

## Partnership address - Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is Belarus's key partner in Central Asia. The two former Soviet republics celebrated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2023. And today, based on numerous facts, one can assert that the interaction between Minsk and Tashkent is experiencing a period of a peculiar flourishing, which is reaching a qualitatively new level and seeking to find and expand new joint forms of cooperation to realize the objectives of strategic cooperation. In December 2023, Samarkand hosted the 10th meeting of the joint Belarusian-Uzbek intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation, during which the parties discussed the state and prospects of trade and economic interaction, paying special attention to the spheres of industry, agriculture and healthcare, in order to fill the economic component of the partnership between Belarus and Uzbekistan with new practical content, to ensure timely implementation of investment projects and trade contracts. After all, the parties still have a significant potential to multiply trade volumes by expanding supplies of products in demand in the markets of the two countries. This is the subject of this study.



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## Partnership address - Uzbekistan

*Chronicle of the cooperative world*

**Boris Zalesskij**

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## Table of contents

The goal is a billion dollars .....	2
Commission outlines priorities for cooperation .....	11
The task is a qualitatively new level of cooperation .....	21
Joint initiatives expose collaboration in innovative areas .....	32
Growth points - industry, agriculture, healthcare, regions.....	42
Literature.....	57

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## The goal is a billion dollars

In June 2019, Minsk hosted the seventh meeting of the Belarusian-Uzbek intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation, during which the parties discussed priority areas of interaction, which include agro-industrial complex, machine-building, food and pharmaceutical industries, and light industry, paying special attention to **industrial cooperation**. The fact is that back in September 2018 at the talks between the heads of state A. Lukashenko and Sh. Merziyoyev it was noted that "the countries have the potential to increase trade turnover up to \$1 billion"<sup>1</sup>. The task is supposed to be solved in three to four years, actualizing all possible areas of interaction. But the priority area of cooperation "should be the expansion of production cooperation in machine building, agro-industrial complex, transportation and pharmaceutical industries, information technology"<sup>2</sup>. A little later, in November 2018, at the level of heads of government of the two countries, it was announced that the parties "will work on the creation of joint production of milk, medicines, medical equipment, mini-tractors and attachments, as well as bicycles, a joint transportation and logistics enterprise"<sup>3</sup>.

By the time the roadmap for the development of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan was signed, three assembly plants of Belarusian machinery were already operating in Uzbekistan. In particular, the Amkodor-Agrotechmash joint venture produces road-building machines. "UzBelAgromash produces a line of machines of Bobruiskagromash: tractor

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<sup>1</sup> Matievsky, M. Lukashenko and Merziev consider it possible to raise the level of trade turnover up to \$1 billion / M Matievsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: [https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-i-mirzieev-schitajut-vozmozhnym-podnjat-uroven-tovarooborota-do-1-mlrd-317697-2018/?utm\\_source=belta&utm\\_medium=news&utm\\_campaign=accent](https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-i-mirzieev-schitajut-vozmozhnym-podnjat-uroven-tovarooborota-do-1-mlrd-317697-2018/?utm_source=belta&utm_medium=news&utm_campaign=accent)

<sup>2</sup> Negotiations with the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Merziyev [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: [http://president.gov.by/ru/news\\_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-uzbekistana-shavkatom-mirzieevym-19489](http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/peregovory-s-prezidentom-uzbekistana-shavkatom-mirzieevym-19489)

<sup>3</sup> Signing of the roadmap for the development of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/8364>

trailers, fodder spreaders-mixers, mowers. In addition, MTZ tractors are assembled at the Tashkent Agricultural Machinery Plant. Cooperation between the enterprises was launched in 2016<sup>4</sup>. As for Minsk Tractor Plant, in September 2018, at the Belarusian-Uzbek business forum in Tashkent, the company's management voiced plans to open another assembly plant in Uzbekistan - this time for caterpillar and garden machinery. "The new enterprise, which was agreed to be located in Karakalpakstan, will produce about 200 agricultural machines per year,"<sup>5</sup>.

Gomselmash Holding is also considering the possibility of creating joint assembly plants of machinery in Uzbekistan. In February 2019, its specialists held negotiations "with representatives of the Hokimiyat of Tashkent region, the management of Uzagrotekhsanoatholding JSC, Tekhnolog JSC, visited the dealership center of SN INVEST LLC"<sup>6</sup>. Interesting prospects for the development of production cooperation with Uzbek partners open today for other economic entities of Gomel region. Among them are Gomel Regional Agricultural Experimental Station, confectionery factory "Spartak", as well as JSC "SvetlogorskKhimvolokno", whose products are in great demand in this Central Asian country. For this reason, "Uzbek investors are ready to invest their capital for the development of the enterprise"<sup>7</sup>.

Hrodna Region also plans to contribute to the development of Belarusian-Uzbek industrial cooperation. Thus, within the framework of the

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<sup>4</sup> Matievsky, M. Belarus and Uzbekistan plan to create joint ventures in pharmaceuticals, mechanical engineering and agro-industrial complex / M. Matievsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-planirujut-sozdat-sovmestnye-predpriyatija-v-farmatsevtike-mashinostroenii-i-apk-317534-2018/>

<sup>5</sup> MTZ will open assembly production of caterpillar and garden machinery in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-otkroet-sborochnoe-proizvodstvo-gusenichnoj-i-sadovoj-tehniki-v-uzbekistane-318069-2018/>

<sup>6</sup> "Gomselmashch" plans to establish joint assembly production in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/gomelmash-planiruet-sozdat-sovmestnye-sborochnye-proizvodstva-v-uzbekistane-338356-2019/>

<sup>7</sup> Uzbekistan is interested in industrial cooperation with Gomel region [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://belta.by/regions/view/uzbekistan-zainteresovan-v-promyshlennoj-kooperatsii-s-gomelskoj-oblastju-327270-2018/>



international business forum "Euroregion Neman-2018", held in September 2018 in Grodno, it was announced about the start of construction of a cotton processing plant in Smorgon with the participation of Uzbek capital. "The volume of investments will amount to about 30 million euros. <...> The enterprise will employ about 1.2 thousand workers"<sup>8</sup>. The new enterprise is expected to be put into operation within two years. An important detail: the construction of the plant will be carried out by the resident of the free economic zone "Grodnoinvest" - Uzbek LLC "Europlastics Invest". The products of the enterprise are planned to be exported to the markets of the European Union countries - Poland, France and Germany. At the same time, in September 2018, the Baranovichi Cotton Production Association joined the Uzbek cluster of cotton producers. The essence of this interaction is to grow cotton on Uzbek land, process it and "take the material for yarn, threads that are needed <...> at the mill. It turns out to be cheaper and more expedient"<sup>9</sup>.

