement, "the Belarusian side is ready to

²² Aliaksandr Lukashenka met with the Chairman of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia Heng Samryn [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-vstretilsya-s-predsdatelem-natsionalnoy-assamblei-korolevstva-kambodzha-khengom-samrinom-3610/

²³ MTZ will create Belarus-Mekong LLC for tractor assembly in Cambodia [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://news.uvaga.by/mtz-sozdaet-v-kambodje-ooo-belarus-mekong-po-sborke-tractorov>

²⁴ Ministers of Education of Belarus and Cambodia signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/society/Ministry-obrazovaniya-Belarusi-Kambodzh-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-i-623981.html

organize a visit of Cambodian business circles to Belarus and hold a contact and cooperation exchange with Belarusian partners"²⁵. Besides, the parties agreed to assist each other in opening trading houses of their countries in Belarus and Cambodia. Interregional partnerships were not left aside either. Thus, the Belarusian parliamentary delegation visited one of the Cambodian provinces, where "prospects of establishing regional cooperation between Siem Reap province and one of the regions of the Republic of Belarus were discussed. <...> The issues of broader interaction in the field of culture and tourism were raised"²⁶. All these steps to strengthen cooperation between the two countries led to the fact that in 2012 the trade turnover between Belarus and Cambodia increased to \$3.193 million with the share of Belarusian exports - \$1.828 million.

In 2013, a new dealership of the company "Mekong AT" for the sale of Belarusian tractors in Phnom Penh was opened in Cambodia, and the founding documents were signed between MTZ OJSC and the same company "Mekong AT" to establish a joint venture in Cambodia to build an assembly plant for tractors. And at the end of 2013, the trade turnover between the two countries has almost doubled, amounting to 6.3 million dollars with the volume of Belarusian supplies - 5.3 million dollars. These facts enabled official Minsk to declare that "Cambodia is considered a promising partner of Belarus, a gateway to the Southeast Asian market."²⁷

In the course of the first official visit of Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej to Cambodia in March 2014, which was the first in the history of Belarusian-Cambodian bilateral diplomatic relations, the two sides began considering opportunities to increase exports to that Southeast Asian country of not only Belarusian tractors, but also fertilizers, tires, pharmaceuticals, food products, trucks, and road-building equipment. Cooperation in science and education was also discussed, including the possibility of training Cambodian specialists in Belarusian educational

²⁵ Chambers of Commerce of Belarus and Cambodia intend to cooperate // Mercury. - 2012. - № 12. - C. 32.

²⁶ The Province of Cambodia Siem Reap may start cooperation with one of the regions of Belarus // Minsk Official. - 2012. - 8-15 Feb. - C. 15.

²⁷ On trade and economic cooperation with Cambodia [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5408>

institutions and "contracts were signed with Cambodian partners to supply 400 tractors, tractor kits and a pilot batch of tire products"²⁸. Siem Reap province joined the interregional cooperation between Belarus and Cambodia, and its authorities discussed the prospects of partnership in trade, education, culture and tourism. Finally, March 27, 2014 became a kind of "starting point" in the development of industrial cooperation between Belarus and Cambodia. On that day, Cambodia inaugurated its first tractor assembly plant in Southeast Asia, which will initially supply more than 400 tractors of various models and capacities to Cambodia and neighboring countries.

This rapid development of partnerships with this state allowed the Belarusian side to call Cambodia "the fastest growing and fastest developing country in Southeast Asia,"²⁹, with which Belarus has recently appeared many projects that can be implemented together. They include joint ventures to produce automotive equipment, military and technical cooperation, and work in the mining industry. Furthermore, the Belarusian government believes that the existing trade relations with Cambodia "should be complemented by cooperation in financial and investment spheres, as well as in the field of innovations"³⁰.

This was exactly what was discussed during the visit of Cambodian Prime Minister H. Sen to Minsk in April 2014, which resulted in the signing of ten documents on cooperation between the two countries in various sectors of the economy and the social sphere. These include agreements on trade, economic, and military-technical cooperation, on the promotion and mutual protection of investments, on cooperation in healthcare and industry, and between the capitals of Belarus and Cambodia, as well as a memorandum of understanding between the national banks and a joint communiqué. In addition, the two sides confirmed their mutual desire to establish a joint intergovernmental Belarusian-Cambodian committee for trade and economic

²⁸ On the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Uladzimir Makei to Cambodia [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/f0746c2f608c2306.html

²⁹ The President of Belarus met with the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/prezident-belarusi-vstretilsja-premier-ministrom-korolevstva-kambodzha-8573/

³⁰ Mikhail Myasnikovich met with the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5514>

cooperation "to further expand bilateral cooperation in this area,"³¹ to: ensure conditions for the promotion of Belarusian tractor and agricultural machinery, dump trucks, trucks, tires, fertilizers, pharmaceutical and food products to Cambodia; develop industrial cooperation in this Southeast Asian country. Assessing the overall development of relations with Cambodia in recent years, the Belarusian side believes: "Our business cooperation is only gaining momentum, but we see good prospects"³². This conclusion is confirmed by the figures: in January-February 2014, the trade turnover between Belarus and Cambodia increased by almost a third, coming close to the \$1.5 million mark.

As for another Southeast Asian country, **Laos**, the volume of Belarus's mutual trade with this state has not yet seen such positive dynamics: in 2013, it totaled only USD 483,300: "Laos supplies tractors MTZ, MAZ vehicles (timber trucks and dump trucks), motorcycles of Motovelo, engines and spare parts to machinery in small quantities"³³. Nevertheless, Minsk is confident that "the friendly relations and mutual respect that exist between the Republic of Belarus and the Lao People's Democratic Republic give confidence in excellent prospects for the development of bilateral cooperation in all spheres"³⁴.

Speaking of this country, we should remember that the independence of Laos was proclaimed in 1975 after a long and bloody struggle, in which the Soviet Union provided considerable help and support to the Lao people. Over the past almost 40 years, this Southeast Asian country has greatly expanded its international relations, establishing diplomatic relations with 135 countries. Despite the existing serious difficulties in development - "the lack of modern industry, access to the sea and developed transport infrastructure, lack of qualified personnel, as well as the persistent

³¹ Joint communiqué [Electronic resource]. - 2014 . - URL:

<http://www.government.by/ru/content/5516>

³² President of Belarus accepted the credentials [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/prezident-belarusi-primet-veritelnye-gramoty-8751/

³³ Bilateral relations between Belarus and Laos [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: http://vietnam.new.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/.

³⁴ Alexander Lukashenko congratulated President of Laos Choummaly Sayasone on the national holiday [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - Access mode: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-laosa-tjummalisaj-nj-asona-s-natsionalnym-prazdnikom-7480/

problem of unexploded ordnance left in the country after the war in Indochina"³⁵ - Laos in recent years has achieved consistently high economic growth - about 8 percent a year. The country's socio-economic development plan to 2015 also includes this figure. The ninth Congress of the Lao People's Democratic Party held in 2011 also set the following objectives: by 2015 to reduce the number of poor people in the country to 10 per cent of the total population and by 2020 to take the republic completely out of the ranks of the poorest countries in the world. These goals are to be reached through a comprehensive program of modernizing industry and transferring it to market mechanisms, while preserving the socialist model of the state system. But so far "agriculture is the basis of the economy and the main source of livelihood for the majority of Laos residents. It employs up to 80% of the working-age population of the country"³⁶ . Therefore, the urgent issues for this country in the near future are: increasing crop yields; improving the technical equipment of agriculture; meeting the growing demand for mineral fertilizers, modern agricultural machinery and equipment. When one considers that Laos has rich reserves of gold, copper, tin, iron, zinc, coal, gypsum, limestone, dolomite, potassium salts, precious and semi-precious stones, it becomes clear why more than 800 projects with foreign capital worth more than \$10 billion have been approved and implemented here over the past five years. "The most attractive sectors for foreign investors are such sectors of the national economy as hydropower, mining, agriculture, textile and food industry, as well as tourism and services"³⁷ . Because of these features of this Southeast Asian country, Minsk outlined a course for direct contacts with Laos, for which purpose in June 2013 they proposed "to create a mixed intergovernmental commission, which could regularly consider and resolve issues of trade and economic partnership between the countries."³⁸ [23]. In early July 2013, President of Laos T. Sainyason paid a landmark visit to our country, during

³⁵ Vathanuvong, S. Laos on the Way of Renewal / S. Vathanuvong // Southeast Asia: Current Development Issues. - 2013. - № 20. - C. 233.

³⁶ Belarus-Laos: joint projects ahead [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: http://export.by/resources/izdaniya_i_publicacii/belarus%E2%80%9494%20laos%20vpered%20sovmetstnic%20proekti.html

³⁷ Vathanuvong, S. Laos on the Way of Renewal / S. Vathanuvong // Southeast Asia: Current Development Issues. - 2013. - № 20. - C. 234.

³⁸ Mikhail Myasnikovich met with the Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Laos [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5058>

which the two heads of state agreed that there were "good prospects for the development of cooperation in science and education, military and technical cooperation, and other areas of interest to the Lao state and society"³⁹ .

The package of documents signed in the Belarusian capital, which included agreements on the implementation and mutual protection of investments, on the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of tax evasion with regard to income taxes, on scientific and technical cooperation and cooperation in education, laid the foundation for the formation of the legal framework for bilateral relations, which will serve as the basis for concluding contracts in specific areas of cooperation in the near future. The parties identified mechanical engineering as a priority area of partnership and considered the possibility of joint production of buses and agricultural machinery. "They also talked about partnership in the food industry, and considered a project to organize baby food production in Laos with the participation of Belarus."⁴⁰ .

Among other important documents signed by the parties in July 2013 is the memorandum on friendship and cooperation between Minsk and Vientiane, which contains the intention to "cooperate in the economic sphere, health care, education"⁴¹ . Specifically, the memorandum talks about the establishment of joint productions to assemble Belarusian tractors and machinery of the Minsk Automobile Plant, training of young people from Laos in Minsk, and joint development of minerals. As for the last point, Minsk also signed a memorandum on cooperation in creating a joint laboratory to study the mineral resources of Laos, whose founders will be the RUE "Belarusian Research Geological Exploration Institute" of the The founders will be the RUE "Belarusian Research Geological Exploration Institute of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus and the Department of

³⁹ Alexander Lukashenka held talks with President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic Choummaly Sayasone [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-laoskoj-narodno-demokraticeskoj-respubliki-tjummali-6413/>

⁴⁰ Mikhail Myasnikovich met with the President of Laos [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5124>

⁴¹ Radivon, N. Minsk and Vientiane signed a memorandum of friendship and cooperation / N. Radivon // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/ru/all-news/regions/Mrnsk-i-Vjention-zakliuchili-memorandum-o-druzhbe-i-sotrudnicestve-i-639885.html>

Standardization and Metrology of the Ministry of Science and Technology of Laos. In addition, "Belarus is planning to participate in the tender to establish a potash fertilizer plant in Laos. <...> It might be a good experience for Belarus both in terms of participation in the tender and project implementation"⁴².

In terms of scientific and technical cooperation, the Laotian side was also interested in the creation of unmanned aerial vehicles, production of medical devices and preparations, and development of biotechnologies. In September 2013, a Belarusian-Laos scientific and practical conference was organized in Vientiane on the basis of the Lao Ministry of Health, where Belarusian pharmaceutical products and baby food Bellakt were presented. In October 2013, an agreement was reached to supply 10 MAZ dump trucks and 40 MTZ tractors to Laos. All of these areas of cooperation were discussed at the first meeting of the Joint Belarusian-Laos Commission for Bilateral Cooperation and at a business forum, which was held in February 2014 in the capital of Laos.

Another area of partnership was opened by a memorandum of understanding signed in February 2014 between the National Bank of Belarus and the Bank of Laos, in which the parties agreed "to exchange information and publications on economic and financial issues related to monetary policy, financial regulation and the payment system."⁴³. This is all the more important given that the Belarusian side, along with commodity flows, offers its partners in Laos to develop modern financial support mechanisms and very attractive terms for sales of Belarusian machinery: "It can be export crediting from our side, as well as international leasing"⁴⁴.

The interested position of the two sides in the implementation of large systemic projects is beginning to give its own, albeit small, return. For example, during the first two months of 2014, trade turnover between Belarus and Laos increased by a quarter,

⁴² Asfura, A. Belarus plans to build a potash plant in Laos / A. Asfura // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Belarus-planiruet-postroit-kaliinyi-kombinat-v-Laose-i-640186.html

⁴³ Kot, A. National Bank of Belarus and the Bank of Laos signed a Memorandum of Understanding / A. Kot // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Natsionalnyj-bank-Belarusi-i-Bank-Laosa-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-i-660852.html

⁴⁴ Mikhail Myasnikovich met with parliamentary delegation of Laos [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5512>

with a surplus of \$227,900 for the Belarusian side. This demonstrates that both countries are determined to bring the Belarusian-Laotian interaction to a new level, where the development of contacts between specific economic entities will play a decisive role. It seems that in order to create the necessary atmosphere of trust in the implementation of partnership ties, the parties should already agree on interaction in the media and information sphere - on the exchange of TV and radio programs, electronic and printed media materials dedicated to the Belarus-Laos bilateral cooperation and its specific projects.

**Belarus-ASEAN:
cooperation with a view
to use the positive potential**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), established in 1967, now encompasses 10 countries with a population of about 600 million, strategically located between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean and connecting the Pacific Basin to the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Over the past nearly half-century, this structure "has become the most successful example of regional integration outside Europe."⁴⁵ . Perhaps this is because, having embarked on economic modernization, the member countries of this association give priority to maintaining social and political stability as the most important condition for their existence. Now ASEAN is making important steps towards economic integration in order to increase its competitiveness, attractiveness to foreign investors, create new jobs, increase incomes and reduce consumer prices.

Thus, on December 15, 2008, the ASEAN Charter entered into force, which proclaimed the building of a region of lasting peace, stability and sustainable economic growth as its main goal. Despite numerous internal and external challenges, including social instability and economic and military imbalances in the region, by 2015 the association intends to "complete the creation of a common market with free movement of goods, investment and skilled labor on the model of the European Union, while

⁴⁵ ASEAN - the driving force of regional integration // ASEAN at the beginning of the XXI century. Actual problems and prospects / L.E. Vasiliev [etc.]. - Moscow: Publishing house "Forum", 2010. - C. 3.

harmonizing the regional economic policies of states and strengthening regional ties.⁴⁶ ASEAN has the necessary potential for this. After all, in addition to a favorable geographical location, the member countries of this association have large reserves of natural resources. In particular, about 81% of global production of natural rubber, 38% of palm oil, 53% of coconut oil, 98% of abaca (hemp), 62% of tin, 60% of copper ore and 12% of chrome ore fall on ASEAN countries; these countries also have considerable stocks of oil and natural gas. The development of natural resources and the creation on their basis of production of finished products with high added value is a strategic task for all members of the association"⁴⁷.

The Republic of Belarus sees prospects for cooperation with ASEAN in the areas of food security, agriculture, emergency response, training and education. In particular, "opportunities for training specialists from ASEAN countries in the field of prevention of emergencies on the basis of educational institutions of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Belarus, as well as in the field of high technology and engineering specialties are already being worked out"⁴⁸. Other areas of cooperation are also possible: "Almost all ASEAN member countries are interested in cooperation in the military-industrial sector. Among other things, this is due to the fact that some states in Southeast Asia still have Soviet military equipment. <...> Many states of this region are Muslim, which means that there is a demand for chicken there. The Belarusian side could participate in projects to build turnkey poultry farms. Another promising direction is the construction of raw rice processing plants"⁴⁹.

Given the fact that cooperation with such ASEAN members as **Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines** is just entering an active phase, Minsk is already working out "ways to promote to the markets of these countries machinery, equipment and

⁴⁶ Lokshin, G.M. ASEAN: restructuring and renewal at the beginning of the new century / G.M. Lokshin // ASEAN at the beginning of the XXI century. Actual problems and prospects / L.E. Vasiliev [et al]. - M. : Publishing house "Forum", 2010. - C. 21.

⁴⁷ Belarus-Laos: joint projects ahead [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: http://export.by/resources/izdaniya_i_publicacii/belarus%E2%80%94laos_vpered_i_sovmestnie_proekti44_4.html

⁴⁸ On Cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/ru/ASEAN/>.

⁴⁹ Malashenkov, V. All ASEAN countries stand for increasing cooperation with Belarus / V. Malashenkov // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/politics/Vse-strany-ASEAN-vystupajut-za-naraschivanie-sotrudnichestva-s-Belarusju_i_647251.html.

components for the mining and electronics industries, metal cord, polyamide and polyester cord fabric to meet the demand of manufacturers of tires for passenger cars, equipment and technologies for mining and mineral processing, oil and gas equipment. The possibility of exporting a wide range of products of the Belneftekhim Concern, high-tech equipment and agricultural machinery is also being studied"⁵⁰. In this regard, the trade turnover of the Republic of Belarus with ASEAN countries achieved in 2013 in the amount of \$750.69 million with the share of Belarusian export - \$386.89 million - it is appropriate to consider as a kind of "reference point" in planning the prospects of reaching a quantitatively and qualitatively new level of cooperation with this very promising region of the planet.

Speaking about **Singapore** in this context, let us recall that Belarus views it as "a financial and trade center of Southeast Asia and is interested in the dynamic expansion of trade, economic and investment cooperation."⁵¹ President of Singapore Tony Tan Keng Yam also notes "the positive nature of interaction between the two countries, both in bilateral and multilateral formats, as well as <...> the increased interest of Singaporean business circles in establishing investment cooperation with the Republic of Belarus"⁵². This desire of the parties to expand partnerships is confirmed by the dynamics of trade turnover between the two countries in recent years. Whereas in 2012 Belarus' foreign trade with Singapore was \$26.5 million, in 2013 it was already \$37.4 million. The growth was primarily due to the increase in supplies of Singaporean computer equipment, electrical appliances, radio equipment, medical equipment, and consumer goods to Belarus.

Here it is important to note that Minsk studies with special interest the experience of

⁵⁰ Grishkevich, A. Belarus considers the region of Asia, Australia and Oceania as a promising market for its goods and services - MFA / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/politics/Belarus-rassmatrivaet-region-Azii-Avstralii-i-Okeanii-kak-perspektivnyi-rynok-dlia-svoix-tovarov-i-uslug---MID_i_620818.html

⁵¹ Aliaksandr Lukashenka congratulated President of Singapore Tony Tan Keng Yam on the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations [Electronic resource]. -2012 . - URL:

http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-singapura-toni-tan-keng-yama-s-20-letiem-ustanovleniya-dipotnosheniv-3996/

⁵² On presentation of credentials [Electronic resource]. -2012 . -

URL:
http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa7c03cf551f7840715.htm

this Southeast Asian country, whose economy remains one of the most open, and whose socio-economic policy is able to respond timely and adequately to modern challenges, constantly and flexibly improve both traditional and newly created institutions, follow the adopted strategy, while constantly adjusting it. The Strategic Plan for Economic Development in Singapore was adopted in 1991. It identified eight tasks: developing human resources; preserving national unity; focusing on international status; creating an enabling environment for innovation; developing industry and services; focusing on economic reconstruction; maintaining international competition; and reducing the country's vulnerability. In 2006, three more strategic projects were approved, "which are important for future economic development and whose implementation will make it possible to maintain international competitiveness. These are the biomedical sciences, the environment and interactive and digital media"⁵³. In other words, in Singapore, the development of the human factor as the only resource that this state possesses has become a priority for the government. And today, the Singaporean experience teaches that "to effectively transition to a knowledge-based economy, it is necessary to instill in society a culture of creation, innovative entrepreneurship, the desire for change, the ability to take risks and to endure failure"⁵⁴.