In addition, Motovelozaod LLC is planning to become an active participant in production cooperation with Uzbek partners. In August 2018, it signed an agreement of intent with the Hokimiyat of Andijan region on the establishment of production of bicycle equipment in the region. The parties agreed "to establish long-term and mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as to provide the JV with preferences and benefits established for other joint ventures with foreign investment in Uzbekistan."<sup>10</sup>. UzShoes, a footwear manufacturing enterprise founded by the Belarusian holding company Marko, has been operating on Uzbek soil since 2018. Note also that "in

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<sup>8</sup> Cotton processing plant will be built in Smorgon [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/zavod-po-pererabotke-hlopka-postrojat-v-smorgoni-317921-2018/>

<sup>9</sup> Matievsky, M. Baranovichi mill entered the Uzbek cluster of cotton producers / M. Matievsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/baranovichskij-kombinat-voshel-v-uzbekskij-klaster-proizvoditelej-hlopka-317839-2018/>

<sup>10</sup> Motovelozaod will create a JV in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/motovelozaod-sozdast-sp-v-uzbekistane-314017-2018/>

September 2018 in Tashkent, the presidents of Belarus and Uzbekistan opened a new plant for the assembly of Amkodor machinery"<sup>11</sup> . Finally, Belarus and Uzbekistan intend to develop mutually beneficial cooperation in the confectionery industry, where "we are talking about the creation of licensed production. On the Belarusian side, the Kommunarka confectionery factory is taking part in the project" .<sup>12</sup>

At the seventh session of the intergovernmental commission, the Belarusian side proposed to implement new large-scale projects in the **machine-building** sector to create production facilities for trucks, special-purpose and trailer vehicles, and gas-fueled buses. Moreover, Minsk Automobile Plant is already "ready to take part in the creation of such production facilities with a high degree of localization"<sup>13</sup> . As for cooperation in **agriculture**, the two sides reached an agreement on the creation of dairy complexes in Uzbekistan "at the expense of the Uzbek side with the involvement of Belarusian design and construction organizations, complete with Belarusian equipment, as well as supplies of cattle of Belarusian selection"<sup>14</sup> . And they have already made concrete steps in this direction. In particular, back in April 2019, a joint venture Zdravushka Tashkent was established in Tashkent region, which will construct a milk processing plant and a dairy complex for one thousand cattle.

Speaking about the prospects for cooperation in the **light industry**, we note that in the first quarter of 2019, the trade turnover of Bellegprom

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<sup>11</sup> Belarus - Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://mfa.gov.by/bilateral/cis/uzbekistan/>

<sup>12</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan plan to create a joint production of confectionery products [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-planirujut-sozdat-sovmestnoe-proizvodstvo-konditerskih-izdelij-306531-2018/>

<sup>13</sup> Vladimir Dvornik took part in the meeting of the intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <http://government.gov.by/ru/content/8847>

<sup>14</sup> The government of Belarus offers Uzbekistan large-scale projects for the production of machinery [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/pravitelstvo-belarusi-predlagaet-uzbekistanu-masshtabnye-proekty-po-proizvodstvu-tehniki-113-2019/>

Concern's enterprises with Uzbekistan exceeded four and a half million dollars. Fabrics from Belarus were supplied to the Uzbek market by Mogotex OJSC, Kamvol OJSC, pile fabrics by Belfa OJSC, corsetry products by Milavitsa JV CJSC. The bulk of imports was cotton yarn, knitted fabrics and cotton fiber. Nevertheless, Belleprom Concern is considering additional opportunities for cooperation and development of cooperative ties with Uzbek partners. It is a question of joint work "on supplies of demanded products - yarn from synthetic fibers, fabrics, pile fabrics, corsetry and hosiery, cotton yarn"<sup>15</sup>.

The agreement signed in June 2019 by the administrations of the free economic zones Vitebsk and Kosonsoy Farm in Namangan region of Uzbekistan on cooperation in the investment and information spheres opens up new opportunities for Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the **pharmaceutical industry**. The fact is that FEZ "Kosonsoy-Farm", established in May 2017, specializes in the development of enterprises in the pharmaceutical industry, the activities in which several residents of FEZ "Vitebsk". In why "attraction of investments in projects for the creation of production of medicines, medical devices is one of the most promising areas of cooperation between the administrations of the two FEZs"<sup>16</sup>.

In the fall of 2018, Belarus and Uzbekistan also signed an intergovernmental agreement on socio-economic cooperation for 2019-2023, which reflects the key agreements at the highest level to develop Belarusian-Uzbek relations and bring them to a qualitatively new level, including in the **scientific and technological sphere**.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, the

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<sup>15</sup> "Belleprom" plans to expand cooperation with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belleprom-planiruet-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-uzbekistanom-333-2019/>

<sup>16</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" and Uzbek "Kosonsoy-farm" will develop investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-uzbekskaja-kosonsoj-farm-budut-razvivat-investitsionnoe-sotrudnichestvo-352766-2019/>

<sup>17</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of science and technology [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-v-oblasti-nauki-i-tehnologij-317747-2018/>

State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus and the Ministry of Innovative Development of Uzbekistan reached an agreement on cooperation in science and technology, which envisaged the development and strengthening of long-term scientific and technical cooperation in such priority areas as energy, medicine, nano- and biotechnology, information and communication technologies, robotics, agro-industrial technologies, as well as an agreement to "carry out joint scientific and technical projects in the field of science and technology". To coordinate this interaction, the two sides established a joint commission on cooperation in science and technology, the first meeting of which was held in April 2019 in Minsk and within the framework of which an executive program of scientific, technical and innovation cooperation for 2019-2020 was signed.