Belarus not only carefully studies this experience, but also tries to gradually use it. Thus, the model for the Belarusian-Chinese industrial park with unprecedented benefits for investors, which is being created in the Minsk Region, is the China-Singaporean industrial park in Suzhou. And during the visit of the Belarusian head of state to Singapore in March 2013, it was stated that "we are interested in Singapore's experience in e-government in order to improve the efficiency of the state apparatus"⁵⁵. As for other areas of cooperation, the first concrete steps have already been taken in

⁵³ Muranova A.P. Tax policy and economic modernization in the countries of Southeast Asia (on the example of Brunei and Singapore) / A.P. Muranova // Eastern Analytics. - 2011. - № 2. - C. 73.

⁵⁴ Economy of Singapore [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL:

<http://www.webeconomy.ru/index.php?page=cat&newsid=1243&type=news>

⁵⁵ Belarus and Singapore have mutual interest in building full-scale relations [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/president/Belarus-i-Singapur-imej-ut-vzaimnyj-interes-k-vystraivanju-u-polnomasshtabnyx-otnoshenij-i-628309.html

some of them. The regional representative office of Belarusian Potash Company CJSC has been operating in Singapore since 2006, the trading house of Belshina JSC (Beltayer Asia) has been operating in Singapore since 2009, and the trading house of BelAZ JSC (BelAsia) has been operating in Singapore since 2011. In addition, there are two companies with Singaporean capital registered in our republic. Their total authorized capital is about \$500 thousand, and they are engaged in trade and procurement activities, research and development and manufacturing of electronic products. The volume of Singaporean investments in the Belarusian economy is still small: in 2012 it amounted to USD 730 thousand.

Now the parties are outlining the prospects for the development of the legal and contractual framework of bilateral relations. After all, so far the two countries have signed only a few agreements, including agreements on promotion and mutual protection of investments and on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of tax evasion with regard to income taxes, and memorandums on cooperation between the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Singaporean Business Federation and the Singaporean International Chamber of Commerce. An effective form of bilateral cooperation could be Belarusian-Singaporean business forums. Specifically, in 2013, such events included: an agreement on the establishment of joint ventures to sell auto parts in the Asian market, as well as "contracts of the Belshina trading house in Singapore for the supply of oversized tires to Malaysia and oversized tires to Indonesia for a total amount of almost 500,000 euros"⁵⁶.

Interesting approaches are emerging in the development of cooperation between the two countries in science and technology. Thus, the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and Nanyang Technological University started cooperating back in 2008, when the Belarusian-Singaporean seminar on nanomaterials and nanotechnologies was held. For your reference it should be noted that Nanyang Technological University is one of the leading institutions of higher education in

⁵⁶ Polezhai, T. Belarus and Singapore will create joint ventures to sell auto parts / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Belarus-i-Singapur-sozdadut-sovmestnye-predpriiatiia-po-realizatsii-avtozapchastei-i-628332.html

Singapore, training highly qualified specialists in the field of technical sciences, arts, business and management, established in 1955. Its partners include such world-renowned educational institutions as the Masachusset Institute of Technology, Stanford University, Cambridge University, and Peking University. So, for 5 years of interaction between BSUIR and NTU "20 joint scientific articles were published, about 50 reports were presented at various international conferences"⁵⁷ . And in 2013, Belarusian scientist V.A. Labunov was invited to Singapore to conduct scientific research in the field of nanoelectronics. All these facts give reason to hope that "joint efforts will continue to contribute to the effective realization of the significant potential of Belarusian-Singaporean cooperation"⁵⁸ .

Another country of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations - **Malaysia** - is considered in Minsk an important partner in this region of the world, as "there are no problems between our countries that would hinder further expansion of political, trade and economic cooperation"⁵⁹ . Indeed, this state, like Belarus, acts as a consistent supporter of a multipolar structure of international relations in its approach to addressing major international problems, advocates the idea of a balance of power between the world's leading powers, and demonstrates support for uniting developing countries in pursuit of their political and economic interests.

Moreover, "Malaysia is not only peaceful and politically stable, but also a prosperous state whose economy has grown at an average annual rate of more than 7% since 1970.⁶⁰ A liberal economy is successfully combined here with fairly strict government regulation. Malaysia's success is based on "political stability, prudent economic policy, and attracting foreign investment to build an export-oriented industry by creating a

⁵⁷ BSUIR - Singapore: Cooperation Developing [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.bsuir.by/online/tnj2/one_article.jsp?PageID=88970&resID=100229&lang=ru&tnj_type=2&rid=-1&tnj_id=11146&pid=100229

⁵⁸ Alexander Lukashenko congratulated President of Singapore Tony Tan Keng Yam [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-respubliki-singapur-toni-tan-keng-jama-6705/

⁵⁹ On September 20, Alexander Lukashenko received credentials from foreign ambassadors [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/20-sentjabrija-aleksandr-lukashenko-prinial-veritelnye-gramoty-poslov-inostrannyx-gosudarstv-5187/

⁶⁰ Mohamad, M. The way forward / M. Mohamad // [Electronic resource]. - 1998. - URL: <http://www.lib.politolog.com/mahathir.txt> with-big-pictures.html

liberal investment and trade regime"⁶¹. It is also of interest that "among the main factors for the successful diversification of Malaysia's economy is a well-developed national planning and control system. Since independence, the government's The country's development programs are determined by the five-year, ten-year, and forward-looking twenty-year plans developed by the Government of Malaysia"⁶².

The country's economic development strategy, Vision 2020, aims to achieve a "knowledge economy" by 2020. So far, moving towards economic diversification and responding quickly to changes in global trends, Malaysia has already "consistently passed several stages of development: from the export of cheap raw materials - palm oil (and today ranks 1st in the world), rubber (3rd in the world), precious wood, spices and textiles - to consistent industrialization and import substitution policy"⁶³. In 2006, the country began to implement its third General Plan for Industrial Development until 2020, which includes an innovation strategy that "covers economic, scientific and technical, structural and reproductive policies. The strategy is aimed at further overcoming the technological lag, accelerating the transition to the production of a product with high added value, expanding the chain of its creation"⁶⁴.

Today, the country is betting on the accelerated development of 12 strategic industries, which include oil and gas, palm oil and its products, financial services, retail and wholesale, tourism, information and communication technology, education, electrical and electronics, business services, private health care, agriculture, and greater Kuala Lumpur. It is noteworthy that the most important function of the state in Malaysia is now to ensure the demand for knowledge, in which "information should be considered as much a public commodity as water, gas or electricity, and should be readily available

⁶¹ Islamov E.G. Strategy of development of foreign trade of Malaysia / E.G. Islamov // [Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <http://www.dissercat.com/content/strategiya-razvitiya-vneshnei-torgovli-malaizii>.

⁶² Lagunov A.S. Strategy of economic development of Malaysia / A.S. Lagunov // [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <http://www.dissercat.com/content/strategiya-ekonomicheskogo-razvitiya-malaizii>.

⁶³ Malaysia: a diamond in China's shadow or its pale shadow? [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns- rasia.nsf/1083b7937ae580ae432569e7004199c2/07ca30399c9ed7cfc32575ad00441b6f10p>

⁶⁴ Pakhomova L.F. Industrial-information development of Malaysia / L.F. Pakhomova // Southeast Asia: Current Development Issues. - 2009. - № 13. - C. 242.

to those who need it. People must be trained to make the best use of this information."⁶⁵ The country's 10th Economic and Social Development Plan (2011-2015) is paying off: "The economy is booming and the transformation program under Vision 2020, the plan devised under Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad to make Malaysia an industrialized nation by 2020, is well underway. There is widespread construction of cheap houses, government aid for farmers and fishermen, and subsidies for the poorest."⁶⁶ Given all of these specifics of Malaysia's development, the Belarusian side believes that "in the very near future, through joint efforts, we will be able to fully use the vast potential for cooperation between our countries, both in the bilateral format and in the international arena"⁶⁷. Now the sides are discussing possibilities to intensify trade and economic cooperation, "including an increase in the supply of potash fertilizers and tires of Belarusian production to Malaysia"⁶⁸. Let us recall that in 2013 the Belarusian-Malaysian trade turnover amounted to 163.6 million dollars with a share of supplies from Malaysia in the amount of 103.5 million dollars, the basis of which was the import of rubber, electronic tubes and lamps, cocoa, televisions, video monitors and video projectors, radio equipment. Nevertheless, Belarus sees that domestic exporters of various products can find their niche for sales in this country. First of all, it is agriculture and food industry, because food products are one of the essential items of Malaysian import. And the first steps in this direction have already been made. In 2010 Grodno Azot sent the first batch of nitrogen fertilizers worth nearly 9 million dollars to Malaysia. There are opportunities to expand the presence of Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment in the Malaysian market: "In particular, Bobruisk factory of tractor parts and units has prospects here, whose products - mini-tractors Belarus-311 - are already supplied to Malaysia"⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ Adyrbekov, I. The experience of Malaysia is useful / I. Adyrbekov // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://www.nomad.su/?a=10-200404190023>

⁶⁶ Pogadaev, V. Malaysia: Quo Vadis? / V. Pogadaev // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.pereplet.ru/text/pogadaev20aug13.html>.

⁶⁷ Alexander Lukashenko congratulated the Supreme Leader of Malaysia on Independence Day [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-verxovnogo-glavu-malaizii-s-dnem-nezavisimosti-6841/

⁶⁸ On the working visit of Belarusian Ambassador V. Lopato-Zagorski to Malaysia [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/e154707de535787e.html

⁶⁹ Belarus - Malaysia: prospects for the growth of mutual trade [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL:

But, perhaps, the prospects of Belarusian-Malaysian cooperation in science and technology look especially tempting. In May 2013, the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus signed a memorandum of understanding with the Academy of Sciences of Malaysia. The potential of these partnerships was clearly demonstrated by the National exposition of the Republic of Belarus at the 24th International Exhibition of Inventions, Innovations and Technologies "ITEX 2013" that was held on May 9-13, 2013 in Kuala Lumpur. For the first time Belarus took part in such a large and authoritative event in science and technology in South-East Asia where participants from 15 countries presented their expositions in such thematic areas as aviation and space industry, vehicles and transport, electricity and electronics, ecology and renewable energy sources, chemical industry, construction, materials production, biotechnology, health and fitness, multimedia, telecommunications and office equipment, clothing, personal care products, products for m

The collective stand of the Republic of Belarus presented more than a hundred developments in such areas as "electronic systems, nanotechnology, laser physics, metallurgy, surface treatment of parts, new materials, new technologies using ultrasound, industrial waste recycling, medicine, light industry, construction, machine and instrument building, ecology".⁷⁰ . The important outcome of the participation of Belarusian scientists in the exhibition was the signed documents with the Malaysian partners: the agreement on cooperation in solar energy, the protocols of intent on cooperation in medicine, use of agricultural waste, development of unmanned aerial systems for mapping, search and rescue operations. Further cooperation with the Malaysian party in the field of supplies and organization of joint ventures for production of engine oil additives and paints based on nanodiamonds is also outlined. The partnership of Belarusian State University with the company Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council in the field of medicine and promotion of spirometers MAC-1 to the

http://export.by/resources/izdaniya_i_publicacii/belarus_%E2%80%94_malaiziya_perspektivi_rosta_vzaimn_oit.html/

⁷⁰ The 24th International Exhibition of Inventions, Innovation and Technology "ITEX 2013" (May 9-11, 2013, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) [Electronic resource]. -2013 . -

URL:

http://belisa.org.by/en/print/?brief=ITEX_2013

Malaysian market can also give interesting results, as well as cooperation "with the Malaysian Forest Research Institute Malaysia in implementation of joint research on obtaining and studying properties of new cellulose materials, including films, fibers and threads, as well as carbon fibers and composites on their basis"⁷¹. All these agreements give grounds to hope that the necessary foundation for transition to comprehensive and mutually beneficial cooperation in a number of areas is now being laid in the Belarusian-Malaysian relations.

Another country in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, in relations with which the Belarusian side hopes to "further expand dialogue and strengthen constructive cooperation in all areas for the prosperity of our countries,"⁷², is **the Philippines**. More than 100 million people live here. And lives in difficult conditions. On the one hand, the economy of this state "at the moment suffers from the consequences of the typhoon, which affected production and especially agriculture. It will not fully recover until 2014-2015."⁷³. There are also many long-standing social problems. Among them - "mass poverty, permanently high level of unemployment and underemployment, low standard of living, in the last 3-4 years the increase in food prices caused by the so-called rice crisis - reduction of rice imports - the basis of the Filipino diet"⁷⁴. But on the other hand, the Philippines, which was the world's 42nd largest economy in 2012, "if current trends continue, could become the 16th largest economy by 2050"⁷⁵. The results of 2013, when the country's gross domestic product grew 7.2 percent, support this prediction. "This is the second fastest growth rate in Asia after China"⁷⁶. And the

⁷¹ Participation of BSU in the International Exhibition ITEX 2013 (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://research.bsu.by/itex-2013/>.

⁷² Alexander Lukashenko congratulated the President of the Republic of the Philippines on Independence Day [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-respubliki-filippiny-s-dnem-nezavisimosti-404/

⁷³ Byrkova, E. Forecast of economic development of the countries of the world for the period from 2015 to 2028: international comparison / E. Byrkova // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://проект.рф/analytics/research/9264-ppognoz-ekonomicheskogo-pazvitiya-stpan-mipa-na-pepiod-s-2015-po-2028-gody-mezhdunapodnye-spavneniya.html>.

⁷⁴ Levtonova Y.A. The Philippines: 18 Months of Presidency of B. Aquino III / Y.A. Levtonova // Southeast Asia: current issues of development. - 2011. - № 17. - C. 149.

⁷⁵ Manukov S. Will the Philippines Become a New Asian Tiger? / S. Manukov // [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://expert.ru/2012/11/16/stanut-li-filippinyi-novym-aziatskim-tigrom/>.

⁷⁶ Philippine GDP grew by 7.2% in 2013 [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://www.vestifinance.ru/articles/38688>

country's information and telecommunications development priorities for 2014 are "e-government, healthcare services, use of free TV frequencies"⁷⁷ .

Assessing the current stage of relations with the Philippines, established on May 22, 1996, Belarus notes "good prospects for expansion of comprehensive ties between our countries"⁷⁸ . In 2013, the Belarusian-Philippine trade turnover amounted to \$42.8 million with a share of \$21.4 million in exports from Belarus, which was based on potash fertilizers, tires, and dairy products. Given the existing potential for cooperation between the two countries, we can assume that the list of Belarusian export items could be much broader. This conclusion is prompted, in particular, by the problem of food security, which is quite urgent in the Philippines. In terms of its solution, Belarusian agricultural machinery and equipment can be used here to help increase labor productivity and improve the quality of tillage. In addition, over the past three years, the country has been implementing a state program of irrigating agricultural land, which resulted in "an increase in acreage of rice fields and rice production. The project includes the construction of new irrigation systems and modernization of agricultural machinery. Belarusian specialists can also take part in them"⁷⁹ .

The Belarusian side also considers "the establishment of ties in the field of culture and education as promising areas for the development of cooperation with the Philippines. The development of cooperation in tourism could be of considerable interest"⁸⁰ . But first the parties need to thoroughly modernize the contractual and legal framework of bilateral relations, which is still in the process of formation. Concrete steps in this direction are expected quite soon, as the Belarusian-Philippine agreements on

⁷⁷ Ryabova, V. The Philippines named e-government as a priority area of the country's IT-development program / V. Ryabova // [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://d-russia.ru/filippiny-nazvali-elektronnoe-pravitelstvo-prioritetnym-napravleniem-programmy-it-razvitiya-strany.html>

⁷⁸ Alexander Lukashenko congratulated President of the Philippines Benigno Aquino III [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-respubliki-filippiny-benigno-akino-iii-6236/

⁷⁹ Belarus-Philippines: On the Way to Export Diversification [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: http://export.by/resources/izdaniya_i_publicacii/belarus%E2%80%9494-filippini-po-puti-diversifikacii-ksp-or.html

⁸⁰ Bilateral Relations with the Republic of the Philippines [Electronic Resource]. - 2014. - URL: <http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral-ph/>

facilitation and mutual protection of investments, on avoidance of double taxation, on trade and economic cooperation and on defense cooperation are already being worked out.

Coming back to the topic of intensifying multilateral cooperation of the Republic of Belarus with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, we should note the following fact: in May 1989 the ASEAN Program and Declaration on Enhanced Cooperation in Television, Radio, Film and Video Production were adopted, which formulated the main goals and principles of cooperation between the mass media of the Association's member countries. These documents emphasize the role of the media in pursuing policies aimed at promoting social stability, social justice, rapid economic growth, regional connectivity and human development. This shows that ASEAN encourages mutual dialogue among peoples in order to enhance mutual understanding, increase positive potential for cooperation, and improve knowledge of other cultures, national traditions and customs, and religious features, well aware that "cultural exchanges become a bridge linking peoples, a factor of mutual understanding and harmony".⁸¹ This is a clear indication of the fact that ASEAN has been promoting mutual dialogue among peoples to enhance mutual understanding, build up positive cooperation potential, and increase the knowledge of other cultures, national traditions and customs, and religious features.

In this regard, Belarusian international journalism, which is just beginning to comprehend the processes of interaction of the Republic of Belarus with the ASEAN countries, faces a number of tasks, dictated by the obvious fact: so far ordinary Belarusian citizens are very poorly informed about the real economic processes taking place in this region of the world, about the opportunities for cooperation that are opening here. Therefore, it is necessary to start with a simple thing - to eliminate the information hunger that is observed today, which is experienced by the domestic real and potential subjects of this international interaction, who need reliable information,

⁸¹ Voronin, A.S. Socio-cultural community ASEAN: unity in diversity / A.S. Voronin // ASEAN at the beginning of the XXI century. Actual problems and prospects / L.E. Vasiliev [etc.]. - Moscow. : Publishing house "Forum", 2010. - C. 150.

objective and up-to-date information about the markets of the ASEAN member countries, peculiarities of the culture of behavior there and other rules of international information exchange and business cooperation. Active involvement of Belarusian international journalists in this process , of those who specialize in their creativity in this country segment could only positively contribute to this large, long-term, and multifactorial task.

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Belarus-Vietnam: promising cooperation and media

The countries of Southeast Asia are a very attractive vector of Belarusian foreign policy, because the position of most of them on topical international issues is quite close and consonant with the views of official Minsk. As for Belarus's economic interests in this region of the world, they are all the more obvious. A huge and fast-growing market for Belarusian products and the possibility to offer a wide range of services creates the "prerequisites for building up trade and economic cooperation and successfully implementing national foreign policy objectives"⁸². This is what makes Southeast Asia attractive for Belarus, its industry, science and technology and educational sector, which is confirmed by some figures: in 2011, trade with the countries of the region grew almost to \$830 million, with Belarusian exports accounting for 525 million U.S. dollars in 2011.

It is also important that the positive dynamics of interaction continued in 2012.⁸³ This demonstrates that "good opportunities have been created to expand old and find new niches in trade and investment cooperation with the countries of Southeast Asia - Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The leadership of Vietnam in this important list for Belarus is quite understandable, as this state is among those countries of the global South "with which large-scale cooperation in all areas of bilateral cooperation is developing"⁸⁴, and the diversification of trade and deepening of economic cooperation with which are "an important prerequisite for the growth of the export-oriented Belarusian economy"⁸⁵.

Here it is appropriate to recall that the policy of renewal in order to "establish a global partnership, to lead the country out of its political and economic crisis, to attract foreign investment and technology into its economy, to improve the living standards of the

⁸² Priorities and directions of foreign policy activity [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press46194.html#doc>

⁸³ Our historical choice is an independent, strong and prosperous Belarus. Report of President A. G. Lukashenko at the Fourth All-Belarusian People's Assembly // SB - Belarus Today. - 2010. - 7 December.

⁸⁴ Belarus and the countries of Asia and Africa [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.mfa.gov.by/bilateral/asia_africa/

⁸⁵ Priority directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.mfa.gov.by/foreign_policy/priorities/

people"⁸⁶ began in Vietnam back in 1986. Gradually, this Southeast Asian country has become an active participant in regional integration processes. Today, Vietnam is a member of a number of universal and regional international organizations and maintains diplomatic relations with more than 170 countries. "For a decade, the Vietnamese economy has shown stable and consistent growth, hardly slowing down even in the years of financial crisis."⁸⁷ . This country of more than 90 million inhabitants is Southeast Asia's third largest oil reserves. It also produces hard coal and iron ore, which play an important role in Vietnam's exports.

Orientation of the foreign policy of official Hanoi to the economic dimension has allowed Vietnam to date to establish trade and economic relations with more than 200 countries, the volume of bilateral trade with which in 2011 exceeded 200 billion dollars. And now there are 1,500 foreign investment projects in Vietnam with a total registered fund of almost 200 billion dollars, which shows the considerable success of the implementation here of a comprehensive strategy of international economic integration, which "should include strategies for cooperation with each state, each region"⁸⁸ .

Each diplomatic mission of Vietnam in foreign countries is tasked with developing and implementing a strategy for economic cooperation with the host country for the next five to ten years. In addition, such strategies take into account the current trend of Vietnam's international economic integration from expanding activities, joining international organizations and signing cooperation agreements - to deepening activities, active participation in international organizations and implementation of signed documents. By "deepening activities" the Vietnamese side understands that "it is necessary to raise the existing relations to a new level and create a framework for

⁸⁶ Chang, V.T. The place and role of Vietnam in ASEAN (1995-2011) / V.T. Chang // [Electronic resource].

- 2011. - URL: http://dis.podelise.ru/pars_docs/diser_refs/73/72103/72103.pdf

⁸⁷ Kostyuk R. Vietnam goes along the original path / R. Kostyuk // [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://www.sensusnovus.ru/analytics/2012/09/01/14338.html>

⁸⁸ Huen, A. International integration and foreign economic tasks for the new period / A. Huen // [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://vovworld.vn/ru-RU/Комментарии/Международная-integration-and-foreign-economic-for-dachi-na-new-period/65957.uou>

long-term trade and economic cooperation and deepen ties with partners"⁸⁹. And in this regard, one of the main tasks of Vietnamese diplomacy today is to continue to form a framework of strategic partnership with countries in the process of economic integration.

As for the friendly relations between Vietnam and Belarus, which had their start in the days of the Soviet Union, they were formalized in the last decade of the last century, when on December 27, 1991 the Socialist Republic of Vietnam recognized Belarus' independence and on January 24, 1992 diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. In 1997-1998 there were exchanges of visits at the highest level, but the official visit of the Belarusian President to that South-East Asian country in April 2008 gave a full impetus to the development of large-scale Belarus-Vietnam cooperation, when in their joint declaration they emphasized that "Belarus and Vietnam intend to reach a brand new level of cooperation and are ready to deepen the bilateral cooperation in all areas"⁹⁰. The prerequisite for such an active development of bilateral cooperation was the fact that both countries are pursuing similar socially-oriented economic policies; besides, the economies of Belarus and Vietnam are highly dynamic and complementary in structure. At that time the parties voiced a confident forecast that the volume of mutual trade achieved in 2007, i. e. \$63.6 million, could be multiplied within the next few years.

Two years later, during the official visit of Vietnamese President Nguyen Minh Triet to Belarus in May 2010, the parties "confirmed their mutual interest in the intensification of trade and economic cooperation, interaction in such areas as security, science and technology, education, healthcare, culture and sports <...> and expressed readiness to continue creating favorable conditions for long-term cooperation in the interests of the peoples of Belarus and Vietnam"⁹¹.⁹²It was then that the Vietnamese leader initiated discussions of a

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Belarus views Vietnam as a strategic partner [Electronic resource]. - 2008. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press55986.html>

⁹¹ Joint Declaration of the President of the Republic of Belarus and the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam [Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press89128.html#doc>

⁹² Alexander Lukashenka met with President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Nguyen Minh Chiet

number of promising issues of bilateral cooperation at the talks in Minsk, including proposals to the Belarusian side to consider signing a free trade area agreement between the two countries, to participate "in the development of oil deposits both in the Vietnamese territory and in third countries, <...> in joint coal mining projects with Belarus, as well as in joint potash fertilizer production using Vietnamese raw materials. To implement such ambitious plans, the Vietnamese side expressed its readiness to create favorable conditions to develop ties between Belarusian and Vietnamese regions and enterprises; it also welcomed Belarus' participation in the construction of metro lines in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and expressed interest in cooperation with Belarus to train Vietnamese agricultural specialists.

And, indeed, interaction between the regions of Belarus and Vietnam can be very promising. Especially since back in 2009 the parties agreed to create a Working Group on the development of interregional cooperation, the meetings of which "will be held simultaneously with the meetings of the Belarus-Vietnam Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation"⁹³ and which can and should find serious reserves for implementation of joint projects in mechanical engineering, petrochemical industry, agriculture, healthcare and culture. And certain steps in this direction are already being taken.

In addition to interaction between the capitals of the two states, we can talk about establishing partnership relations between Minsk region and Bac Ninh and Quang Ninh provinces, with which cooperation agreements were signed in 1998 and 2007 respectively⁹⁴, and between Minsk and Ho Chi Minh City, which on December 1, 2011 signed a five-year program to implement the Agreement on Cooperation, adopted in 2008.⁹⁵ The province of Vinh Phuc, which was visited by the head of the Belarusian

[Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press89066.html#doc>

⁹³ Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the principles of cooperation between local executive and administrative bodies of the Republic of Belarus and local executive bodies of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam [Electronic resource]. -2009

URL:

<http://bankzakonov.com/republicpravo-by-2010/blockm8/rtf-n5s2w4.htm>

⁹⁴ Interregional cooperation of Minsk region [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://regioninvest.by/index.php?category=11&page=49&type=child>

⁹⁵ On the Visit of Belarusian Ambassador to Vietnam V. Sadoho to Vinh Phuc Province [Electronic

diplomatic mission to Vietnam V. Sadojo, who discussed the prospects of supplies of Belarusian engineering products and potash fertilizers to this Vietnamese region, as well as "issues of establishing joint production facilities, placing orders of Belarusian light industry enterprises at Vietnamese clothing companies, sending Vietnamese students and professors to the region.

The parties also agreed to significantly strengthen interregional relations during the official visit of Belarusian Prime Minister M. Myasnikovich to Vietnam in November 2011. M. Myasnikovich, Prime Minister of Belarus, who visited Vietnam in November 2011, agreed to considerably strengthen their regional ties. It will be based on the implementation of new joint investment projects. In particular, the Belarusian side expressed its willingness "to establish new factories in Vietnam to produce competitive products that can be supplied both to the domestic market and to markets of third countries"⁹⁶. This intention was backed up by memoranda of cooperation signed by the Minsk Automobile and Motor Plants with the Vietnamese companies Veam and Disoko. And on November 30th, 2011 a representative office of Minsk Automobile Plant was opened in Hanoi. The next step is the transition from equipment assembly to the construction of automobile and agricultural machinery plants. At the same time, the Belarusian side suggested considering "the possibility of forming a transnational corporation for the production of automotive equipment with the participation of Belarusian, Vietnamese and German manufacturers."⁹⁷

It was during this visit that the head of the Belarusian government announced a specific goal that the two countries decided to focus on in the implementation of partnership relations: "Belarus and Vietnam plan to increase their annual trade turnover to \$1 billion in the next five years."⁹⁸. To this end, the heads of the governments agreed to focus their efforts on:

resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news/mfaM52bceec25e4b09e.html>

⁹⁶ Belarus and Vietnam will create more comfortable conditions for cooperation - M. Myasnikovich [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4155>

⁹⁷ Vietnam is ready to expand cooperation with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4156>

⁹⁸ Belarus and Vietnam plan to increase annual trade turnover to \$1 billion within five years. - M. Myasnikovich [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4158>

- 1) expansion of the existing and establishment of new assembly facilities for Belarusian automotive and motor vehicles based on Vietnamese companies;
- 2) expanding the use of Belarusian tractor and automotive equipment in Vietnamese agricultural, infrastructure and mining projects;
- 3) creating conditions for the participation of Belarusian companies and organizations in the development of certain mineral deposits in Vietnam;
- 4) increasing the volume of direct deliveries of traditional Vietnamese agricultural products, seafood, rubber and pharmaceutical products to Belarus;
- 5) creation of joint production of dairy products on the Vietnamese land using Belarusian raw materials and technologies;
- 6) organizing in Belarus joint productions for processing traditional Vietnamese goods - coffee and tea;
- 7) creation of a joint center for the development and mastering in production of technologies in the field of instrumentation and mechanical engineering, energy and chemical products.

A year later, in November 2012, at the 9th session of the Belarusian-Vietnamese Intergovernmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation the parties discussed the results of cooperation. Thus, in 2011 the amount of Belarus-Vietnam trade has exceeded \$210 million, and the legal framework of bilateral relations consists of more than 50 documents, including agreements - on the promotion and mutual protection of investments, on trade and economic cooperation, on scientific and technological cooperation, on science and technology collaboration.

The documents on cooperation, on avoidance of double taxation, on cooperation in education, medicine and pharmaceuticals, and on air communication. A number of other documents were signed at the 9th session of the intergovernmental bilateral commission, including the memorandum between the Belarusian State Committee for Science and Technology and the National Agency for Scientific and Technical Information under the Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam on implementation of the project to create the Belarusian-Vietnamese Center for

Promotion of Scientific and Technical Cooperation.

A year earlier the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology agreed to create such a joint center. It is assumed that the projects at this center will be carried out according to the full technological cycle - from scientific research to the production of innovative products. At the first stage of development there will be carried out projects in three main directions: instrumentation, cellular nanotechnology and low-tonnage chemistry. "In the future, the range of joint scientific and technical works is planned to be expanded with the output of joint production of innovative products"⁹⁹. The current Program of Innovation Partnership between the two countries for 2012-2013 provides for about 30 new joint projects in the fields of materials science, chemistry, energy, medicine, microelectronics and mechanical engineering. In particular, we are talking about the implementation of an innovative project to generate electricity from municipal waste, as well as the creation of joint production of medical equipment - magnetic, phototherapy and light therapy, ultrasound devices, test systems.

All these facts indicate that the parties look confidently into tomorrow, where they intend to create large joint transnational corporations that will be able to operate not only in their own markets, but also in third countries, which is the most important condition for survival in the global competition. All the more so because today a unique opportunity is being created to form a free trade zone not only between Belarus and Vietnam, but also between the Customs Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The first round of negotiations on a free trade area agreement between the Customs Union and Vietnam took place in late March 2013 and outlined the contours of the future document, which will include not only trade in goods and services, but will also cover investments and other aspects of economic cooperation that form the infrastructure of strategic relations. On the one hand, this agreement will be based on global best practices, including the rules of the World Trade Organization, and on the other hand, it will take into account the rich experience of cooperation accumulated by

⁹⁹ Belarus and Vietnam will create a joint innovation center [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4154>

Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia in relations with Vietnam. Ultimately, all this should create incentives for the development of priority projects that already form the basis of sustainable cooperation between the Customs Union and Vietnam to increase trade between the parties "up to \$7 billion by 2015 and up to \$12 billion by 2020."¹⁰⁰ .

In this regard, let's see what Belarusian-Vietnamese projects can be considered a priority in the near future:

- intensification of activities of the Belarus-Vietnam Trade House that opened in Hanoi in November 2012 to expand the range of supplies of Belarusian household and food products to the Vietnamese market and in all areas of cooperation with Vietnamese companies to establish in that country joint production of complex fertilizers, dairy products using raw milk, as well as in the field of alternative Vietnamese medicine;

- organization of the assembly of Minsk diesel engines in Vietnam for their subsequent installation in MAZ trucks assembled there, which in 2013 should be assembled at least 900 units at the Vietnamese corporation WEAM - a manufacturer of power and agricultural machinery;

- intensification of cooperation between BelAZ and Vietnam's Vinacomin Coal and Minerals Industrial Group and Apatit Corporation on deliveries of Belarusian dump trucks and spare parts;

- supplying up to a thousand Belarusian tractors to Vietnam, and in the future, establishing a joint center for the production and sale of these machines in Cambodia, Myanmar, and other countries of Southeast Asia on the basis of the Mekong Machinery company;

- creation of joint ventures in Vietnam by Vinachem National Chemical Corporation and Belgorkhimprom OJSC for the production of complex fertilizers using Belarusian raw materials, which will be supplied to that country at least 350 thousand tons in 2013, as well as the enrichment of apatite ores and extraction of potassium salts

¹⁰⁰ The first stage of negotiations on the free trade zone between the CU and Vietnam was very successful - Khristenko [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Pervyj-etap-peregovorov-o-zone-svobodnoj-torgovli-TS-i-Vjetnama-stal-vesma-uspeshnym-.Xristenko_i_629160.html

in Laos;

- Strengthening cooperation in the field of science, technology and education on the basis of the Belarusian-Vietnamese Center for Promotion of Scientific and Technological Cooperation, which will attract specialists from the Science and Technology Park BNTU "Polytechnic" and the National Agency of Scientific and Technical Information of Vietnam, as well as the Belarusian-Vietnamese Innovation and Education Center, which is created by the BSU and Binh Duong University and is intended to support the preparation of Vietnamese citizens to enroll in

Since 1962 Belarus has trained over 1100 specialists with higher education, 152 candidates of sciences and 3 doctors of sciences for Vietnam. 155 Vietnamese citizens graduated from Belarusian technical schools and 1816 - vocational schools. "In total, in the academic year 2011/2012 108 Vietnamese nationals studied at higher education institutions in Belarus (in 2010/2011 - 78 students). Cooperation in education is also carried out on the basis of 21 direct interuniversity agreements"¹⁰¹.

As we can see, the intensity of the dialogue between Belarus and Vietnam in the most important areas of life of the two countries is increasing rapidly, which brings to the fore the need to form a joint Belarusian-Vietnamese information space, which should facilitate the expansion of interstate information exchange, creation and development of joint information and telecommunication and media systems. The first steps in this direction have already been made by journalists. In particular, in February 2011 the Agreement on Cooperation was signed by the National State Television and Radio Company of the Republic of Belarus and the National Television of Vietnam - the biggest national media holding of the country that unites various media platforms including satellite, cable and Internet broadcasting. Now the parties are discussing "the possibility of implementing joint projects on various topics, exchanging creative teams, video materials and special programs for broadcasting on air or online."¹⁰². The next

¹⁰¹ Belarus and Vietnam plan to organize joint educational and innovative structures [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/society/Belarus-i-Vietnam-planiruiut-organizovyvat-sovmestnye-obrazovatelno-mnovatsionnye-struktury-i-615133.html

¹⁰² Belteleradiocompany held a working meeting with representatives of Vietnamese television [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: http://www.tvr.by/rus/dms_news.asp

steps to bring the media communities of the two countries closer together are pending, one of which could be the signing of a bilateral intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in press and information, which could significantly expand the sphere of professional contacts between representatives of the international segment of Belarusian and Vietnamese national journalism.

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Belarus-India: Large-Scale Interaction and Media

In November 2012, Belarus and India signed an intergovernmental agreement in the field of press and information. This document aimed the parties to actively cooperate in the media sphere, which began in 1993 soon after the establishment of Belarusian-Indian diplomatic relations on April 17, 1992. At that time the two countries agreed to "garden borrowed cultural exchange, stimulate cooperation and develop ties between educational, cultural and business establishments"¹⁰³. Almost 15 years later, in 2007, the parties concretized the forms of cooperation in the media sphere and agreed to "promote the publication and demonstration of materials and programs covering cultural, art and educational events in both countries"¹⁰⁴, as well as to explore the possibility of exchanging visits of journalists and media experts. However, the pace of expansion and deepening of Belarusian-Indian ties in virtually all areas of interaction of mutual interest has grown with such intensity over the past five years that it has set additional serious creative tasks for the international segment of Belarusian and Indian journalists to adequately cover the diversity of the developing bilateral partnership. More than 20 years of diplomatic relations and cooperation between Minsk and Delhi in multilateral and bilateral formats show that India is among the partner countries of Belarus in Asia, with which large-scale interaction is developing in all areas of cooperation. Minsk believes that the high level of trust and friendship between Belarus and India "will yet be reflected in specific projects in trade, economic, investment, science and technology and other sectors of bilateral cooperation."¹⁰⁵ For this purpose the Belarusian side intends to use its serious economic, scientific and technical potential

¹⁰³ Pagadnenie pamagii Uradom Respubliki Belarus i Uradom Respubliki Indyy o supratsounstvu v kulture, mastatstva, adukatsivu, srodkai mashamatstva, sport i turizma [Electronic resource]. - 1993. - URL: <http://pravo.levonevsky.org/bazaby09/sbor87/text87247.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ Program of cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Republic of India in the field of culture, art, education, mass media and press for 2007-2009 [Electronic resource]. - 2007. - URL: http://india.mfa.gov.by/modules/cfiles/files/Kultura_russk_131.pdf

¹⁰⁵ Alexander Lukashenko congratulated the President of the Republic of India Pranab Mukherjee on the national holiday [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press/141635.html#doc>

to implement joint projects, as "Belarus and India need to enter a new stage of development. <...> Close cooperation in science and technology should be followed by rapid development of projects in other areas"¹⁰⁶ .