In accordance with this document, the two former Soviet republics agreed to develop scientific and technical cooperation on advanced technologies, implement joint scientific and technical projects, cooperate in the exchange of scientific and technical information, and conduct research and development of mutual interest. We are talking about projects in the field of mechanical engineering, agriculture and agro-industrial technologies, medicine and pharmacy, new materials, information and communication technologies, genetics biotechnology, selected "according to the results of the competition of joint scientific and technical projects for 2019-2021, which was held in the priority areas of bilateral cooperation <...>. In addition, the parties plan to establish at least two joint research laboratories in Belarus and Uzbekistan"<sup>18</sup>. All in all, a list of 15 joint projects in various spheres for co-financing has been agreed upon. And a number of concrete steps have already been taken to develop this area of cooperation.

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<sup>18</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan realize 15 joint scientific and technical projects [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/society/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-realizujut-15-sovmestnyh-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-proektov-343295-2019/>

Thus, in February 2019, the Belarusian National Technical University and Islam Karimov Tashkent State Technical University agreed to establish a joint science and technology park, which will be the first university-based entity of innovation infrastructure in Uzbekistan. As a co-founder of this project, the BNTU Science and Technology Park "Polytechnik" will participate in this project, which "will allow to integrate the scientific and innovative potential of BNTU and TashSU, to scale the experience of the Belarusian university in business incubation of high-tech projects, to jointly develop knowledge-intensive production of international level with the participation of students, undergraduates and doctoral students of both universities"<sup>19</sup>. The first priority joint innovation project in the technopark will be the development and production of medical devices.

<sup>20</sup>In April 2019, it became known that the same universities - Belarusian National Technical University and Tashkent State Technical University - will act as founders of the Belarusian-Uzbek inter-sectoral institute of applied technical qualifications, where the main focus of work will be "training, retraining, internship and advanced training of personnel in strategically important areas for Uzbekistan on the basis of joint educational programs, as well as the implementation of scientific, innovative activities and its commercial activities". Education in the new institute will be conducted in Russian language in such areas as intelligent devices, machines and production, computer mechatronics, biotechnical and medical devices and systems, management of innovative projects of industrial enterprises. An important detail: graduates will be awarded a diploma of a Belarusian

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<sup>19</sup> The first university technopark is being created in Uzbekistan with the participation of BNTU [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/society/view/v-uzbekistane-pri-uchastii-bntu-sozdaetsja-pervyj-universitetskij-tehnopark-335511-2019/>

<sup>20</sup> Belarusian-Uzbek Institute of Applied Technical Qualifications will be created in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-uzbekskij-institut-prikladnyh-tehnicheskikh-kvalifikatsij-sozdadut-v-tashkente-345862-2019/>

university, which is recognized as a document of higher education in this Central Asian country.

The Belarusian State University is also serious about cooperating with Uzbek partners. The thematic range of potential cooperation in the innovation sphere was clearly demonstrated by its exposition at the exhibition of Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus, held in September 2018 in Tashkent, where more than 30 scientific and technological developments in the fields of agriculture, medicine and pharmaceuticals, food industry, as well as measuring devices, equipment for the production of polyurethane foam products, technologies for the application of functional coatings, creation of heat-resistant water purification materials were presented. The participants and visitors of the exhibition also showed great interest in the stand of BSU "antitumor drugs Temodex, Prospidelong and Cisplacel". They cause the death of cancer cells, prevent metastasis, and help reduce the toxic load on the body"<sup>21</sup>. It should be noted that this topic is also important for Belarus and Uzbekistan in terms of industrial cooperation. After all, "the parties plan to create two pharmaceutical enterprises. One will specialize in the production of oncological drugs, the other - in the production of medicines developed on the basis of medicinal herbs growing in Uzbekistan"<sup>22</sup>. In total, more than a hundred scientific and technical developments from organizations of the Ministry of Education and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus were presented at the exhibition in Tashkent.

The Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after M. Tank actively cooperates with Uzbek partners, which in September 2018

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<sup>21</sup> More than 30 scientific and technical developments will present BSU at the exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bolee-30-nauchno-tehnicheskikh-razrabotok-predstavit-bgu-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-317246-2018/>

<sup>22</sup> Matievsky, M. Belarus and Uzbekistan plan to create joint ventures in pharmaceuticals, mechanical engineering and agro-industrial complex / M. Matievsky // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/special/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-planirujut-sozdat-sovmestnye-predpriyatija-v-farmatsevtike-mashinostroenii-i-apk-317534-2018/>

facilitated the opening of the Belarusian-Uzbek educational center on the basis of the Nizami Tashkent State Pedagogical University, considered by the parties "as a platform for the development and strengthening of Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the field of education and culture"<sup>23</sup>. In addition, these universities are jointly implementing today an educational program in the specialty of "speech therapy" and a project within the framework of the program at the second level of higher education in the network form of interaction in the specialties of "inclusive education" and "correctional pedagogy".

As we can see, the documents adopted in the fall of 2018 at the level of the heads of state and government of Belarus and Uzbekistan began to yield real results quite quickly. Suffice it to say that already at the end of 2018, "mutual trade turnover increased by 2.5 times"<sup>24</sup>. And there is every reason to believe that if the current dynamics of expansion of Belarusian-Uzbek interaction continues, the goal set by the presidents of the two countries to achieve a mutual trade turnover of one billion dollars will be successfully achieved in the coming years.