It is worth noting here that since the early 1990s, India's role as an active player in the world economy and international relations has been growing sharply. It is a fact that over the past 20 years the Indian economy has been one of the fastest growing economies in the world. And today India "has already joined the number of world powers and has become a special subsystem of international relations. Together with the United States and China, it is the most likely contender for the status of a global center of influence."¹⁰⁷ . As far back as 1996 and 2002 the Indian government presented an ambitious national development program "India: Vision 2020", which "reflected the new worldview: an era of economic competition between the states, the essence of which is the achievement of advantage in technology"¹⁰⁸ . Therefore, the main guidelines of Indian reforms today are "full industrialization of the economy, "scientification" of the economy, strengthening the common economic space through the deliberate development of horizontal linkages. <...> The logic of the reform and the tangible results achieved on the way of modernization have predetermined the interest of the Indian economy in products with a high share of intellectual value, innovative services, "advanced" world-class technologies"¹⁰⁹ .

It is easy to see that all these provisions are very close to the Belarusian model of socio-economic development. So are the basic national interests of India, which include such definitions as "the formation of a unipolar world is unacceptable; it is necessary to continue an uncompromising struggle against political extremism and radicalism; it is necessary to resist those aspects of economic globalization that negatively affect

¹⁰⁶ On September 20, Alexander Lukashenko received credentials from foreign ambassadors [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press/129375.html#doc>

¹⁰⁷ Lunev, S. From pauper Bharat to Great India / S. Lunev // [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/Zid_4=744#top

¹⁰⁸ Ilyumzhinov, V. Transformation through technology / V. Ilyumzhinov // [Electronic resource]. - 2010. - URL: <http://www.politjournal.ru/preview.php?action=Articles&dirid=40&tek=8745&issue=229>

¹⁰⁹ Volodin A. Russian-Indian economic relations: trends, problems, prospects / A. Volodin // [Electronic resource]. - 2007. - URL: http://www.perspektivy.mfo/rus/desk/rossiisko-indijskije_ekonomicheskije_otnosheniya_tendencii_problemy_perspektivy_2007-01-31.htm

developing countries"¹¹⁰ .

It is thought that this convergence of views of India and Belarus on the ways to solve the most important international and domestic problems led to the fact that in 2007, during the official visit of the Belarusian leader to Delhi, the presidents of the two countries "noted the significant potential in bilateral relations and emphasized the commitment to develop a strategic partnership"¹¹¹ . At the same time, at the highest level it was noted that "the peculiarity of Belarusian-Indian relations is that they are based on scientific and technical cooperation"¹¹² . But at the same time, the emergence of new initiatives in trade, economy, science and technology and investment, including the creation of joint ventures and industrial implementation of joint technological developments and further joint work on the diversification of ways and means of economic and financial cooperation is also important. The sides reached the strategic goal of increasing bilateral trade turnover up to 500 million US dollars by 2010, and accomplished this goal ahead of schedule, reaching over 600 million dollars in 2009. But the global economic and financial crisis clearly demonstrated that in order to maintain the positive dynamics of bilateral relations between such countries as Belarus and India it is necessary to move from simple trade and economic interaction to more complex schemes of investment and innovative cooperation in various areas. And the experience of the past few years has shown that the parties have been able to continue the real movement towards implementation of scientific-technical and innovative-investment projects, the beginning of which was laid as early as in the intergovernmental Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology of 1993 and continued in 2003 by the Agreement on Cooperation between the National Academies of Sciences of both countries.

In September 2012, the parties approved the "Executive Program of Belarusian-Indian

¹¹⁰ Theses on Russian-Indian Relations: Working Notebook / [V.I. Trubnikov (in charge) and others]; [Editor in Chief I.S. Ivanov]; Russian Council on Foreign Affairs (RIAC). - Moscow: Spetskniga, 2013. - C. 6.

¹¹¹ Presidents of Belarus and India adopted a joint declaration [Electronic resource]. - 2007. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press43214.html#doc>

¹¹² Prospects for expanding bilateral cooperation were discussed in New Delhi by President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko and the leadership of India [Electronic resource]. - 2007. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press43215.html#doc>

cooperation in science and technology for 2013-2015," which identified an extensive list of areas of bilateral cooperation, including microelectronics , information technologies, new materials, laser optical and optoelectronic technologies, biotechnology, medicine, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, agricultural and road engineering, energy and energy supply, environmental management and environmental protection technologies, water purification technologies and safety technologies. Such joint initiatives of scientists from the two countries as establishment of coordination centers for scientific and technical cooperation in Minsk and New Delhi and the Indian Information Center on the basis of the Republican Scientific and Technical Library in the Belarusian capital, as well as "preparation and publication of the information analytical publication "Belarus - India: directions of innovative cooperation"¹¹³ were expected to be implemented in 2013.

Moreover, back in January 2012 a Belarusian-Indian training center in the field of information and communication technologies was opened at the High-Tech Park in Minsk. In November of the same year the SPA of powder metallurgy of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Defense Research and Development Organization of the Ministry of Defense of India created the India-Belarus Center for research in new materials and technologies that will be located in Minsk and will perform research worth tens of millions of dollars. Other interesting examples of Belarusian-Indian scientific and technical cooperation include the joint project of the Institute of Physics and Technology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Indian Institute of Technology in the field of gas flame coatings hardening using ion and laser beams and the intention of the BNTU Scientific and Technological Park "Polytechnic" and the Indian R. K. Foundation to create in India a joint scientific and educational business center. It is thought that while implementing these various projects the Belarusian participants will become thoroughly familiar with the new type of scientific and practical developments that have been widely developed in India,

¹¹³ Scientific and technical cooperation [Electronic resource].

URL:

<http://india.mfa.gov.by/rus/belbelg/dbaz/>.

including under the influence of the global crisis, which "is designated as economical (frugal), gandhi, renewable (reverse). The main task is to significantly (up to 80%) reduce the price of innovative goods, services by eliminating everything superfluous, to make them available to the mass consumer with limited means"¹¹⁴ .

Since the Indian side objectively notes "the availability in Belarus of heavy-duty mining equipment, other high-tech products and potash fertilizers, which are vital for agriculture and food security in India,"¹¹⁵ , the next important and urgent areas for Belarusian-Indian cooperation should be trade and economic and industrial-cooperative cooperation.

Statistics show that in 2011 the Belarusian-Indian trade crossed the 500 million dollar mark again, and in 2012 it grew another third, largely due to deliveries of potash fertilizers, oil and petroleum products, heavy duty trucks, synthetic harnesses, acrylic fibers, bearings, tires, as well as development of the system of representative offices of Belarusian exporters in this country. In particular, Belarusian Potash Company CJSC, Beltelexport CJSC, Amkodor OJSC, and BelAZ Eurika Mining Equipment Services Private Limited are already represented in the Indian market.

Active participation in exhibitions and fairs held in India also contributes to entering the Indian market. Thus, more than 60 Belarusian enterprises participated in the national exposition of Belarus at the 32nd international fair held in New Delhi in November 2012. All these facts indicate that "Belarus is rediscovering India and the Indian market, and is counting on a strategic partnership with this state, which has a large and growing economy"¹¹⁶ . An eloquent evidence of this course is the development of Belarusian-Indian industrial and cooperative ties.

For example, the machines made by the Belarusian Automobile Plant, which are used in mining and transportation of natural resources - coal and non-ferrous metals -

¹¹⁴ Bragina, E.A. India: post-crisis promotion / E.A. Bragina // North - South - Russia 2010. Yearbook / Ed. by V.G. Khoros. - MOSCOW: IMEMO RAN, 2011. - C. 39.

¹¹⁵ On the meeting of the Ambassador of Belarus with the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament of India [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news/mfa/ceb056af673ee090.html>

¹¹⁶ Mikhail Myasnikovich met with representatives of Indian business circles [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://government.by/ru/content/4771>

aluminum, copper, manganese, tin, chromium, and lead - have proved to be quite popular in India. The popularity of the Belarusian dump trucks in the Indian market is evidenced by the following fact: in 2013 India is planning to buy 77 trucks of 190 tons payload capacity for the total amount of about \$ 200 million. In the framework of recent official visit of Belarusian governmental delegation in November 2012 it was said that "a joint factory for servicing BelAZ dump trucks has already been established in India. Now Indian partners are offered the entire line of these machines with payload capacity from 50 to 450 tons."¹¹⁷ and discussed a proposal to establish a joint venture to produce quarry equipment.

The project to set up an assembly facility for Belarusian diesel engines in the Indian state of Haryana, where approximately half of India's automotive industry is produced, also looks very promising. The point is that the government of this country has set a serious task to convert automobile vehicles to diesel fuel, so the products of Minsk Motor Works may be in high demand here. Minsk Automobile Plant is actively working on certification of three of its right-hand steering models in the Indian market in order to establish a joint venture to assemble these vehicles for India. We are also working on promoting Belarusian tractor machinery on the Indian market with a view to jointly sell it in third countries.

The Indian government's plans to develop local highways, the total length of which in India exceeds three million kilometers, and the length of expressways, which carry almost half of all cargo, is not even 70 thousand kilometers, open up interesting prospects for gaining a foothold in the Indian market. By 2015, 35,000 kilometers of expressways and ring roads will have been built. It is clear that in this situation, the equipment of the Belarusian Amkodor, which is already developing loaders with regard to engine compliance with Indian standards and has already established its distribution network in this country, which is represented by the joint venture Amkodor-India.

When it comes to the activity of Indian business in Belarus, according to Chief of the

¹¹⁷ Mikhail Myasnikovich pays a working visit to India [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://government.by/ru/content/4688>

Belarusian government M. Myasnikovich, "currently, over one thousand Indian companies are building their business in Belarus <...> And there will be more in the near future"¹¹⁸. At the same time, the Indian side is of the opinion that "interaction in the pharmaceutical industry is the most promising for Belarus and India"¹¹⁹. This conclusion is confirmed by the agreement reached in November 2012 to establish in Belarus on the basis of "Minskinterkaps" enterprise a pharmaceutical production of oncological, oncohematological and antiretroviral agents with an investment of up to \$15 million. In this case we are talking about the creation of an import-substituting enterprise, as now in Belarus "there are 525 pharmaceutical products registered, pharmaceutical substances produced by 125 Indian pharmaceutical companies"¹²⁰. If we take into account that in 2011 the Belarusian side purchased \$4.5 million worth of drugs in India, it is easy to see that the establishment of this production in Belarus will seriously reduce the volume of imports.

Interesting opportunities for Indian business in Belarus are opening up in the energy sector. For example, the Indian company Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd has already provided equipment for the construction of Grodno TPP-2, for which the Indian government has allocated a credit line of 56 million dollars. And in December 2012, representatives of the company SMS International Infrastructure Limited visited Belarus to find out about investment projects for construction of the Mogilev, Shklov and Rechitsa hydroelectric power plants with total cost of \$90 million. Projects on participation of the Indian business in modernization of Baranovichi cotton production association, on cooperation with the Belarusian metallurgical plant and on power installations at the Dolomit Production Association are also being considered today. All of these interaction projects that are already underway and are still under

¹¹⁸ Mikhail Myasnikovich pays a working visit to India [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://government.by/ru/content/4688>

¹¹⁹ Belarus is interested in accelerating the implementation of joint projects with India [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <http://government.by/ru/content/3979>

¹²⁰ Materials of the press-conference with the participation of Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Sergei Aleinik on the results of the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to Kazakhstan, Bangladesh and India (Minsk, November 21, 2012) [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news/mfa/fa749f4a828ffc5.html>

consideration make it possible to forecast growth in Belarusian-Indian trade turnover up to one billion dollars in 2015, which again demonstrates the parties' desire to "establish strategic Belarusian-Indian cooperation."¹²¹ .

Belarus's participation in the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space opens up additional opportunities for the development of successful cooperation with India. It is worth recalling that in December 2012, in the course of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India, both countries "spoke in favor of holding talks between India and the Eurasian Economic Commission. Putin, both countries "spoke in favor of holding talks between India and the Eurasian Economic Commission on the conclusion of a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of India and the Customs Union of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation."¹²² . The main idea behind this initiative is to create a free trade zone or full-fledged economic interaction that would significantly increase the volume of mutual trade turnover between India and the countries of the Customs Union. In early April 2013, the heads of the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Indian Ministry of Industry and Trade discussed the options for this interaction and were quite optimistic about the prospects of this idea, since "India and the countries of the Customs Union - Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia - have special economic and political relations and very close positions in the international arena"¹²³ .

In the light of all these trends in the development of Belarusian-Indian bilateral and multilateral cooperation, the role of the media in fulfilling its main function of providing objective coverage of the events taking place in the interaction between the two countries and their allies is increasing. To put it bluntly, this topic is still very poorly represented in their media space. However, this shortcoming is also typical of

¹²¹ Alexander Lukashenko congratulated Pranab Mukherjee on his election as President of the Republic of India [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press38967.html#doc>

¹²² Joint Statement on the Results of the Official Visit to the Republic of India by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir V. Putin. Putin "Partnership for mutual prosperity and a better world order". [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://kremlin.ru/ref/notes/1369>.

¹²³ The Customs Union is looking for ways to expand cooperation with India [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Tamozhennyj-sojuz-ischet-puti-dlja-rasshirenija-sotrudnichestva-s-Indiej_i_629726.html

the Russian media covering Russian-Indian relations. But there they view the ways to activate media and information cooperation in a constructive way and propose such solutions to the problem at hand: "It is necessary to sign additional agreements with India's major newspapers that would include providing them with Russian materials. It is possible to create a Russian-language online edition for India. India should be offered to open new Indian media bureaus in Moscow. It is important to intensify exchanges of journalists. Provision should also be made for allocating funds to pay for Russian materials in the Indian press in areas of particular importance to Russia."¹²⁴ .

Perhaps, not all of the solutions proposed in this case by Russian analysts are fully applicable to the Belarusian side. However, we cannot ignore the most serious attitude of our partners in the Customs Union to the topic of strengthening and developing the media and information space with India as a space of constructive interaction and pragmatic consent, because "the media prepare the ground for such cooperation: they widely inform the population about the prospects of cooperation, form its ideology and create a positive psychological mood. The media to a certain extent organize the processes of <...> cooperation, show its benefits and identify problems, suggesting solutions, in a word, bring the parties really closer together. Where there is no active involvement of the media, the processes of integration are very slow, and disintegration - fast"¹²⁵ . This approach is especially important for Belarusian international journalism for the reason that informational support of the processes of strategic partnership of the Republic of Belarus is an unconditional priority of creative activities of Belarusian international journalists, who have yet to build and implement their information and analytical strategies specific to this bilateral (Belarus - India) and multilateral (Customs Union - India) issue.

¹²⁴ Theses on Russian-Indian Relations: Working Notebook / [V.I. Trubnikov (in charge) and others]; [Editor in Chief I.S. Ivanov]; Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC). - Moscow: Spetskniga, 2013. - C. 23.

¹²⁵ Rachkov, M. On the convergent function of journalism in cross-border and inter-regional cooperation / M. Rachkov, A. Sukhodolov // International Journalism-2013: Globalization and Regionalization of Information Space: Proceedings of the Second International Scientific and Practical Conference, February 20. The second international scientific-conference on February 20, 2013, Minsk / edited by T.N. Dasaeva; co-editor B.L. Zalessky. B.L. Zalessky. - Minsk : Publishing Center of Belarusian State University, 2013. - C. 227.

Belarus-Indonesia: Future-Oriented Cooperation and Media

Strengthening and expansion of the "foreign policy arc" of allies and partners in Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern and African regions of the planet and raising cooperation with its "anchor points" to the level of strategic partnership is one of the main directions of the multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus. In Asia, one of these "pivotal points" is Indonesia, a country with a quarter of a billion people, the fourth largest in the world. It is one of the countries that have a significant potential for mutually beneficial cooperation, and for the Belarusian side, the development of relations with these countries is at a stage that can be described as "establishing a dialogue and an active way out"¹²⁶ with a foothold in the markets of these countries. In this regard, it is important for the international segment of Belarusian journalism to "emphasize the constructive aspects of our relations in the economic and cultural spheres"¹²⁷, which requires the development and implementation of well thought-out comprehensive media strategies that would take into account the specifics of interaction of the Republic of Belarus with each of the countries of the "foreign policy arc", including with Indonesia.

June 2013 marked the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and Indonesia. Minsk believes that during this period the two sides have achieved "considerable progress in the development of mutually beneficial cooperation in various areas. Contacts at the highest and highest levels have gained momentum, there has been a steady growth in trade and economic cooperation, and the dialogue on topical international issues is expanding"¹²⁸. An important factor contributing to the development of relations is also the fact that "there are no artificial problems between us that would hinder the expansion of comprehensive trade and

¹²⁶ Countries and regions [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.by/bilateral/>.

¹²⁷ Matusevich, V. It is important for the media to emphasize the constructive aspects of interaction between Belarus and the West / V. Matusevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/person/opinions/Vladimir-Matusevich_i_513857.html

¹²⁸ Alexander Lukashenka congratulated President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press/145241.html#doc>

economic cooperation"¹²⁹ .

The starting point in the intensification of Belarusian-Indonesian relations can be considered May 12, 2000, when in Jakarta an intergovernmental agreement on economic and technical cooperation was signed, under which the parties established the "Intergovernmental Belarusian-Indonesian Joint Commission on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation"¹³⁰ .

It is worth noting here that the first decade of the 21st century was significant for Indonesia in a number of respects. It was during this period that the "country of 17500 big and small islands" demonstrated to the world community "a successful example of democracy building in a country with a predominantly Muslim population"¹³¹ . It was during this period that Indonesia's obvious foreign policy advantages - its rich resource base and large population - began to emerge. It was during this period that President S.B. Yudhoyono, who came to power in 2004, formulated four main principles of Indonesian foreign policy - "constructive approaches, identity in the modern world, nationalism and rejection of military alliances with other countries"¹³² .

Following the slogan "a thousand friends and no enemies," Jakarta in the twenty-first century has focused its main efforts on creating favorable conditions for maintaining high rates of economic development, promoting the construction of a multipolar world, firmly defending national interests, forming its positive image as a moderate Muslim country that demonstrates compatibility of the values of democracy and Islam. And this course quickly yielded results: "Having an economy that is largely oriented toward the domestic market, Indonesia managed to maintain GDP growth at 4% during the

¹²⁹ Alexander Lukashenko receives credentials from foreign ambassadors [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press140154.html#doc>

¹³⁰ Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia on economic and technical cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2000. - URL: <http://pravo.levonevsky.org/bazaby/org457/basic/text0235.htm>

¹³¹ Gusev M. Islam in Indonesia. Foreign policy course of the country as a factor of intra-confessional contradictions / M. Gusev // [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <http://www.idmedina.ru/books/history-culture/23533>

¹³² Khokhlova N.I. The main directions of Indonesia's foreign policy and prospects for its development based on the results of the first presidency of S.B. Yudoyono / N.I. Khokhlova // [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <http://www.perspektivy.info/ovkumena/azia/osnovnyje napravlenija vneshnej politiki indonezii i perspektivy jeje razvitiya po itogam pervogo prezidentstva s b judojono 2011-10-07.htm>

crisis. The country was able, despite the crisis, to create new jobs and stop the outflow of capital abroad¹³³.