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<sup>23</sup> Grishkevich, A. Belarusian-Uzbek educational center opened in Tashkent Pedagogical University / A. Grishkevich // [Electronic resource]. - 2018. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belorusko-uzbekskij-obrazovatelnyj-tsentr-otkrylsja-v-tashkentskom-peduniversitete-318451-2018/>

<sup>24</sup> Growth of trade turnover and new projects - Ambassador of Uzbekistan on the dynamics of relations with Belarus [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://belta.by/economics/view/rost-tovarooborota-i-novye-proekty-posol-uzbekistana-o-dinamike-otnoshenij-s-belarusiju-333099-2019/>

## **The commission outlines priorities for cooperation**

The eighth meeting of the joint intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan was held in early March 2021 in Tashkent. It discussed issues related to the development of trade and economic, investment and cooperation ties, strengthening relations in the scientific-educational and socio-humanitarian spheres, in the field of interregional cooperation, information technologies, and tourism.

Diplomatic relations between the two former Soviet republics were established in January 1993. In 2020, the Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover grew by another 17 percent and exceeded \$280 million with the share of supplies from Belarus - more than \$237 million. "The main items of Belarusian exports last [2020] year were trucks, tractors and tractor-trailers, meat and meat products, sugar and dairy products, medicines, vaccines, and blood serums"<sup>25</sup>. Noting these positive trends, the parties at the meeting of the intergovernmental commission focused their attention on those issues, the solution of which would help to bring bilateral relations to a new level. One of such urgent priorities was the expansion of the legal framework of Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation, which had more than 70 agreements until March 2021. The eighth meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission contributed to its further expansion.

In particular, the National Metrology Institutes of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed in Tashkent an agreement on cooperation, which defines the main directions of interaction for the next five years. The document refers to the close partnership of the parties in the development and implementation of programs to create national and working standards. "Another direction is participation in the development of interstate documents on ensuring the uniformity of measurements to solve the problems of harmonization of

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<sup>25</sup> Belarus aims at further development of bilateral relations with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9736>



national legislations and development of common principles of activity in this field"<sup>26</sup> . In addition, the program of cooperation for 2021-2023 was adopted by the State Committee for Standardization of Belarus and the agency "Uzstandart", which outlined comparisons of state measurement standards, calibration of measurement standards and working measuring instruments, as well as participation of laboratories in proficiency testing programs. All this, together with the planned establishment of a permanent group, should help to resolve issues related to technical barriers to trade between the two countries. Another important aspect of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan in this area is that the Eurasian Economic Union currently has a draft agreement on the procedure and conditions for the elimination of technical barriers to mutual trade with third countries in high readiness. In this regard, the Belarusian Gosstandart is "working on the possibility and making a proactive proposal that the first pilot project under this agreement after its entry into force be implemented with Uzbekistan"<sup>27</sup> .

Ten more documents on cooperation were signed in early March 2021 by higher education institutions of the two countries. They supplemented the already very extensive legal framework of interaction between educational institutions and scientific organizations, which already included about two hundred direct agreements. Thanks to them, joint faculties are successfully functioning today, Belarusian-Uzbek educational programs are being implemented, including dual-diploma programs. A joint Belarusian-Uzbek Interindustry Institute of Applied Technical Qualifications was opened in Tashkent. The establishment of the Uzbek-Belarusian University of Materials Science is under consideration. The following figures are quite

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<sup>26</sup> Institutes of Metrology of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an agreement on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/instituty-metrologii-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve-431178-2021/>

<sup>27</sup> Gosstandart of Belarus and the agency "Uzstandart" signed a program of cooperation for 2021-2023 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gosstandart-belarusi-i-agentstvo-uzstandart-podpisali-programmu-sotrudnichestva-na-2021-2023-gody-431298-2021/>

eloquent: "In the 2020-2021 academic year, Belarusian educational institutions will host about 2,000 Uzbek students. The export of educational services to Uzbekistan for the last [2020] year amounted to \$1.7 million, having increased by almost 14% compared to the previous year"<sup>28</sup>. It should be assumed that the appearance of ten more documents on cooperation between the universities of the two states will only contribute to the further expansion of Belarusian-Uzbek interaction in the educational sphere.

It should be noted that a number of domestic universities are showing considerable interest in developing cooperation with Uzbek partners. Among them are the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics, Belarusian National Technical University, Belarusian State Technological University, P.M. Masherov State University of Vitebsk, Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, and Francysk Skorina State University of Gomel. The Belarusian State University (BSU) is also busy implementing big plans to expand its presence in the Uzbek educational market and plans to seriously expand the range of joint educational programs here.

In particular, the agreement signed in April 2021 on cultural and scientific cooperation between BSU and Mirzo Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan, the first and leading higher education institution in Central Asia, offers great opportunities in this regard. Established in 1918, today it unites 12 faculties: Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Social Sciences, History, Geology and Geoinformation Systems, Geography and Natural Resources, Foreign Philology, Journalism and Taekwondo and Sports. Until recently, the interaction between the two universities consisted in joint training of Uzbek students in the specialties of "medical-biological business" and "medical ecology" on the basis of the International State

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<sup>28</sup> Universities of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed 10 documents on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/vuzy-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-10-dokumentov-o-sotrudnichestve-431140-2021>

Ecological Institute named after A.D. Sakharov BSU. <sup>29</sup>The document signed in April concerns not only cooperation on student and faculty exchange, preparation of theses, dissertations and publications, joint scientific research and events, exchange of literature, periodicals, but also expands the subject area of inter-university relations in new directions, among which "the parties have indicated an increase in joint educational programs in the humanities and natural sciences, the organization of mutual summer schools, interaction between Uzbek and Uzbek students. In addition, the Uzbek side was interested in the BSU's experience in organizing a system of continuing education for lawyers, which is implemented through the law college and faculty, as well as the Institute for retraining and advanced training of judges, prosecutors, courts and justice institutions. It is also quite possible that Belarusian scientists with relevant experience will participate in the development of a satellite for the Uzbek university.