Indonesia is an industrial-agrarian country, where more than half of the gross domestic product is created in industry, agriculture and fishing, where the main industries are oil and gas processing, metallurgy, machinery, chemicals, food and textiles. It is a fact that today Indonesia is one of the top three countries in terms of exports of coal, gas, palm and coconut oil and natural rubber. It has the world's largest gold mine and the second largest copper mine, as well as large deposits of nickel, iron and manganese. However, the country's mineral deposits are not yet explored enough, so Indonesia is ready to take advantage of foreign experience in exploration and offer joint projects to foreign companies in the field of exploration and production of minerals.

In agriculture, in order to meet the domestic needs of almost 250 million people and stimulate industrial food production, the Indonesian government has invested significant financial resources in the development of land irrigation, infrastructure building, the purchase of high-yield crop varieties, and the purchase of mineral fertilizers over the past 15 years. Another priority area of the country's development is the implementation of infrastructure projects, which is especially important for the island state, where relatively recently they started paying attention to improving the port infrastructure, building national roads and other transport routes between the islands. But imbalances in the economic development of Indonesia's regions still remain today. Nevertheless, the country has a rapidly growing middle class engaged in small and medium-sized businesses. This potential allows Jakarta to actively upgrade its relations with countries on virtually every continent - Asia-Pacific, Africa, South America. Finally, in Europe, where the last five years have seen a real intensification of interaction with the Republic of Belarus.

Another milestone in the development of Belarusian-Indonesian partnership is 2008, when the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Indonesian Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation took place in February in

¹³³ Zubov, G. Indonesia: Growing Tiger / G. Zubov // [Electronic resource]. - 2011. - URL: <http://professional.ru/Soobschestva/biznes-v-azii/indonezija-rastuschij-tigr/>.

Minsk, which demonstrated a clearly expressed "constructivism and readiness of the Indonesian side to actively cooperate with the Republic of Belarus"¹³⁴ . Then the parties outlined three priority areas of bilateral cooperation: 1) in industry, investments, agriculture, including the supply of fertilizers; 2) scientific and technical activities and humanitarian sphere; 3) interaction between state administration bodies in the development of the contractual and legal framework of Belarusian-Indonesian cooperation, as well as in the cooperation of law enforcement bodies.

The past five and a half years have confirmed the seriousness of the intentions of the two countries to bring their bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level. Today the legal framework for cooperation between Belarus and Indonesia includes 16 agreements, including agreements on economic and technical cooperation, cooperation in science and technology, trade, defense industry, avoidance of double taxation, and "work is underway to coordinate and prepare for signing seven agreements in the fields of investment promotion and mutual protection, legal assistance, combating crime, education, culture"¹³⁵ .

In recent years, the trade and economic cooperation also began to develop dynamically, where the trade turnover grew from 1.8 million dollars in 1995 to 219.2 million dollars in 2011. In 2012, due to the decrease in the supply of potash fertilizers to Indonesia, the index of mutual trade went down to 132.2 million dollars. In January-February 2013 the Belarusian-Indonesian trade turnover amounted to \$26.1 million. At the same time, Belarusian exports increased more than threefold and amounted to 19.5 million dollars.

Belarusian supplies to this Southeast Asian country are formed, as a rule, by potash fertilizers and tires. Interestingly, the Belshina trade house in Singapore, which was opened there in 2009, deals with supplies of tires to the Indonesian market. In 2012, it

¹³⁴ Materials of the meeting of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Viktor Gaisenok with representatives of mass media after the first session of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Indonesian commission on trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation, which took place in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus on February 8, 2008 [Electronic resource]. - 2008. - URL: http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b65db0f3deb694d2.html

¹³⁵ Treaty-legal base of relations with the Republic of Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/legal/

supplied tires worth \$19 million to Indonesia. In addition, "the supply of tires for the primary completion of Caterpillar and Komatsu dump trucks in Indonesia" has been established¹³⁶ .

Back in 2011, seamless ferrous pipes became a new export item for Belarus to Indonesia. On September 20, 2012, five Belarusian mine dump trucks with the lifting capacity of 45 tons were delivered to Indonesia, and all in all, 20 machines that are now successfully operating in the coal mine in East Kalimantan. This fact was preceded by the establishment in December 2011, again in Singapore, of the trade house Belazia, whose main activity is the export of Belarusian Automobile Plant products to the Indonesian market.

2012 was a remarkable year for Belarusian-Indonesian relations: in March 2012, Belarus for the first time marked its presence at the largest Indonesian international exhibition of heavy machinery and equipment "Heavy Duty Vehicle and Equipment," where "about thirty Belarusian enterprises and organizations from the Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Education, National Academy of Sciences, and the Belneftkhim Concern demonstrated their export potential"¹³⁷ . In total, about a thousand companies from 20 countries took part in the exhibition, which allowed the representatives of the Belarusian business to introduce their products to a very wide range of potential customers not only from Indonesia, but also from almost all countries of South-East Asia.

However, even these examples show that the current level of business cooperation between the two countries clearly does not match the potential for cooperation that they have. According to the Belarusian side, "in the next year or two, the countries will be able to triple the volume of mutual trade"¹³⁸ . This can be done by actively moving

¹³⁶ Polezhai, T. Belarusian-Indonesian business forum opens on March 19 in Jakarta / T. Polezhai // . [Electronic resource]. - 2013 . - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Belorusko-indonezjij_ski_j-biznes-forum-otkroetsja-19-martay-Dzhakarta_i_627711.html

¹³⁷ Belarus-Indonesia: Entering the Market of Southeast Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: http://export.by/resources/izdaniya_i_publicacii/belarus_%E2%80%94indoneziya_vihod_na_rinok_vugov_ostoch.html

¹³⁸ On March 19, Alexander Lukashenka met with President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press143072.html#doc>

forward in a number of partnership areas, where Belarus and Indonesia are natural partners, despite their geographical remoteness. Such a priority area is, first of all, mechanical engineering, where the parties pay special attention to projects related to "purchases and service maintenance of BelAZ trucks and tractors. Large coal deposits are being developed in Indonesia, and there are other projects where Belarusian machinery may be in demand.¹³⁹ .

¹⁴⁰Back in 2011, during the third session of the Belarus-Indonesia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation that took place in September in Minsk, it was stated that "the Indonesian side is very interested in maintaining stable supplies of potash fertilizers, in arranging supplies of our mining equipment, agricultural machinery, road building equipment and in participation of Belarusian specialists in infrastructure projects that are planned by the Indonesian government. Also in 2011 the Belarusian embassy was opened in Jakarta to make fuller use of the potential of bilateral cooperation. And in the business circles of Indonesia, companies seriously interested in cooperation with Belarus started to appear.

In particular, the holding company OSO Group is one of the largest in the Indonesian mining industry - it mines tin, bauxite, granite, and coal. It is interested in cooperation with OAO BelAZ in terms of purchasing Belarusian quarry machinery for use in its own granite deposits, as well as in organizing supplies of "agricultural machinery, grain drying complexes, and technologies for producing cube-like crushed stone of increased strength" from Belarus.¹⁴¹ .

Indonesian company Pertamina is the world's largest producer and exporter of liquefied natural gas and the second largest oil producer in Indonesia after American Chevron.

¹³⁹ Mikhail Myasnikovich met with the speaker of the Council of People's Representatives of the People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia [Electronic resource]. -2013 . - URL:

<http://www.government.by/ru/content/5001>

¹⁴⁰ Materials of the approach to the press of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Sergei Aleinik at the third session of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Indonesian Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation (Minsk, September 15, 2011) [Electronic resource]. -2011 . - URL:

http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c692677a4155e858.html

¹⁴¹ Belarus is ready to meet Indonesia's needs for dump trucks and potash fertilizers [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4592>

It was attracted by the research of Belorussian specialists in enhanced oil recovery and equipment on the wells of the Belorussian fields: "Representatives of Pertamina consider it possible to implement a joint project to select, test and implement the optimal EOR (enhanced oil recovery) technology in a specific field in Indonesia."¹⁴² . These and a number of other examples eloquently show that great prospects for Belarussian-Indonesian ties are opening up in scientific and technical cooperation, where "Belarus offers Indonesia its developments and technologies in the agro-industrial complex, as well as cooperation in mechanical engineering, including in the production of agricultural machinery <...> Belarussian scientists are ready to cooperate with their Indonesian colleagues in bio- and nanotechnology, pharmacology, laser technology, space industry"¹⁴³ .

On 3 December 2012 in Minsk, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus signed a memorandum of understanding in the field of scientific and technological cooperation, which should become the basis for joint projects. Belarussian scientists have already proposed to their Indonesian colleagues more than 30 joint projects in various fields of science and technology. And, we think, this is just the beginning. After all, Indonesia is a fast-growing country with rich reserves of minerals and natural resources. It is expected that by 2030 this state will become the seventh largest economy in the world. Therefore, promising areas of Belarussian-Indonesian cooperation in science and technology could be "technical sciences, agriculture, microelectronics, control and measuring devices, information and communication technologies, new materials"¹⁴⁴ .

Moving in this direction, the parties are actively building ties and establishing contacts at the level of specific organizations. For example, Protocols of Intent to cooperate in

¹⁴² Bolgova T., Indonesian oil and gas company "Pertamina" is interested in cooperation with "Belorusneft" / T. Bolgova // . [Electronic resource]. -2013 . -

URL:
http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Indoneziskaia-neftegazovaia-kompaniia-Pertamina-zainteresovana-sotrudnicchat-s-Belorusneftiu-i-639932.html

¹⁴³ Belarus and Indonesia agreed on cooperation in science and technology [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Belarus-i-Indonesia-dogovorilis-o-sotrudnichestve-v-sfere-nauki-i-texnologii-i-617193.html

¹⁴⁴ Scientific and Technical Cooperation with Indonesia [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://indonesia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/scientific/

metallurgy have already been signed by the Metallurgy Center of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences and the Institute of Physics of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Grodno State University named after Y. S. Pushkin, the Institute of Physics of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, and the Institute of Physics of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Я. Kupala State University of Grodno, the Science and Technology Park BNTU "Polytechnik" SE and the Belarusian-Russian University. In May 2012 arrangements have been made for cooperation between BNTU and Technological Institute of Bandung in the organization of internships and exchange of students, graduate students, teachers and scientific personnel, in scientific-practical conferences, joint research activities, exchange of information resources for grants and programs. Belarus has also declared its readiness to train highly qualified scientific personnel for Indonesia, as well as to establish educational structures in Indonesia. Training of highly qualified workers and technicians of engineering, technical and construction specialties may become a priority here.

Future joint projects were discussed during the first visit of the Belarusian head of state to Indonesia in March 2013, during which the Belarusian side declared its readiness to deepen industrial cooperation and establish relevant joint ventures that could supply products not only to the Indonesian market, but also to other Southeast Asian countries. Specifically, agreements were reached "to establish joint ventures to produce tires and our machinery in Indonesia"¹⁴⁵.

At the same time the parties agreed to export 50 dump trucks of Minsk Automobile Plant, 20 dump trucks of Belarusian Automobile Plant, and 20 machines of Minsk Tractor Plant to the South-East Asia country. In the nearest two-three years, it is planned to export more 500 MAZ trucks and about 600 tractors there. It is also planned to consider the possibility of "Belarusian road-building machinery and crushing plants" supplies to the Indonesian market¹⁴⁶. There are plans to develop partnership relations

¹⁴⁵ Belarus intends to strengthen its diplomatic presence in Southeast Asia - Makej [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/politics/Belarus-namerena-usilit-svoe-diplomaticomateskoe-prisutstvie-v-Jugo-Vostochnoj-Azii---Makej_i_628804.html

¹⁴⁶ Vladimir Semashko took part in the Belarusian-Indonesian business forum [Electronic resource]. - 2013. -

in the potash industry as well: in 2013, Belarus will supply 250 thousand tons of potash fertilizers to Indonesia. And a contract has already been signed for their supply over the next three years.

And the scientific and technical sphere can become an independent part of the bilateral cooperation, which can be based on the latest developments of Belarusian scientists. Good prospects are seen in the implementation of joint projects in bio- and information technologies, agrarian sciences, and food industry. For instance, "the Indonesian side is very interested in production and processing of milk in Belarus and export of it to Indonesia, since Belarus cannot provide itself with this product, as well as production of instant pasta"¹⁴⁷. And contacts are already developing in this regard with Salin Group, the largest company producing food products in Indonesia.

Analyzing all these facts, it is hard not to agree with the opinion that "with joint efforts the countries will be able to achieve successful development of contacts and raise Belarusian-Indonesian cooperation to a qualitatively new level"¹⁴⁸. Moreover, according to Indonesian President S. B. Yudojono, "deepening cooperation with Belarus in the future is a political capital for us <...> Belarus' participation in the Customs Union opens up new opportunities for us to interact, and our participation in ASEAN opens up great opportunities for Belarus"¹⁴⁹. As we can see, the prospects for Belarusian-Indonesian cooperation in the context of modern integration processes are very tempting. To implement them is a task, and representatives of Belarusian international journalism should contribute to its competent solution.

URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4917>

¹⁴⁷ Polezhai, T. Indonesia shows interest in investing in Belarusian agriculture / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. - 2013 . - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/economics/Indonezija-projavlja-interes-k-investirovaniju-y-belorusskoe-selskoe-xozjajstvo-i-627735.html

¹⁴⁸ Alexander Lukashenka congratulated the President of the Republic of Indonesia on the national holiday [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press/39357.html#doc>

¹⁴⁹ On March 19, Alexander Lukashenka met with President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/press/143072.html#doc>

Belarus-Bangladesh: from preconditions of growth to full-fledged cooperation

It is known that diversifying trade and deepening economic cooperation with Asian countries are important prerequisites for the growth of the export-oriented Belarusian economy. The People's Republic of Bangladesh, a state in South Asia with a fast-growing population exceeding 150 million people and which "may grow to 180 million people by 2020," is among the countries of this continent that have significant potential for mutually beneficial cooperation with the Republic of Belarus .¹⁵⁰

In January 2014, Bangladesh held regular parliamentary elections, again won by the Awami League, led by Sheikh Hasina, an iconic political figure for the entire South Asian region and the eldest daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the first head of independent Bangladesh, who was assassinated by political opponents in 1971, but who is still called the "father of the nation" in this country. Sheikh Hasina, once again at the helm of the government, promised to bring political stability to her people with the goal of transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country within the next ten years and solving its many problems, of which there are many.

First of all, we have to remember that South Asia is part of the so-called Third World, for which there is no greater challenge than overcoming poverty. And Bangladesh is the largest state in the world in terms of population among the poorest per capita income. But it is poverty that makes labor costs low and makes this country attractive to foreign capital. According to Hasina, who took over the government in 2009, Bangladesh is moving forward with reforms in legislation, health care and education. The logic behind this development is as follows: "When basic needs are met, we will not stop there, and in addition to the economy, we will start to develop science, so that our country has the basic infrastructure to create its own scientific developments for the greater convenience of our people."¹⁵¹

As for Bangladesh's position on the international scene, it is also very simple and clear:

¹⁵⁰ Belokrenitskiy, V. South Asia 2013 - 2020: opportunities and risks for Russia / V. Belokrenitskiy // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=1943#top.

¹⁵¹ Khasina, Sh. I'm not afraid of death / Sh. Khasina // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1358107440>

"We are ready to cooperate with the world and be open to the world without losing our national identity"¹⁵². In other words, "Bangladesh's policy is traditionally focused on maintaining friendly relations with all countries, deepening relations with the United States, Japan and EU countries, and developing regional cooperation with South Asian states, the PRC, South Korea and ASEAN"¹⁵³. This once again emphasizes the desire of this South Asian country, which is in the sphere of regional influence of its powerful neighbors, and especially India, nevertheless "to strengthen its geopolitical positions at the expense of extra-regional powers"¹⁵⁴, to which, as the practice of recent years shows, can be included the Republic of Belarus, diplomatic relations with which were established on February 21, 1992.

¹⁵⁵Over the past twenty or so years, the two countries "have made serious progress in trade and economic cooperation, but the countries have considerable potential to expand it. Bangladesh, with its large population, is of considerable interest to Belarus, which is confirmed by the figures. According to the results of 2011, the trade turnover with this country amounted to about \$135 million. Moreover, the share of Belarusian exports in this amount exceeded \$120 million, having increased 2.5 times during the year. This happened primarily due to the supply of Belarusian potash fertilizers, as well as exports of x-ray equipment, synthetic filament harnesses and tractors. On the whole, since 2003, when the value of the Belarusian export was only \$10 million, the supplies from Belarus have increased by 11 times in 2011.

Statistics also states that already in January-March 2012, the trade turnover with Bangladesh was only \$2.4 million and was "represented exclusively by imports from Bangladesh: clothing, tobacco raw materials, yarn made of jute fibers"¹⁵⁶. But even

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Visit of the Government Delegation of Bangladesh [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5141>

¹⁵⁴ Lunev, S. The Greater East Asia Region and the Politics of India / S. Lunev // [Electronic resource]. - 2009. - URL: http://www.isoa.ru/art-view.php?bc_tovar_id=529

¹⁵⁵ M. Myasnikovich met with the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4401>

¹⁵⁶ About the visit of the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news/mfa/e663652bafc498ca.html>.

then it was clear that Bangladesh was of interest to Belarus "as a market for the implementation of industrial cooperation projects with an emphasis on agricultural machine building, as a serious promising market for increasing sales of potash fertilizers, chemical oil products and mechanical engineering products"¹⁵⁷ .

A certain impetus to the Belarus-Bangladesh cooperation was given by the first official visit of Foreign Minister of Bangladesh D. Moni to Minsk in May 2012, who outlined a clear position of official Dhaka on the partnership with Belarus: "The countries have a lot in common, and the economies of Belarus and Bangladesh are mutually complementary. We would very much like to intensify our bilateral relations, and we look forward to intensifying cooperation between our countries."¹⁵⁸ . And at the same time, the parties agreed to pay attention, first of all, to the active expansion of the contractual and legal framework of bilateral relations, which at that time consisted of only several documents, including the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on trade and economic cooperation and the Agreement on cooperation between the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The parties agreed to supplement them with new documents, including agreements on mutual protection of investments, military and technical cooperation, and cooperation in education. Specifically, the Belarusian side suggested the need for joint work in personnel training and agriculture, and the Bangladeshi side - in science. Belarus was ready to train students from Bangladesh even in English, and to set up a joint university or college with Belarusian teachers and professors. An important outcome of the visit of the foreign minister of Bangladesh to Belarus was the agreement of the sides to establish a bilateral commission, which "will discuss trade, economic and other areas

¹⁵⁷ Materials of the press-conference with the participation of Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Sergei Aleinik on the results of the visit of the government delegation of the Republic of Belarus to Kazakhstan, Bangladesh and India (Minsk, November 21, 2012) [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/fa749f4a828ffcb5.html

¹⁵⁸ 24 May Aliaksandr Lukashenka met with Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dipu Moni [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/24-maja-aleksandr-lukashenko-vstretilsia-s-ministrom-inostrannyx-del-bangladesh-dipu-moni-263/

of cooperation between our countries.¹⁵⁹ .