The topic of expanding the range of educational programs is also relevant in the interaction between BSU and the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, joint training of Uzbek students with which in the specialty "Oriental (Chinese) philology" is conducted from 2019. Among the new areas under discussion is the use of BSU's experience in training specialists for the IT industry, as well as the development of interdisciplinary specialties. In particular, in April 2021, "the initiative of joint training of students in the field of computer linguistics"<sup>30</sup>, as well as the realization of youth startup projects was supported.

A concrete result of the implementation of the roadmap signed in April 2021 between BSU and Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and

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<sup>29</sup> BSU and the National University of Uzbekistan reach a new level of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-i-natsionalnyj-universitet-uzbekistana-vyhodjat-na-novyj-uroven-sotrudnichestva-436206-2021/>

<sup>30</sup> BSU plans to expand joint educational programs with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-planiruet-rasshirit-s-uzbekistanom-sovmestnye-obrazovatelnye-programmy-435893-2021/>

Literature named after Alisher Navoi will be the opening in December 2021 in Minsk of a cabinet of Uzbek language and literature, the activities of which "will be aimed at strengthening educational and cultural ties between the two countries, creating conditions for studying the language, history, ethnic characteristics of Uzbekistan"<sup>31</sup>.

The cooperation agreement between BSU and Tashkent State Law University has been in force since 2020. This year, this cooperation will be expanded through joint training of Uzbek students at the law college of the Belarusian university with the prospect of subsequent enrollment at the BSU Law Faculty, as well as opening joint programs with the BSU Faculty of International Relations. Here it is appropriate to note that the Uzbek partners were "interested in the experience of BSU participation in international rankings, according to which the Belarusian university is close to 1% of the best universities in the world"<sup>32</sup>. In April 2021, the parties agreed to create a working group for the prompt development of documents on the implementation of the proposed initiatives, as well as the organization of a joint educational program for the training of legal personnel in September. Finally, in cooperation with the University of Journalism and Mass Communications of Uzbekistan, the sides are now discussing the issues of Uzbek teachers' internships at BSU, their training there under advanced training programs, and inviting Belarusian university staff to give lectures in Tashkent.

Another important outcome of the work of the intergovernmental commission was the first meeting of the Belarusian-Uzbek business council held in Tashkent, which brought together more than 170 representatives of

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<sup>31</sup> Cabinet of Uzbek language and culture will be opened in BSU [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/kabinet-uzbekskogo-jazyka-i-kultury-otkrojut-v-bgu-435914-2021/>

<sup>32</sup> BSU will expand cooperation with Uzbekistan in the field of education [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/bgu-rasshirit-sotrudnichestvo-s-uzbekistanom-v-oblasti-obrazovanija-436565-2021/>

business circles of the two countries who were able to discuss "specific cooperation projects in agriculture, machine building, logistics, food industry, chemical and pharmaceutical production, science and education, and information technologies"<sup>33</sup>. The potential for the implementation of these projects is very eloquently demonstrated by the example of the Minsk Motor Plant, whose representatives brought to the Uzbek capital contracts worth more than four million dollars. This is largely due to the fact that "the goods distribution network of MMZ in Tashkent is represented by BURAN-SAVDO, SIGMA, INDUSTRIAL MARKETING, FUTURE GENERATION MARKETING. In 2019-2020, MMZ sold more than 1 thousand engines to the primary and secondary markets of Uzbekistan"<sup>34</sup>.

A logical continuation of the first meeting of the Business Council was the participation of 23 Belarusian companies in April 2021 in the international exhibition "INNOPROM. Big Industrial Week in Uzbekistan, where exporters from Belarus presented products of machine-building, metallurgy, chemical industry, pharmaceutical industry, medical equipment, as well as scientific developments and consumer goods. One of the concrete results of the participation of Belarusian manufacturers in this exhibition event was the signing by the subsidiary of Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan - MAZ-Tashkent LLC - of a letter of intent "for the supply of chassis and machine kits for the assembly of vehicles to the Uzbek market for the amount of \$10 million. Also, a contract was signed with a private Uzbek company for the supply of 50 units of MAZ machinery for a total of

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<sup>33</sup> More than 170 business representatives of Belarus and Uzbekistan took part in the meeting of the Business Council [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bole-170-predstavitelej-biznesa-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-prinjali-uchastie-v-zasedanii-delovogo-soveta-431374-2021>

<sup>34</sup> MMZ during the intergovernmental commission in Uzbekistan plans to sign contracts for more than \$4 million [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mmz-vo-vremja-mezhpravkomissii-v-uzbekistane-planiruet-podpisat-kontrakty-bole-chem-na-4-mln-431277-2021/>

\$3 million.<sup>35</sup> . So the prospects for the development of economic ties between the two countries are serious.

Recall that the basic document of trade and economic interaction between Belarus and Uzbekistan is the roadmap of cooperation between the two countries, adopted in November 2018 and comprising 158 measures. By May 2020, more than a third of them had already been implemented. This immediately affected the state of Belarusian-Uzbek partnership ties: "At the end of 2019, the volume of trade turnover between the countries reached \$239 million and increased 1.5 times by 2018"<sup>36</sup> . This means that the parties intend to achieve as quickly as possible the goal, which was outlined in the same 2018 by the heads of the two states - to increase the volume of bilateral trade turnover to one billion dollars. "The task is supposed to be solved in three to four years, actualizing all possible areas of interaction"<sup>37</sup> , among which agriculture is one of the most promising.

The fact is that the main trend in the development of the agro-industrial complex of Uzbekistan today is the formation of a cluster system of production. In other words, clusters should unite producers of agricultural raw materials and their processors into industrial enterprises. Uzbek partners consider the Belarusian experience in this regard as very positive and therefore demonstrate their high interest in establishing direct business contacts and partnerships with Belarusian producers and processors, the effectiveness of which is evidenced by the figures.