Six months later, in November 2012, Belarus and Bangladesh made another concrete step to expand opportunities for trade and economic relations, diversify the range of goods in mutual trade, and launch specific projects in the field of industrial cooperation. I am referring to the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to that South Asian country, in the course of which official Minsk said that "Belarus views cooperation with the People's Republic of Bangladesh as long-term and based on mutual benefits. <...> The Belarusian side intends not only to develop trade, but also to transfer technology, know-how, to follow the path of establishing new production facilities in Bangladesh"¹⁶⁰ .

At the Bangladesh-Belarus business forum held in Dhaka, these promising areas of bilateral cooperation were specified in the formats of possible implementation: "Belarus offers turnkey projects, as well as projects with active participation of the Bangladeshi side. These are the production of automotive and tractor machinery, partnership in agriculture and food, cooperation in high-tech and science."¹⁶¹ . Specifically, they talked about the possibility for the Belarusian side to set up a joint venture in Bangladesh to lend money to buyers willing to buy machinery and goods from Belarus, and it would be cheap resources based on the Islamic banking model. Especially promising in this regard are projects in various spheres of agriculture, agro-industry and biotechnology. After all, "the rise of the village in Bangladesh means the rise of the whole country."¹⁶² . That is why Dhaka has expressed its readiness to consider the possibility of purchasing, for example, Belarusian small-sized agricultural machinery. In this regard, "not only the supplies of finished products, but

¹⁵⁹ Materials of the approach to the press of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Sergei Martynov following his talks with Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Dipu Moni (Minsk, May 22, 2012) [Electronic resource]. -2012 . -

URL:

<http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news/mfa/edb6bb5a52eb7b24.html>

¹⁶⁰ Mikhail Myasnikovich pays an official visit to the People's Republic of Bangladesh [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4686>

¹⁶¹ Mikhail Myasnikovich spoke at the Belarusian-Bangladeshi business forum in Dhaka [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4687>

¹⁶² Khasina, Sh. I'm not afraid of death / Sh. Khasina // [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1358107440>

also the project to create a joint venture for milk processing"¹⁶³, the essence of which is to produce drinking milk and other products from Belarusian dried milk in Bangladesh, seem interesting.

During the visit, the Belarusian government delegation signed 18 bilateral international documents, including six intergovernmental and 12 interdepartmental documents that covered cooperation in investment, industry, agriculture, science and technologies, pharmaceuticals, education, justice, and twinning arrangements between the capitals of Minsk and Dhaka. Also of note is the Memorandum on Long-Term Cooperation in the Export of Potash Fertilizers from Belarus to the Bangladesh Market, in which the parties agreed upon the volume of supplies of up to one million tons per year for the next two years for the state and private sectors of Bangladesh. This should be facilitated by the expansion of the logistics infrastructure for Belarusian fertilizers, for which it is planned to build a warehouse for 50 thousand tonnes in one of the ports of Bangladesh. Other signed documents include a contract between the Minsk tractor plant and Corona Industries for a trial delivery of Belarus-520, which could be a good prologue to further increase exports of Belarusian agricultural machinery to this country, where, as mentioned above, the capacity of the agricultural market is objectively very large, along with the need for tractors, and an agreement to work with the Department of Pharmaceutical Industry of Belarus and Incepta Pharmaceuticals, Square Pharmaceuticals on issues related to co

While discussing opportunities for cooperation in the implementation of commercial projects in agricultural and industrial production, as well as initiatives in science, education, and scientific and technological interaction, it was decided to work on the establishment of three production facilities in Bangladesh: an assembly facility for Belarusian tractors and other agricultural equipment, as well as joint facilities for deep processing of potatoes and milk processing segment. To this end, the two sides created a bilateral working group that studied all aspects of industrial cooperation and included in its scope of interest both supplies of Belarusian machinery and establishment of joint

¹⁶³ Belarus plans to expand its presence in the markets of the Asian region [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4680>

and assembly facilities in Bangladesh.

As for cooperation in education, science and technology, a specific agreement was reached on the establishment in Bangladesh of a multidisciplinary faculty of the highest category on the basis of one of the local universities to train specialists in basic applied and prospective scientific and technical disciplines, which includes mechanical engineering. And soon after that, "the Belarusian government began organizing work to implement the agreements reached during the official visit of the Belarusian governmental delegation to Bangladesh"¹⁶⁴. The figures also testified to it. Whereas in 2012 the trade turnover between the two countries dropped to about \$70 million, it was close to \$45 million within four months of 2013.

In July 2013, the Belarusian-Bangladeshi dialogue at the governmental level was continued during the visit of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to our country for the first time in the history of the bilateral relations, together with whom representatives of over 30 companies and diversified corporations engaged in the production and sale of textile, yarn, woven and leather products, manufacturing and processing of agricultural products, seafood production, hotel and tourism business, construction and reconstruction of buildings, production of air-conditioning, etc. arrived in Belarus. Speaking about the main task of her government - eradication of poverty, as well as the plans to remove the country from the list of the poorest by 2021, Sh: "Partnership with Belarus will contribute to the implementation of the joint investment of this program"¹⁶⁵.

This visit resulted in nine international documents on cooperation in a wide range of areas - "from financial and nuclear energy to joint programs in education and culture"¹⁶⁶, as well as the Agreement on Mutual Protection of Investment and Avoidance of Double Taxation, which clearly demonstrated that in a fairly short period

¹⁶⁴ Mikhail Myasnikovich met with the Ambassador of Bangladesh [Electronic resource]. - 2012. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/4752>

¹⁶⁵ Bangladesh stands for tax-free and duty-free trade with Belarus - Hasina [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/politics/Bangladesh-vystupaet-za-beznavalogovuiu-i-beshposhlinnuiu-torgovliu-s-Belarusiu---Xasina-i-640440.html

¹⁶⁶ Results of the visit of the government delegation of Bangladesh to Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5144>

of time the parties have gone from simple trade transactions to active discussions on the implementation of joint investment projects and the creation of

In particular, the Belarusian side specified its proposals for the construction of a joint venture in Bangladesh to produce baby milk nutrition, which will involve well-known Belarusian producers, who are popular not only in their own country, but also at the global level. When setting up a joint venture to manufacture automobile and agricultural equipment in Bangladesh, the Belarusian side initially set an objective to sell the products made in Bangladesh not only in the domestic market of that country, but also to its neighboring states.

The agreement on Belarus granting export commodity loans worth USD 50 million for supplies of Belarusian road and utility equipment to Bangladesh can be considered the beginning of large-scale cooperation between the two countries. Minsk views this document as the beginning of the systemic promotion of Belarusian goods in the South Asian region, in which "trade and economic cooperation can and should evolve into the establishment of joint ventures, joint industrial and scientific cooperation projects"¹⁶⁷. The fact that Bangladesh is interested in involving Belarusian specialists in the construction of the Ruppur nuclear power plant, the construction of which will start in 2014 under the Russian project, also speaks volumes.

¹⁶⁸There is also interesting cooperation between the two countries in the field of diplomacy, where the Academy of Public Administration of Belarus and the Bangladesh Diplomatic Academy have agreed to train diplomats jointly in such areas as "international relations, international organizations, international law, foreign policy and diplomacy, governance, human rights and the rule of law, economic diplomacy, new aspects of international security, political strategy analysis and diplomatic skills, foreign policy of C

¹⁶⁷ Visit of the Government Delegation of Bangladesh [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5141>

¹⁶⁸ The Academy of Administration of Belarus and the Deepakademy of Bangladesh intend to conduct joint training of diplomats [Electronic resource]. -2013 . - URL: http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/societv/Akademija-upravljenija-Belarusi-Dipakademija-Bangladesh-namereny-vesti-sovmestnuju-podgotovku-diplomatov-i-640708.html

All of this allowed Belarusian Prime Minister M. Myasnikovich, speaking at the Belarus-Bangladesh Business Forum in Minsk in July 2013, to conclude that "Belarus and Bangladesh will increase their mutual trade many times in the coming years.¹⁶⁹ . A good prerequisite for this is the fact that the economies of the two countries, as noted above, do not compete with each other, but only complement each other and create a vast field for mutually beneficial business projects. The prospects for cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector are an eloquent illustration of this conclusion. It is known that Bangladesh exports medicines to more than 50 countries. Belarus imports large quantities of drugs - about 500 million dollars annually. And there are good opportunities for creating joint ventures, which could work successfully in the pharmaceutical market of both the countries themselves and abroad.

The results of Belarus-Bangladesh cooperation in 2013 show that there is every reason to hope for "further expansion of cooperation between Belarus and Bangladesh on the principles of partnership and mutual understanding"¹⁷⁰ . In January - August 2013, the trade turnover between Belarus and Bangladesh reached almost \$75 million, including Belarus' export of \$63.4 million. During this period, 12 Belarusian products were supplied to Bangladesh. Potash fertilizers traditionally made up the bulk of the exports, but "computing machines for automatic data processing, tractors, tires, flour and pellets from meat, meat products and fish were also supplied"¹⁷¹ .¹⁷² Today we can confidently state that by early 2014, Minsk and Dhaka were able to specify the priorities of bilateral relations to the maximum extent possible, coordinate approaches to the development of cooperation and implementation of joint projects in the areas of industrial cooperation, export and import of goods, science and technology, and agriculture, and

¹⁶⁹ Mikhail Myasnikovich took part in the opening of the Belarus-Bangladesh Business Forum [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5139>

¹⁷⁰ Alexander Lukashenko congratulated President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Abdul Hamid [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-narodnoj-respubliki-bangladesh-abdula-xamida-7718/

¹⁷¹ Mikhail Myasnikovich met with Saiful Hock [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5288>

¹⁷² On the meeting with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh S. Hock [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/bc250156681a35a6.html

outline joint steps to implement priority cooperation projects, which now include "supplies of Belarusian agricultural and municipal machinery to Bangladesh, cooperation in the field of

The tasks facing the international segment of Belarusian journalism in this regard can be formulated as follows: the development of cooperation between Belarus and Bangladesh should be adequately reflected in the Belarusian media in the form of a friendly, respectful and increasingly expanding information flow, as "at present, ideas of interested attitude to neighbors and allies are increasingly penetrating into communication channels. <...> In fact, we are now witnessing how a new specific prospective community of states and peoples of effective socio-economic development is emerging on the basis of global Eurasian integration in the world"¹⁷³ .

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¹⁷³ Sluka O. Perspective of Eurasian Communication // International Journalism 2014: Dialogue of Cultures and Interaction of Media of Different Countries: Materials of the Third International Scientific and Practical Conference, February 20, 2014. 2014, Minsk / ed. by T.N. Dasaeva; co-auth. B.L. Zaleskii. - Minsk, 2014. - C. 261.

Belarus-Pakistan: Mutually Complementary Formula

The development of Belarusian-Pakistani relations over the past few years can be called a vivid example of the practical implementation of the Republic of Belarus's strategy to strengthen relations with the countries of the so-called "far arc. As far back as 2011, Islamabad expressed hope "for the intensification of bilateral relations between Belarus and Pakistan"¹⁷⁴. In 2012, Minsk also voiced a very clear conviction that "the sustainable development of Belarusian-Pakistani relations in all spheres will bring mutual cooperation to a new level"¹⁷⁵. In 2013, they spoke about the possibilities to "intensify trade and economic relations, first of all, by increasing supplies of Belarusian machine building products, which have proven themselves in the Pakistani market"¹⁷⁶.

Belarus is well aware that as the sixth country in the world in terms of population - about 200 million people - and the seventh in terms of export of agricultural products, Pakistan is a very capacious market and promising partner not only in the field of agricultural machinery, where our equipment is "the basis of the Belarusian export to Pakistan, which in 2013 was over 42 million dollars"¹⁷⁷. It also suggests that the time has come for a serious expansion of the naturally established formula of Belarusian-Pakistani relations, which even today is the mutual complementarity of the economies of the two countries: "In terms of net trade, there are quite certain prospects for us in the Pakistani market in terms of heavy dump trucks, road construction, municipal and agricultural machinery and petrochemical products"¹⁷⁸. Pakistan has traditionally

¹⁷⁴ On presentation of credentials [Electronic resource].

-2011

URL:

http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/f2183ccf6e73f640.html

¹⁷⁵ Alexander Lukashenko congratulated President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari on Independence Day [electronic resource]. -2012 . - URL:

http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/aleksandr-lukashenko-pozdravil-prezidenta-pakistana-asifa-ali-zardari-s-dnem-nezavisimosti-4003/

¹⁷⁶ On the meeting of Belarusian Ambassador to Russia I. Petrishenko with Pakistani Ambassador to Russia A. Babar [Electronic resource]. - 2013. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa7d503da6196449e39.html

¹⁷⁷ Answers of the Head of the Department of Information - Press Secretary of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry Dmitry Mironchik to journalists' questions during the briefing held on May 22, 2014 [Electronic resource]. - 2014. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/a57b88663ce28b13.html

¹⁷⁸ Interview of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Pakistan Andrei Yermolovich to the Belarusian Telegraph Agency (August 7, 2015) [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL:

supplied the Belarusian market with textile products, rice, vegetables, fruits and vegetables. Consideration of these arguments led the Belarusian side to open a diplomatic mission in this South Asian country in 2014, and the turnover rose to almost \$60 million. Then supplies of Belarusian potash fertilizers to the Pakistani market increased significantly - by two times, parts and accessories for cars and tractors - by almost a third, and synthetic yarn harnesses - by 20 percent.¹⁷⁹ However, 2015 was a truly breakthrough year for Minsk and Islamabad, when the Belarusian head of state paid a visit to Pakistan in May, culminating in the adoption of the Islamabad Declaration of Belarus-Pakistan Cooperation, in which the two sides consolidated the main principles of the political dialogue and signed "a package of two dozen documents aimed at expanding cooperation between Belarus and Pakistan in various areas, including industry, agriculture and food, science and technology, investment, information and communication, and the development of the Pakistani economy.

It is noteworthy that the list of the Belarus-Pakistan documents signed in May 2015 includes three documents related to information and media: the Memorandum of Understanding between the government of Belarus and the government of Pakistan on cooperation in information and communications; the Cooperation Agreement between the National State Television and Radio Company of Belarus and Pakistan Television Corporation; the Memorandum of Understanding between the Belarusian News Agency (BELTA) and the Associated Press of Pakistan Corp. In addition, the Pakistani side expressed its readiness to assist in promoting the TV channel Belarus 24 in Pakistan. The signed documents contain specific cooperation programs. Namely, they provide for exchange of journalists, assistance of the sides in the work of journalists in the two countries. In addition, the Pakistani side expressed great interest in journalistic education in Belarus, cooperation in the exchange of cultural programs and production of joint multi-part films. An agreement on joint TV projects was also reached. For the

<http://mfa.gov.by/press/smi/d12ddfe19d932532.html>

¹⁷⁹ Belarus and Pakistan signed the Islamabad Declaration of Bilateral Partnership [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/belarus-i-pakistan-podpisali-islamabadskuju-deklaratsiju-dvustoronnego-partnerstva-11453/.

Belarusian side, it is important to "establish a regular exchange of news information"¹⁸⁰

It is obvious that the implementation of all these agreements will contribute to the development of cooperation in the media sphere, the importance of which is only increasing every year. The very fact of signing these documents shows that for Pakistan, as well as for Belarus, "positive, constructive information is relevant. The country actively looks towards Europe. And it sees Belarus as an island of stability. <...> The economy will move only when countries and nations understand each other better"¹⁸¹. In this regard, it is important for citizens of Belarus and Pakistan to have timely and comprehensive access to information related to bilateral interaction. After all, intensive media and information cooperation only contributes to the expansion of economic and cultural contacts between the representatives of the two countries and the implementation of joint projects. There is no doubt that such interaction between the two countries, located on different continents, will actively develop in the very near future.

Back in May 2015, when the Belarusian head of state visited Pakistan, Minsk and Islamabad agreed that, given the rapid development of partnership ties between the countries, a joint Belarusian-Pakistani commission for trade and economic cooperation should become the center of bilateral relations, elaboration and decision-making. Its first meeting was held in August 2015 in Minsk. The parties agreed "to expand cooperation, in particular, in industrial cooperation, geology, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, housing and infrastructure development, interregional cooperation, science and technology, culture and education"¹⁸².

¹⁸⁰ Polezhai, T. BELTA and Associated Press of Pakistan signed a memorandum of understanding / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/society/view/belta-i-associated-press-of-pakistan-podpisali-memorandum-o-vzaimoponimanii-3641-2015/>.

¹⁸¹ Polezhai, T. Pakistan shows great interest at all levels in Belarus - Ananich / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/pakistan-projavliaet-ogromnuiu-zamteresovannost-na-vsesh-urovniakh-k-belarusi-ananich-3628-2015/>

¹⁸² On the First Session of the Joint Belarusian-Pakistani Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/e8da2c1a2ab59907.html

The leadership in this list of priority areas for Belarusian-Pakistani industrial cooperation is quite natural, because the intentions of the two countries complement each other in a very organic way. Minsk sees the creation of industrial assembly facilities for Belarusian machines and joint ventures to produce dairy products using Belarusian technologies and raw materials as a promising way forward for itself in Pakistan. At the same time, Islamabad offers Belarus to establish joint ventures to produce textile products from Pakistani raw materials. To this end, the Belarusian side even said at the first meeting of the joint commission that it was ready "to provide a production site for a textile company in Baranovichi, one of the largest textile companies in the entire post-Soviet space.¹⁸³ . The creation of a joint venture to produce carpets on the premises of the Brest Carpet Factory also looks promising.

The implementation of these and a number of other projects of Belarusian-Pakistani industrial cooperation would mean a gradual transition from simple trade to more advanced forms of bilateral cooperation and could have a positive impact on the volume of mutual trade, which has been fluctuating between \$50 million and \$129 million over the last eight years. The task, which was set at the highest level in 2015, is aimed at increasing the trade turnover between Belarus and Pakistan to one billion dollars. The implementation of the bilateral cooperation roadmap for 2015-20120, which was signed by the parties in November 2015, should help to cope with this task. This document deals with several main areas of joint activities. First, the Pakistani side will be supported in initiating negotiations on the Free Trade Zone Agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union and its member states. Second, the structure of Belarusian-Pakistani trade will be optimized, for which it is planned to conduct joint research to identify promising areas of economic cooperation. Thirdly, the road map specifically provides for the establishment of joint ventures and assembly factories of Belarusian tractors and automotive equipment in Pakistan. In this case, "cooperation in the textile industry will actively develop. Specifically, we are talking about the establishment of joint ventures in Belarus and Pakistan for the further supply of the manufactured

¹⁸³ Andrei Kobayakov met with Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5984/>.

products in the markets of both our countries and the Eurasian Economic Union.¹⁸⁴ . The talks will also focus on supplies of MTZ tractors, Gomselmash harvesters, MAZ trucks, Amkodor road-building machinery, Belshina tires, and Bellegprom products to the Pakistani market.