In 2019, agricultural products and foodstuffs worth \$35 million were supplied to the Uzbek market from Belarus, which more than doubled the

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<sup>35</sup> More than 20 Belarusian enterprises took part in a major industrial exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-20-belorusskih-predpriyatij-prinjali-uchastie-v-krupnoj-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-436286-2021/>

<sup>36</sup> Vladimir Dvornik held talks with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sardor Umurzakov [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9423>

<sup>37</sup> Zaleskii, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. View from Belarus / B. Zaleskyy. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 223.

level of 2018. The positive dynamics of mutual trade in this area continued next year, despite the restrictions caused by the spread of the coronavirus. "Belarusian food exports more than doubled in 2020 and reached \$73 million. supplies of Belarusian beef more than doubled, sugar - 3.5 times, milk powder - twice, fish and fish products - 1.5 times to Uzbekistan"<sup>38</sup>.

At the same time, cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan, of course, is not limited only to mutual supplies of food products, but also includes a wide range of interaction, including the development of joint scientific approaches and modern technologies. In particular, "promising areas of cooperation in the agro-industrial sector include participation of the Belarusian side in the construction of dairy complexes, organization of milk processing, establishment of joint ventures for the production of veterinary drugs, cooperation in the field of breeding, organization of training and retraining of Uzbek specialists on the basis of Belarusian agrarian educational institutions"<sup>39</sup>.

The first Belarusian-Uzbek Agrarian Forum, which took place in 2020 and was attended by more than 700 people, demonstrated this diversity of effective partnerships. The business part of the Belarusian delegation alone included about 150 representatives of agricultural and food exporting enterprises, scientific and educational institutions of the country. In particular, an active participant of the forum was Gomselmash OJSC, which signed an agreement with the Tashkent Agricultural Machinery Plant in the fall of 2019. "The document provides for the creation of an assembly production of combines in the capital of Uzbekistan"<sup>40</sup>. From the Uzbek side

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<sup>38</sup> Belarusian food exports to Uzbekistan more than doubled in 2020 [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-belorusskogo-prodovolstvija-v-uzbekistan-v-2020-godu-vyros-bolee-chem-v-dva-raza-431838-2021/>

<sup>39</sup> On the results of Vladimir Dvornik's visit to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/9301>

<sup>40</sup> "Gomselmash" will present its potential at the agrarian forum in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/gomselmash-predstavit-svoj-potentsial-na-agrarnom-forume-v-uzbekistane-380486-2020>

were delegations from all regions of the country, as well as from relevant ministries and organizations of the agro-industrial complex. As a result, on the margins of the forum "Belarusian exporting enterprises signed more than 30 agreements and contracts with Uzbek partners"<sup>41</sup>. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus and the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan adopted a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation.

Simultaneously with the agrarian forum, an exhibition was organized in Tashkent, where only the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus presented more than 60 innovative developments and technologies for agriculture in Uzbekistan. Among the novelties of Belarusian scientists from the Scientific and Practical Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on Food, vegetable marmalade aroused great interest. "The line includes marmalade made of sweet corn, red carrots, ripe pumpkin, juicy tomato and spicy celery. The marmalade contains prebiotics and no artificial colors"<sup>42</sup>. The Institute of Soil Science and Agrochemistry demonstrated a range of complex mineral fertilizers with a balanced ratio of nutritional elements for cultivated crops. The S.N. Vyshellesky Institute of Experimental Veterinary Medicine showed vaccines for the prevention and treatment of viral and bacterial diseases of farm animals. Scientists from the Center for Identification Systems and Electronic Business Operations offered technologies for digital identification and traceability of animals and animal products. The Scientific and Practical Center for Potato Breeding interested the visitors of the exhibition with new potato varieties - "Manifest", "Uladar", "Palats" - resistant to a complex of diseases. As we

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<sup>41</sup> More than 30 agreements and contracts signed as a result of the Belarusian-Uzbek agrarian forum [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-30-soglashenij-i-kontraktov-podpisano-po-itogam-belorussko-uzbekskogo-agrarnogo-foruma-381350-2020/>

<sup>42</sup> NAS of Belarus presented in Uzbekistan more than 60 innovative developments for agriculture [Electronic resource]. - 2020. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/nan-belarusi-predstavila-v-uzbekistane-bolee-60-innovatsionnyh-razrabotok-dlja-selskogo-hozjajstva-381057-2020/>



can see, even this short list of novelties presented in Tashkent clearly shows what tempting prospects are opening up in the development of Belarusian-Uzbek partnership in agriculture in the near future.

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## **The challenge is a qualitatively new level of cooperation**

In April 2022, a government delegation from Belarus visited Uzbekistan and signed contracts worth more than 25 million dollars. An equally important outcome was the statement by Minsk and Tashkent that new points of growth in cooperation have been found. And "now the task is to fill it with new content"<sup>43</sup>, in order to bring the annual volume of mutual trade up to half a billion dollars.

The beginning of 2022 showed that the parties were confidently approaching the set goal. While in 2021 Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover grew by almost 8 percent and exceeded \$300 million with a positive balance of almost \$190 million for the Belarusian side, "in January-February 2022 trade turnover amounted to \$53.5 million and increased by 9.9 percent against the level of the corresponding period of 2021"<sup>44</sup>. The volumes of trade and investment are expected to increase further, primarily through the implementation of joint cooperation projects.