Within the framework of the joint commission for trade and economic cooperation, working groups in various areas - industry and agriculture - are expected to focus their attention on specific issues of Belarusian-Pakistani cooperation. At the first meeting of the bilateral working group for industry, the parties plan to consider a draft intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in industrial, scientific, and technical cooperation. Furthermore, in 2015, Belarus and Pakistan established a joint commission for military and technical cooperation to develop cooperation in the field of electronic warfare, and signed an agreement on military and technical cooperation, which "was concluded for a five-year period and provides for mutual sale of weapons and design work, training of military specialists, and exchange of information."¹⁸⁵ .

In August 2015, the first meeting of the joint Belarusian-Pakistani commission for cooperation in science and technology was held. It should be noted that representatives of Pakistani science first came to Belarus in March 2015. Then the parties agreed to implement joint projects, for which they envisaged the possibility of creating a joint funding fund. Pakistan declared its readiness to "provide funding in the field of scientific and technical cooperation"¹⁸⁶ . The Pakistani side was interested, above all, in cooperation in the field of space research, biotechnology, as well as agricultural engineering and agricultural technology. The agenda of the first meeting of the joint commission also included "expansion of scientific and technical cooperation in the development and organization of production of modern micro- and nanoelectronic

¹⁸⁴ Belarus and Pakistan signed the Roadmap for Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL:

<http://www.government.by/ru/content/6106>

¹⁸⁵ Belarus plans to supply sights for small arms to Pakistan [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-planiruet-postavliat-v-pakistan- pritsely-dlia-strelkovogo-oruzhija-173398-2015/>

¹⁸⁶ Scientists of Belarus and Pakistan plan to create a joint fund to finance scientific developments

[Electronic resource]. -2015 . - URL:

http://atom.belta.by/ru/news_belta/view/news_belta/view/uchenye-belarusi-i-pakistana-planiruiut-sozdat-sovmestnyi-fond-finansirovaniia-nauchnyx-razrabotok-5200/t id/1

devices, interaction in the field of geological exploration"¹⁸⁷. In October 2015, the first Belarusian-Pakistani scientific seminar was held in Minsk, where scientists of the two countries discussed the most promising areas of cooperation, as well as "areas of joint projects in information technologies, physical and technical sciences, chemistry and earth sciences, biological and medical sciences"¹⁸⁸. Finally, in early 2016, the parties announced the planned creation of the Belarusian-Pakistani center for coordination of scientific, technological and innovative cooperation, which "will help establish cooperation between Belarusian and Pakistani research organizations and more efficient use of spent funds and resources"¹⁸⁹.

In March 2016, the implementation of the Roadmap was discussed at the second meeting of the joint Pakistan-Belarus commission for trade and economic cooperation, which was held in Lahore, Pakistan. After discussing topical issues of partnership development, the parties agreed to intensify trade and economic cooperation and interaction "in the economy, standardization and certification, customs, aviation, pharmaceuticals, industrial and agricultural cooperation"¹⁹⁰.

Another effective form of developing and strengthening Belarusian-Pakistani economic ties is holding joint business and investment forums. The first such forum, held in May 2015 in Islamabad, brought together representatives of 25 companies from Belarus working in oil refining, agriculture, mechanical engineering, medicine, chemical and light industries, as well as trading companies. The Pakistani side was represented by 60 companies. On the first day of the forum they "signed contracts

¹⁸⁷ Belarus and Pakistan discuss expansion of scientific and technical cooperation in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-pakistan-obsuzhdaj-ut-minske-voprosy-rasshirenija-nauchno-technicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-15-8424-2015/>.

¹⁸⁸ Pakistani scientists are interested in developing cooperation with the NAS in biotechnology and IT [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/society/view/pakistanskije-uchenye-zainteresovany-v-razvitanii-sotrudnichestva-s-nan-v-oblasti-biotekhnologii-i-it-165353-2015/>.

¹⁸⁹ Mihovich, S. Belarus and Pakistan will create a center for coordination of scientific, technological and innovation cooperation / S. Mihovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-pakistan-sozdadut-tsentr-po-koordinatsii-nauchno-technicheskogo-i-innovatsionnogo-179316-2016/>.

¹⁹⁰ Grishkevich, A. Belarus and Pakistan at the meeting of the trade and economic commission agreed to intensify contacts / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-na-zasedanii-torgovo-ekonomicheskoi-komissii-dogovorilis-aktivizirovat-kontakty-184571-2016/>.

worth \$42 million"¹⁹¹ . Such high efficiency is explained by the fact that such forums are a very convenient platform to announce the intentions of the parties in terms of business cooperation. For instance, at the first forum, the Pakistani side expressed its interest in Belarusian fabrics, in particular, in poly viscose fabrics, and in the creation of a joint venture to produce goods made of Belarusian linen and Pakistani cotton. The Belarusian side, in its turn, is particularly interested in the Pakistani leather industry, as this country produces high quality leather for both footwear and furniture industries. According to the parties, the best way to cooperate is "mutual provision of services, in particular, supply of price-priced raw materials from Pakistan and production of fabrics from them in Belarus."¹⁹² .

Even more important for Belarus is cooperation with Pakistan in the machine-building sector. After all, in the best years Minsk Tractor Plant used to supply more than 12 thousand of its machines annually to this South Asian country, now it supplies less than three thousand. That is why Minsk set a task - "not just to return its positions and to supply the same 12 thousand tractors, but to increase supplies up to 20 thousand"¹⁹³ . And the first steps in this direction were made exactly on the first business and investment forum, within the framework of which JSC "MTW" signed a contract with a Pakistani company MTW PAK Assembling Industries for the supply of 2000 tractor kits and 500 complete tractors. The Belarusian Automobile Plant has plans to expand its presence on the Pakistani market, with companies engaged in construction, coal, copper, silver and gold mining being among its partners. It should be reminded that Pakistan is actively developing large infrastructure projects related to field

¹⁹¹ Polezhai, T. Belarus and Pakistan signed contracts worth \$42 million / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-zakljuchili-kontrakty-na-42-mln-3446-2015>

¹⁹² Polezhai T. Belarus and Pakistan show mutual interest in cooperation in light industry / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. -2015 . . -

URL:
<http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-projavliaiut-obojudnyi-interes-k-kooperatsii-v-legkoj-promyshlennosti-3447-2015/>

¹⁹³ Belarus and Pakistan need to reach \$1 billion trade turnover - Vovk [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL:

<http://news.21.by/economics/2015/06/07/1088104.html>

development, so Belarusian heavy-duty trucks may be in high demand there.

The first Belarus-Pakistan Business and Investment Forum turned out to be important also because it included a proposal to establish a Belarus-Pakistan Business Council, which could be attended not only by members of the chambers of commerce and industry, but also by any representatives of the business community who would like to get consultations or face any problems. After all, the essence of the business council is to "help business to solve those problems that exist in cooperation, to bring them to the government, including advisory assistance to business that wants to cooperate"¹⁹⁴ .

The first meeting of the business council took place in August 2015. At the meeting, the parties outlined the top-priority and most promising areas of cooperation. In particular, Pakistani companies expressed their interest in establishing business relations with Belarusian partners "in the chemical, textile industry (sale of cotton, fabrics, materials), mechanical engineering (purchase of industrial, quarry and agricultural equipment, spare parts for Belarusian equipment). Potential partners are also interested in processing and sale of raw materials for the construction industry and export of agricultural products (vegetables, fruits, pulses and grains, rice, sunflower oil)"¹⁹⁵ . The Belarusian side outlined the objective to increase the supply of tractors up to 25 thousand per year by 2020, create assembly productions of MAZ and Gomselmash and enter the Pakistani market with the BelAZ quarry equipment. "The implementation of these plans will allow the enterprises of the Ministry of Industry to increase exports up to \$400 million a year."¹⁹⁶ . Already in November 2015, the next Belarus-Pakistan Business and Investment Forum was held in Islamabad, during which

¹⁹⁴ Polezhai T. Belarus and Pakistan Create a Business Council / T. Polezhai // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-pakistan-sozdajut-delovoj-sovet-3522-20155>

¹⁹⁵ Businessmen of Belarus and Pakistan will discuss opportunities for expanding cooperation on August 11 in Minsk [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/biznesmeny-belarusi-pakistana-obsudiat-11-avgusta-v-minske-vozmozhnosti-rasshireniia-sotrudnichestva-158332-2015/>.

¹⁹⁶ The Ministry of Industry plans to increase the supply of MAZ vehicles to Pakistan to 1.5 thousand units per year by 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-planiruet-k-2020-godu-narastit-postavki-tehniki-maz-v-pakistan-do-15-tys-edinits-v-god-163829-2015/>.

eight more contracts worth about \$55 million were signed, including the delivery of the first batch of Neman Glass Works products to the market of this South Asian country. And it was noted that already "mutual deliveries according to the commodity nomenclature of foreign economic activity exceed 10 items"¹⁹⁷. All these facts attest to one thing: the interaction formats used by Minsk and Islamabad have proved their worth, although their potential is only beginning to be explored. So is the potential for interregional cooperation.

The fact that interaction between the regions of Belarus and Pakistan is an important component of bilateral relations was announced back in May 2015 during the visit of the Belarusian leader to Islamabad. Then the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee and the Punjab provincial government signed an agreement to this effect. At the high level, there was a mutual confidence that "other regions of Belarus and Pakistan will eventually join this dynamic of contacts development"¹⁹⁸.

As for Mogilev region and Punjab province, they do have a wide range of opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation in many areas and sectors of economic activity. This applies to machinery and elevator construction, mining equipment, agricultural production. For reference, it should be noted that this province accounts for more than half of Pakistan's gross domestic product. The region has great mining potential, with coal reserves of 600 million tons. Large deposits of iron ore have been discovered. The main Pakistani production of sports equipment and implements, for example, is concentrated there. The province is interested in buying skimmed milk powder, agricultural machinery and equipment, timber industry products from its partners in Mogilev.

The share of Pakistan in the foreign trade turnover of the Mogilev Region with

¹⁹⁷ Ogneva, Yu. Contracts worth about \$55 million were signed at the Belarusian-Pakistani Business and Investment Forum / Yu. [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/kontrakty-na-summu-okolo-55-mln-podpisanj-na-belorussko-pakistanskom-delovom-i-investitsionnom-forume-169765-2015/>

¹⁹⁸ The official visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif to Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-premier-ministra-pakistana-navaza-sharifa-11909/

countries outside the Commonwealth of Independent States was only 0.3% in 2014. The Pakistani market was mainly exported by Belshina OJSC tires and tires, as well as parts and accessories for cars and tractors. But already in 2015, shipments from Mogilev began to grow. "At the same time, the textile industry of the Mogilev region needs cotton, cotton fiber, Pakistani fabrics. The region is also interested in importing surgical instruments, leather, some types of resources"¹⁹⁹ .

Among other Pakistani regions, Sindh province is interested in increasing trade, economic and investment cooperation with Hrodna and Gomel regions, "including in the framework of cooperation agreements signed in 2015"²⁰⁰ , and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where "options for involvement of business communities of both countries in trade and economic interaction" have already been discussed with the president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry²⁰¹ . But, perhaps, the most significant in the perspective of interregional cooperation may become the interaction of Belarusian and Pakistani partners in the province of Baluchistan, where the port of Gwadar, which is the starting point of the China-Pakistan economic corridor, is located. This project, which is located at the intersection of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st century Maritime Silk Road, is of particular interest in Minsk, which even suggested creating a special working group in the joint Belarus-Pakistan commission to assess the possibility of Belarus's participation in the project, because "the Minsk-Beijing-Islamabad triangle, given the complementarity of each in geographic and economic terms, can become a promising formula for collaboration"²⁰² .

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the implementation of which was announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to Pakistan in April 2015, involves the

¹⁹⁹ Kuliagin, S. Mogilev region and Pakistan are interested in expanding economic ties - Domanevsky / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/news-headers/view/mogilevskaja-oblast-i-pakistan-zamteresovany-v-rasshirenii-ekonomicheskikh-svjazei-domanevskij-2529-2015>

²⁰⁰ On the working visit of Ambassador of Belarus A. Yermolovich in Karachi [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/cee9d046d6b650e6.html

²⁰¹ On the meeting of Belarusian Ambassador to Pakistan A. Yermolovich with the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa [Electronic resource]. -2015 . - URL: http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c31fa31b399f3e59.html

²⁰² The official visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif to Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/ofitsialnyj-vizit-premier-ministra-pakistana-navaza-sharifa-11909/

construction of three thousand kilometers of roads and railroads, as well as pipelines from the port of Gwadar in Pakistan to the Chinese city of Kashgar in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. This is done so that in the near future oil from the Middle East through Gwadar will go to China via a transport corridor across Pakistan, and Chinese goods will be shipped in the opposite direction. To implement this project, the Chinese side has already formed a large-scale investment portfolio of 46 billion dollars, as well as received the right to operate the named Pakistani port for forty years.

Note that "China is currently involved in more than 200 projects inside Pakistan, employing some 14,000 engineers and technicians."²⁰³ . By opening to China "the shortest route to the Middle East and directly to the oil sources in the Arabian Peninsula, from where over 60% of China's oil imports currently come"²⁰⁴ , Pakistan is now becoming China's main partner in implementing the Silk Road strategy. Perhaps for this reason, too, the Sino-Pakistani bilateral documents contain a provision on "all-weather relations of strategic cooperation and partnership," which is for China "the highest measure of the level of cooperation and trust achieved in bilateral relations with a foreign country"²⁰⁵ .

There is also an interesting fact. On the basis of this Sino-Pakistani cooperation, there is already an agreement on the inclusion of the Iranian-Pakistani gas pipeline into the transport infrastructure of Gwadar, the contents of which can also be sent to China. In general, the emergence of this economic corridor should fundamentally change the socio-economic situation in the province of Baluchistan, creating a zone of economic growth here. Moreover, with the implementation of this project, it could become "a key transport artery for landlocked Central Asian republics such as Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as well as an important logistics center for cargo transportation to Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Sri Lanka"²⁰⁶ . Thus, the possible

²⁰³ Manukyan, J. Economic corridor China-Pakistan will be guarded by 10 thousand military men / J. Manukyan // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://ria.ru/world/20160204/1369419737.html>

²⁰⁴ Antipov, K.V. Economic corridor "PRC-Pakistan" opens the Silk Road to the West / K.V. Antipov // China in the world and regional politics. History and Modernity. - 2015. - №20. - C. 262.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. C. 261.

²⁰⁶ Analytical Review: The Economic Corridor and the Port in Gwadar - Key Points in Xi Jinping's Trip to Pakistan [Electronic Resource]. - 2015. - URL: http://russian.news.cn/china/2015-04/19/c_134163963.htm.

involvement of the Republic of Belarus in the implementation of this Sino-Pakistani mega-project appears to be a very tempting prospect today, which can give a powerful impetus to the Belarusian side in terms of strategic coordination and deepening of practical cooperation with other participants of the Silk Road Economic Belt as well.

Belarus-Georgia: new initiatives and areas for cooperation

Georgia is one of those countries in the post-Soviet space, relations with which the Republic of Belarus builds on the principles of friendship, mutual understanding and equal dialogue. Perhaps for this reason, "Belarusian-Georgian ties are getting stronger every year, being filled with new initiatives and areas of cooperation"²⁰⁷. The experience of 2017 and early 2018 shows that such initiatives include, first of all:

- 1) the development of **parliamentary diplomacy**;
- 2) Strengthening **interaction** between **the regions** of the two countries;
- 3) increase the effectiveness of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian **Commission on Economic Cooperation**.

In November 2017, the first ever **parliamentary visit** of a high-level delegation led by Speaker of the Georgian Parliament I. Kobakhidze took place in Minsk, which can give new impetus to the development of the entire complex of relations between the two countries. After all, they proceed from the understanding in Minsk that people's diplomacy and "strengthening of interparliamentary relations creates a very good basis for building the same trade and economic relations. It is a good basis, and without it it is impossible to create very deep, long-term relations between the countries"²⁰⁸. It is especially important to take this factor into account when we speak about Georgia where the parliament plays the decisive role in the life of state and the influence of the deputies on the Georgian society is great.

²⁰⁷ Congratulations to President of Georgia George Margvelashvili [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news ru/view/pozdravlenie-prezidentu-gruzii-georgiju-margvelashvili-16270/>

²⁰⁸ Meeting with the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia Irakli Kobakhidze [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news ru/view/vstrecha-s-predsdatelem-parlamenta-gruzii-irakliem-kobaxidze-17492/>

The visit of Georgian parliamentarians to Belarus took place at a time when trade and economic cooperation between the two countries has become show positive dynamics. Thus, "in 2016, the mutual trade turnover between Belarus and Georgia increased by 63% and amounted to \$73.2 million"²⁰⁹. Belarusian exports increased 2.5 times at once. Such dynamics of interaction demonstrated the real possibility of bringing the volume of mutual Belarusian-Georgian trade to \$100 million by the end of 2017, and to \$200 million in the mid-term perspective. It is realistic to solve such a large-scale task when "relations between the legislative bodies of Belarus and Georgia must reach a new level"²¹⁰, in which the parliamentarians of the two countries within their competence will not only support the governments in improving the contractual legal framework and seek to develop a constructive dialogue on legislative activities, but will also contribute to activating interregional contacts and building up their capacity in promising areas, as well as assist the countries in their efforts to strengthen their cooperation. That is why during the visit of Mr. Kobakhidze to Georgia, the speakers of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus and the Parliament of Georgia signed a joint statement in which they outlined the main purpose of their cooperation - "to facilitate the deepening of relations between the parliaments of the two countries.

bilateral cooperation in trade and economic, investment, science and technology, cultural, youth policy, education, tourism, information technology, logistics, communications and informatization"²¹¹.

It should be noted that the activation of Belarusian-Georgian interparliamentary contacts began in the last few years, when friendship groups were established in the parliaments of both countries. Today they already have a new task: "For substantive

²⁰⁹ Belarus and Georgia intensify cooperation in the implementation of competition policy [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://белта.бел/economics/view/belarus-i-gruziia-aktiviziruiut-sotrudnichestvo-v-oblasti-realizatsii-konkurentnoj-politiki-276796-2017/>

²¹⁰ Relations between the legislative bodies of Belarus and Georgia should reach a new level - Kobakhidze [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/otnosheniia-zakonodatelnih-organov-belarusi-i-gruzii-dolzhen-vyjti-na-novyi-uroven-kobakhidze-276669-2017/>

²¹¹ Speakers of the Belarusian and Georgian parliaments signed a joint statement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/spikery-belorusskogo-i-gruzinskogo-parlamentov-podpisali-sovmestnoe-zaiavlenie-o-sotrudnichestve-276782-2017/>

interaction, the heads of the friendship groups on both sides could draw up road maps and plan their work taking into account the aspects envisaged in them"²¹². These road maps are supposed to be based on one or more large-scale projects, around which not only the parliamentary dimension of Belarusian-Georgian cooperation could be deepened, but also production and cooperation aimed at creating business centers to organize the work of companies with joint competence and interest. As a matter of fact, today we are already talking about reloading of the work of parliamentary friendship groups, which "should not only fulfill the actions planned by the heads of the parliaments, but also carry out rather active independent work"²¹³. And the activity of the parliamentary friendship groups on the creation of conditions for the fruitful regional, economic interaction and development of contacts between the business communities looks very promising in this respect. All the more so because Belarus and Georgia already have useful experience of interregional cooperation.

In January 2018, Minsk hosted the fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian Commission on Economic Cooperation, at which the parties declared their intention to bring bilateral trade turnover to \$200 million by 2020. One of the effective ways to solve this problem is the development of Belarusian-Georgian **interregional cooperation**, the potential of which is "enormous and should be fully used"²¹⁴. The Program for 2018-2019 on the implementation of the agreement between the Minsk regional executive committee and the administration of the state commissioner - the governor of Kakheti on trade, economic and socio-cultural cooperation signed during the fourth meeting of the intergovernmental commission was a concrete step to further implement the partnership opportunities of the regions of the two countries. This document once again emphasizes the fact that the Minsk region and Kakheti today have

²¹² Belarusian deputies set up for substantive work with the Parliament of Georgia - Andreichenko [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/beloruskie-deputaty-nastroeny-na-predmetnuju-rabotu-s-parlamentom-gruzii-andrej-chenko-276707-2017/>.

²¹³ Belarus considers Georgia one of its strategic partners - Myasnikovich [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-schitaet-gruziiu-odnim-iz-strategicheskikh-partnerov-mjasnikovich-276652-2017/>.

²¹⁴ A regional forum on sustainable development is planned to be held in Minsk in early 2018 [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/politics/view/regionalnyi-forum-po-ustojchivomu-razvitiyu-planiruetsja-a-provesti-v-minske-v-nachale-2018-goda-264868-2017/>.

a lot in common. Suffice it to say that three mining enterprises in Georgia - JSC "RMG Cooper", JSC "Rustavi MK" and "Sakcementi" LLC - now "operate 41 dump trucks "BELAZ" of 45-55 tons payload"²¹⁵, produced in the Minsk region. It goes without saying that the cited example of the development of partnership relations between the regions of the two countries is far from being the only one. In general, "agreements/memorandums were signed between Minsk and Tbilisi, <...> Brest and Batumi, Polatsk and Tskaltubo, Gomel and Kutaisi, Mogilev region and the Autonomous Republic of Adjara"²¹⁶.

²¹⁷Undoubtedly, the flagship of this partnership is the interaction between the two capitals, which began back in 1994, and in September 2015 Minsk and Tbilisi signed an agreement on twinning ties to "promote the establishment and expansion of bilateral relations in the economic, scientific, technical, cultural, investment and innovation activities, cooperation in health, education, culture and sports, exchange of information on urban development with the organization of local self-government" xml-ph-0000@deep Exports of Belarusian goods and services to the capital of Georgia doubled in just one year. "Medicines, agricultural and municipal equipment, and food produced in Belarus turned out to be in demand by our twins"²¹⁸. As a result, today the trade and economic interaction between the capital's companies is already stable and constantly expanding, and "Belarusian meat and dairy products are very popular in Tbilisi, and Georgian wines and mineral waters, fruits and vegetables - in Belarus"²¹⁹. The following fact also speaks for itself. The first store of Belarusian products appeared in

²¹⁵ "BELAZ" visited the delegation of the Georgian region of Kakheti as part of the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Minsk region. [Electronic resource]. -2018 .

- URL:

<http://www.belaz.by/press/news/2018/oaobelazvramkahprazdnovani/>

²¹⁶ Cooperation of Georgia with the Republic of Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://export.by/georgia>

²¹⁷ Minsk and Tbilisi became twin cities [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://mamuli.by/minsk-i-tbilisi-stali-godami-pobratimami/>.

²¹⁸ Zhdanovich, V. Twins. Minsk and Tbilisi / V. Zhdanovich // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <https://minsknews.by/pobratimiyi-minsk-i-tbilisi/>.

²¹⁹ On the meeting of Belarusian Ambassador to Georgia M. Myatlikov with the Chairman of the Sakrebulo of Tbilisi G.

Tkernaladze [Electronic resource]. -2018 . -

URL:

<http://georgia.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/c2a863c0c016dd7f.html>

Tbilisi back in September 2016, the second - in November of the same year. Today in the capital of Georgia there are already six grocery stores that sell Belarusian products. The assortment of goods represented in them is quite wide. "Dairy products - butter, milk, sour cream, cheese, cottage cheese, yoghurt - are especially popular among the locals. Moreover, in the last two years the sales volume has increased significantly. Georgian dealers can develop a network of up to 25 stores."²²⁰ .

In the same 2015, in order to establish permanent friendly relations for mutual acquaintance with the life, history and culture of the twinned cities, as well as to develop cooperation in all directions, including the exchange of experience in urban economy, Brest and Batumi accepted the twinning agreement. "It is planned that at the first stage the twinned cities will focus on the tourism industry, which should pull the economy"²²¹ . After two years the parties came to the conclusion that the time had come to take relations to a higher level, so that "not only Brest and Batumi had ties, but closer contacts were established between the Brest region and the Autonomous Republic of Adjara"²²² . And in the future they planned to open a Belarusian trade center in Batumi, which would present products made by Brest region enterprises. Here it is appropriate to remind that "Adjara is the most developed region not only of Georgia, but also of the coast. The Republic contributes more than \$1 billion to the country's GDP."²²³ . Back in 2015, the Belarusian side offered this Georgian region at the highest level cooperation in engineering, construction and tourism. As we can see, these plans are gradually beginning to materialize.

Gomel, which signed an agreement on friendship and cooperation with Kutaisi in 2016,

²²⁰ Belarusian food products are in great demand in Georgia [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-produkty-pitanija-polzujutsja-bolshim-sprosom-v-gruzii-276694-2017/>.

²²¹ Nedashkovskaya, M. Brest and Batumi became sworn brothers / M. Nedashkovskaya // [Electronic resource]. - 2015. - URL: <http://mamuli.by/brest-i-batumi-stali-pobratimami/>

²²² A Belarusian shopping center is planned to open in Batumi [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/beloruskij-torgovij-tsentriruetsja-otkryt-v-batumi-259344-2017/>

²²³ Official visit to Georgia [Electronic resource].

-2015

URL:

<http://president.gov.by/ru/news ru/view/ofitsialnyj -vizit-v-gruzii u-11241/>

still gives priority to trade and economic ties in interregional cooperation. After all, in 2015 alone, "Gomel's trade turnover with Georgia reached \$1.1 million. Exports of goods amounted to \$0.8 million, imports - \$0.3 million."²²⁴ . The exporters of their products to the Georgian market were the open joint-stock companies Gomel Chemical Plant, Gomeldrev, Gomel Electric Plant, GZIP, Gomelglass, as well as Gomeloboy, Alkopak, Vimala, Antech, and Belplastkhim.

As for interaction between the cities of Polotsk and Tskaltubo, they established partnerships in June 2015, and in February 2017 they signed an agreement on cooperation in order to actively develop partnerships in industry, entrepreneurship, small and medium business, trade, agriculture, science, education, health, environment, tourism. The motivation for this document was the fact that a number of Polotsk enterprises had already had experience of business relations with Georgian partners by that time. In particular, "dairy farmers supplied milk to Georgia, flour mills shipped rye flour, architects and builders built houses according to their designs"²²⁵ .

Moreover, in September 2016, in the framework of the third meeting of the intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian commission on economic cooperation, which was held in Tbilisi, the memorandum of cooperation was signed by the Mogilev region and the Autonomous Republic of Adjara. A number of other documents on cooperation were accepted for execution by the Gorki District and Khashuri Municipality, Bobruisk with the cities of Kobuleti and Batumi, as well as the Mogilev branch of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Ajara Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In September 2017, Mogilev and Batumi already announced the establishment of friendly relations. In the signed memorandum they agreed "to develop mutually beneficial cooperation in all spheres. The first step will be the development of a program of joint activities for the next year, as well as the preparation of specific projects for further implementation"²²⁶ . At the same time were signed memorandum

²²⁴ Baidan, E. An agreement on friendship and cooperation was signed between Gomel and Kutaisi / E. Baidan // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://news.gomel.by/news/mezhdu-gomelem-i-kutaisi-podpisano-soglashenie-o-druzhbe-i-sotrudnichestve>

²²⁵ Shuyskaya, O. The heart is open for friendship / O. Shuyskaya // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://belsmi.by/archive/article/73054>

²²⁶ Kuliagin, S. Mogilev and Batumi signed a memorandum on the establishment of friendly relations / S.

of cooperation between Mogilev Regional Development Agency and the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Ajara, as well as contract on product supply between "Bakaleya Mogilev" OJSC and "Ajara Wine House" company. And the Belarusian State

the agricultural academy in Gorki, Mogilev region, has agreed to cooperate with Batumi State University named after Shota Rustaveli. Obviously, involving parliamentarians in these projects can only accelerate their implementation.

The fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian **Commission on Economic Cooperation**, mentioned above, also demonstrated the growing influence of this formation on the development of the entire complex of relations between the two former Soviet republics, which have recently become stable. And this despite the fact that "quite recently, literally 5-7 years ago, we did not know at all how to build logistics in trade with Georgia."²²⁷ . We should remind that even at the third session of the intergovernmental commission the attention of the parties was concentrated on the fact that "the governments of Belarus and Georgia should remove the barriers that hinder business"²²⁸ . And at the fourth meeting it was stated that "serious approaches have been developed in all directions - from trade to the creation of joint ventures and jobs in such areas as mechanical engineering and elevator equipment production"²²⁹ . The intention of the parties to develop mutually beneficial cooperation, first of all, in such directions as trade and industrial cooperation was brought to the fore.

In terms of **trade**, the nomenclature of Belarusian exports to the Georgian market in 2016 consisted of 318 items, the main of which were "railway cars, trucks, dairy

Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/regions/view/mogilev-i-batumi-podpisali-memorandum-ob-ustanovlenii-druzhestvennyh-svj-azej-265669-2017/>.

²²⁷ Presentation of credentials by ambassadors of foreign countries [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/vruchenie-veritelnyx-gramot-poslami-zarubezhnyx-gosudarstv-17869/>.

²²⁸ Ogneva, Y. Rusyi: the governments of Belarus and Georgia should remove the barriers that prevent business to work / Y. Ogneva // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL:

<http://www.belta.by/economics/view/rusyi-pravitelstva-belarusi-i-gruzii-dolzhen-sniat-barjery-kotorye-meshaj-ut-biznesu-rabotat-208221-2016/>

²²⁹ Mikhail Rusyi took part in a meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian Commission on Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: http://www.government.by/ru/content/7_814

products, synthetic filaments, medicines, furniture, sausage products, sugar, malt, wood products"²³⁰. Mineral water, wine, spirits, nuts, ferroalloys, spices, vegetables, fruits, and tea prevailed in supplies from Georgia to Belarus.

The Belarusian side has chosen one of the main and effective tools to promote its exports to Georgian consumers by participating in major exhibitions and fairs in Georgia. In particular, in early September 2016, more than 140 Belarusian companies participated in the first National Exhibition of Belarus organized in Tbilisi. They were based on "exporters of products, goods and services in mechanical engineering, industrial equipment, agriculture, consumer goods production, food, construction materials, petrochemical industry, healthcare, sports, tourism, transport, logistics, science, educational services, information technologies, telecommunications"²³¹. The fruits of participation in this business forum appeared quite quickly. Already in March 2017, the Belarusian and Georgian sides signed an agreement for the supply of 90 tractors "Belarus" and started working on the issue "to organize a joint assembly of small class tractors"²³². At the same time, they talked about additional deliveries of heavy-duty equipment from the Belarusian Automobile Plant, and "Stadler sent the first batch of trains to Georgia and intends to continue participating in the project to develop the railway connection between Tbilisi and Batumi"²³³. According to the results of 2016, Bellesbumprom Concern's enterprises increased the shipment of their products to Georgia by more than a third. At the same time, "shipments of chipboard and newsprint increased 6-fold, and plywood 2.3-fold. The shipment of wallpaper

²³⁰ Belarus and Georgia discuss the implementation of agreements to develop trade and cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-gruzija-obsuzhajut-realizatsiju-dogovorennostej-po-razvitiiju-torgovli-i-kooperatsii-273506-2017/>.

²³¹ Mikhail Rusyi took part in the opening of the National Exhibition of Belarus in Georgia [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/6663>

²³² Matveev, V. Belarus plans to increase trade turnover with Georgia almost three times in two years - Rusy B. Matveev // [Electronic resource]. -2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-za-dva-goda-planiruet-uvlechit-torgovyi-oborot-s-gruziej-pochti-v-tri-raza-msyi-235499-2017/>

²³³ Georgia will expand the network of stores with Belarusian products - the ambassador [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/v-gruzi-rasshiritsja-set-magazinov-s-belorusskoj-produktsiej-posol-225439-2016/>

increased by 30% and matches - by 35%"²³⁴. And "Pinskdiv" holding even won the tender for the supply of furniture to Georgian hotels. As a result, Georgia has become one of the most promising markets for the concern's enterprises.

The participation of Belarusian exporters in the Made in Belarus exposition organized as part of the international agricultural and food industry exhibition Agro Food Drink Expo, which was held in Tbilisi in November 2017, and where, in addition to Belarus, a wide range of agricultural products were presented: machinery, crop and livestock products, food processing and storage equipment, packaging products from Ukraine, Russia, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, became very effective. Especially high demand among Georgian buyers was caused by the products of the Belarusian JSC "Red Foodstuffs" - zephyr and marmalade. Pinsk Meat Processing Plant, which entered the Georgian market back in June 2017 and sells almost its entire export lineup - cooked, smoked, raw-smoked and dried products - also took part in this exposition. "A total of 150 types of products are supplied to Georgia"²³⁵. In addition, a large amount of malt for beer production in this country is supplied by Belsolod. Well, and such a fact: "Today every fifth package of milk produced in Georgia is made from skimmed milk powder from Belarus"²³⁶.

Overall, the Belarusian Ministry of Agriculture and Food increased its exports to Georgia by 2.9 times in 2017. It happened due to the opening of the Belarusian network of specialized stores in Georgia, which sell exclusively Belarusian products: meat and dairy products, groceries, confectionery products, alcoholic beverages, and bakery products. As of mid-February 2018, there were already nine such stores in Georgia. "This direction is developing not only in the capital, but also in the regions of the country"²³⁷. And the Belarusian side plans to expand the range of supplied agricultural

²³⁴ Enterprises of Bellesbumprom increased exports to Georgia by 35.4% in 2016 [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-bellesbumproma-v-2016-godu- uvelichili-eksport-v-gruzij u-na-354-235514-2017/>

²³⁵ Belarusian food products are in high demand in Georgia [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-produkty-pitania-polzuitsja-bolshim- sprosom-v-gruzii-276694-2017/>

²³⁶ Belarus and Georgia are working on alternative routes for the supply of products [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-gruzia- prorabatyvaj ut-alternativnyemarshruty-dlia-postavok-produktsii-287901 -2018/>

²³⁷ Enterprises of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in 2017 increased exports to Georgia by 2.9 times

products, increase the number of specialized stores to sell them and enter local retail chains.

Speaking about the prospects for the development of Belarusian-Georgian

It should be reminded that during the official visit of the Belarusian head of state to Georgia in April 2015, it was agreed at the highest level that "industrial cooperation will be fundamental in the bilateral relations."²³⁸ . At the same time, the parties agreed to implement pilot projects to establish assembly production of Belarusian elevators and tractors of various modifications in Georgia. Already in August 2017 in Tbilisi with the participation of Belarusian JSC Mogilevliftmash, a consortium "Georgian Elevator" was created, within which it was planned to "organize the assembly of Belarusian elevators on the basis of the Georgian Technical University"²³⁹ . And by the end of the same year 22 elevators had already been assembled. The tasks for the future here are much more ambitious: in 2018 to assemble more than 200 units of this equipment, as "the break-even point of the elevator industry is about 250 units per year"²⁴⁰ , and then "to organize the production of up to 2 thousand elevators in Georgia"²⁴¹ .

As for the assembly of Belarusian tractor machinery on Georgian soil, the assembly facility based on the Georgian company World Technik was established "in accordance with the memorandum signed in 2015 between the Georgian company and JSC Minsk Tractor Works,"²⁴² , and the first results of its work were the tractors of the Belarus-320.4" and "Belarus-622" assembled by JSC "Bobruisk Plant of Tractor Parts and

[Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/predprijatia-mmselhozproda-v-2017-godu-narastili-eksport-produktsii-v-gruzij-u-v-29-raza-290507-2018/>.

²³⁸ Official visit to Georgia [Electronic resource] . - 2015 . - URL: <http://president.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/ofitsialnyi-vizit-v-gruzij-u-11241/>

²³⁹ Transcript of the speech of Belarusian Foreign Minister V. Makei to the media on the results of negotiations with the Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (September 4, 2017, Minsk) [Electronic resource]. - 2017. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/press/news-mfa/d71a81478f220672.html>

²⁴⁰ Meeting with the First Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7812>

²⁴¹ Mikhail Rusyi took part in a meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Georgian Commission on Economic Cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/7814>

²⁴² Kuliagin, S. The first tractors of Belarusian-Georgian assembly are presented in Tbilisi / S. Kuliagin // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/pervye-traktory-belorusko-gruzinskoj-sborki-predstavleny-v-tbilisi-208304-2016/>.

Units," presented at the aforementioned first National Exhibition of Belarus in Tbilisi in autumn 2016. The topic of development of cooperation in the agro-industrial complex is continued by the plans voiced at the third meeting of the intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation to build a 500-head dairy farm by Belarusian specialists on Georgian land in order to "transfer their dairy cattle breeding technologies to Georgia"²⁴³, and also the intention of the parties to implement joint projects to create breeding and tribal centers for cattle breeding. All these facts show that Belarus really considers Georgia to be an important and promising partner in the Transcaucasus and intends only to intensify bilateral contacts in industry, agriculture, petrochemistry, pharmaceuticals, and the humanitarian sphere.

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²⁴³ Ogneva, Y. Belarus will build a 500-head dairy farm in Georgia / Y. Ogneva // [Electronic resource]. - 2016. - URL: <http://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-postroit-v-gruzii-molochnuj-u-fermu-na-500-golov-208213-2016/>

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