It should be noted that 103 organizations with Belarusian investments have already been registered in Uzbekistan, as well as representative offices of Avtopromsnabspedition LLC, Softclub LLC, AmantisMed LLC, and Belvitunifarm LLC. One assembly production of Belarusian machinery with participation of Belarusian capital - JV AMKODOR-AGROTEXMASH LLC - was established there. In particular, "the production of loaders has been set up at the Tashkent Tractor Plant, which testifies to the demand for these products in the local and regional market"<sup>45</sup>. In addition, cooperation

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<sup>43</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Belarus and Uzbekistan can increase trade and investment, growth points have been found [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10260>

<sup>44</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan intensify the implementation of production and cooperation projects [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-aktivizirujut-realizatsiju-proizvodstvenno-kooperatsionnyh-proektov-495026-2022/>

<sup>45</sup> Machinery, equipment, scientific and technical developments. What Belarus will present at the exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL:

between MAZ OJSC and KRANTAS GROUP LLC, MTZ OJSC and Uzavtosanoat JSC in the field of production of motor vehicles and tractors continues. And "Marko Company" implements a joint project in Uzbekistan for the production of footwear. LLC "Svetlogorsk Welding Electrode Plant" realizes in this country an investment project for the production of welding electrodes. For this purpose, FE "MONOLITH ASIA" LLC was established in Tashkent<sup>46</sup>. And these ties continue to be actively strengthened.

Thus, in April 2022, the official distributor of Minsk Automobile Plant in this Central Asian country - MAZ-TASHKENT LLC - started industrial assembly of MAZ vehicles from SKD kits. "The first model was the MAZ-5337 chassis. Localization of assembly production in Uzbekistan will allow Minsk Automobile Plant to expand its presence in the market of Central Asian countries, and in the future - Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan"<sup>47</sup>. And within the framework of the Uzbek-Belarusian business forum held in April in Tashkent, MAZ distributor "signed a contract with PE OLIY TEXNIK for the purchase of 41 MAZ vehicles. <...> The contract amount exceeded \$3 million"<sup>48</sup>.

The Minsk Tractor Plant is also actively increasing its presence in the Uzbek market, having increased shipments of its machines by almost a quarter in the first quarter of 2022. "In total, more than \$10 million worth of machinery was shipped"<sup>49</sup>. Interestingly, Belarusian tractors worth \$31

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<https://www.belta.by/comments/view/tehnika-oborudovanie-nauchno-tehnicheskie-razrabotki-cto-belarus-prezentuet-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-8158/>

<sup>46</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan should be increased to at least \$500 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10257>

<sup>47</sup>. Minsk Automobile Plant has established the assembly of machinery in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtozavod-naladil-sborku-tehniki-v-uzbekistane-496181-2022/>

<sup>48</sup> "MAZ-Tashkent" signed a large contract with an Uzbek company for the delivery of 41 vehicles [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-tashkent-podpisal-krupnyj-kontrakt-s-uzbekskoj-kompaniej-na-postavku-41-avtomobilja-498224-2022/>

<sup>49</sup> MTZ in the I quarter increased supplies of machinery to Uzbekistan by more than 23% [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-v-i-kvartale-narastil-postavki-tehniki-v-uzbekistan-bolce-chem-na-23-499321-2022/>

million were shipped to Uzbek partners for the whole of 2021. And in late April - early May, a sales and service center for Belarusian agricultural machinery was opened in Tashkent, which combines "a showroom and sales center, a service point and production facilities"<sup>50</sup>. There is also a branch of the bank, which is focused on providing services on crediting and leasing of machinery. Characteristically, the Belarusian side plans to open similar centers in other Uzbek regions.

Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the implementation of joint projects in the field of medicine is very promising. One of them is the joint venture Belpharm, which will produce antibiotics and has already invested more than \$8 million. In addition, the Belarusian side offered its partners to build a joint venture for blood processing. An important detail: "Today the organizations of Belpharmprom Holding have 166 registration certificates for medicines in Uzbekistan. The holding's members have signed 12 contracts with Uzbek partners for the supply of pharmaceutical products. At the end of 2021, the export of products of the organizations of the holding company "Belpharmprom" to Uzbekistan amounted to \$14 million, in January-February 2022 - \$3 million"<sup>51</sup>.

If we talk about other prospects for cooperation, we can name several other areas. One of them concerns electric transportation. The fact is that "Tashkent is considering the possibility of resuming streetcar service. The Belarusian side is ready to provide comprehensive solutions with the necessary infrastructure, planning and supply of rolling stock"<sup>52</sup>. If the decision on this matter is made, the creation of a joint production facility on

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<sup>50</sup> Sales and service center of Belarusian agricultural machinery opened in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/tsentr-prodazh-i-servisnogo-obsluzhivaniya-belorusskoj-selhoztehniki-otkrylsja-v-tashkente-499290-2022/>

<sup>51</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan discuss deepening cooperation in the pharmaceutical industry [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-obsuzhdajut-uglublenie-sotrudnichestva-v-farmotrasli-498163-2022/>

<sup>52</sup> Roman Golovchenko: Trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan should be increased to at least \$500 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10257>

Uzbek soil will become a real possibility. The issue of supplying wooden houses from Belarus to Uzbekistan, where "it is now a very fashionable trend <...>, very high demand"<sup>53</sup> . This may open up good prospects for the Belarusian Newsprint Plant, which has conveyor production of such houses.

In the same context, one should also recall the fact that at the end of April 2022, the parties considered "the possibility of organizing supplies of Belarusian peat substrates to forestry industries in Uzbekistan for further use as a basis for growing plantation seedlings"<sup>54</sup> . Given the considerable experience of Belarusian peat enterprises in this area, and in 2021 exports of peat industry organizations of Beltopgaz grew by more than a quarter, it is quite predictable that Uzbekistan will become the 25th country to receive Belarusian peat as early as this year.

Belarusian light industry enterprises, which produce worsted, linen, synthetic and artificial fabrics with various properties, pile fabrics, corsetry and hosiery products, also see their prospects for increasing supplies of demanded products to the Uzbek market. These are Orsha Flax Factory, OJSC "Mogotex", OJSC "Kamvol", which became participants of the 4th International Exhibition of Textile and Fashion Industry UzTextileExpo Spring 2022, held in April 2022 in Tashkent. Together with them five more Belarusian enterprises of chemical and petrochemical industry were also presented, which demonstrated to numerous visitors of this business forum "artificial and chemical fibers for textile production, technical textiles for construction, polymer products, chemicals and fertilizers for agriculture,

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<sup>53</sup> Golovchenko: Belarus is working on the delivery of wooden houses to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-belarus-prorabatyvaet-postavki-v-uzbekistan-derevjannyh-domov-498185-2022/>

<sup>54</sup> Belarus is interested in supplying peat substrates to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-zainteresovana-v-postavkah-torfjanyh-substratov-v-uzbekistan-499019-2022/>

glass fiber"<sup>55</sup>. In a word, everything that arouses a high interest of partners from Uzbekistan and can become a basis for concluding new contracts.

Speaking about the participation of Belarusian exporters in foreign exhibitions, it should be noted that in 2021, participating in exhibitions and forums organized by Belinterexpo - the exhibition enterprise of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry - they signed 86 agreements and contracts worth more than \$80 million. At the same time, "agreements and contracts worth \$15 million were signed within the framework of national expositions"<sup>56</sup>. Here it is important that the most productive in terms of the amount of contracts signed included national expositions organized within the framework of exhibitions in Uzbekistan - "INNOPROM. Big Industrial Week" and UzProdExpo/UzAgroExpo.

Speaking about the first of them, it should be noted that the "Big Industrial Week in Uzbekistan", held in April 2021 in Tashkent, was the largest event in this Central Asian country after a pause caused by the pandemic. At that time, the exhibition was attended by "more than 200 enterprises working in the fields of mechanical engineering, metallurgy, energy, pharmaceuticals, chemical industry and medicine from Armenia, Belarus, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, the Czech Republic, the EAEU and Central Asia"<sup>57</sup>. As for the Belarusian pavilion, it included stands of 65 companies and organizations that presented engineering, metallurgical, chemical, pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, scientific

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<sup>55</sup> Belarusian enterprises of light industry present their potential in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-legkoj-promyshlennosti-prezentujut-svoj-potencial-v-uzbekistane-498369-2022/>

<sup>56</sup> At the forums and exhibitions "Belinterexpo" domestic enterprises signed contracts for \$80 million [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/na-forumah-i-vystavkah-belinterekspo-otechestvennye-predpriyatija-podpisali-kontrakty-na-80-mln-476100-2021/>

<sup>57</sup> More than 20 Belarusian enterprises took part in a major industrial exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bolee-20-beloruskih-predpriyatij-prinjali-uchastie-v-krupnoj-promyshlennoj-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-436286-2021/>

developments and consumer goods. One of the concrete results of their participation in this exhibition was "the signing by the subsidiary of Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan - MAZ-Tashkent LLC - of a letter of intent for the supply of chassis and machine kits for the assembly of vehicles to the Uzbek market for the amount of \$10 million. Also, a contract was signed with a private Uzbek company for the supply of 50 units of MAZ machinery for a total of \$3 million"<sup>58</sup>. Interestingly, in April 2022, this exhibition in the Uzbek capital was held under a new name - "INNOPROM. Central Asia" - and included six thematic sections: mechanical engineering, metallurgy, energy, chemistry, industrial automation, pharmaceuticals and medicine. There was also a plenary session "Central Asia. Space of Technological Breakthrough" and specialized sessions on infrastructure projects, logistics, financial instruments, and education. Belarusian participation in this business forum was no less representative due to the fact that "exports of Belarusian goods to Uzbekistan have grown six times in five years. The greatest demand is for machinery from Belarus (tractors and tractors-tractors, trucks), chemical products, foodstuffs, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, energy carriers, oil products. In total, Belarus supplies Uzbekistan with 360 commodity items of all industries"<sup>59</sup>.

As for the agriculture and food exhibitions UzAgroExpo and UzProdExpo, held in Tashkent in November 2021, they are the largest sectoral business forums in Uzbekistan, which this time brought together 120 companies from 18 countries. The national pavilion of Belarus, where 17 companies were represented, demonstrated export opportunities of domestic enterprises in three main areas: food industry; agrarian engineering; and science. Especially many original novelties were presented in the first of

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<sup>58</sup> Zaleskii, B. Key task - development. Collection of articles / B. Zalesky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 40-41.

<sup>59</sup> Belarusian national pavilion will be presented at the exhibition "INNOPROM" in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskij-natsionalnyj-paviljon-budet-predstavlen-na-vystavke-innoprom-v-uzbekistane-480872-2022/>

them - beef in lingonberry sauce, soft cheese made from ricotta whey according to the Italian technology, high-quality coffee prepared according to own patented technology, peanut paste with sea salt, fruit bars made from a mixture of dried prunes, dried apple, oat flakes and syrup, protein milk chocolate with increased protein content, as well as "Belarusian whiskey, an alcoholic blended drink made from artesian water on the basis of national grain crops - rye, wheat, barley malt"<sup>60</sup> . The Belarusian State University, Belarusian National Technical University, Belarusian-Russian University and Belarusian State University of Food and Chemical Technologies showed the numerous visitors the scientific developments in agro-industrial and food spheres, including technologies of restoration of damaged soils, methods of production of innovative fermented milk drinks, cosmetics. The Minsk Automobile Plant and the Lidselmash enterprise also brought innovative equipment to the Uzbek capital - a specially designed for the Uzbek market cargo dump truck MAZ-65012K, which "is equipped with a metal body, tiltable by means of a hydraulic mechanism, and is intended for transportation of bulk cargo, including agricultural goods"<sup>61</sup> , and new modifications of a cultivator for cultivating cotton - the most popular agricultural crop in this Central Asian country. The concrete result of the work at these exhibitions was "an agreement between MAZ-Tashkent, the official distributor of Minsk Automobile Plant in Uzbekistan, and Nurafshon Maxsus Texnika on the supply of engineering products worth \$1 million"<sup>62</sup> . At the Uzbekistan-Belarus agrarian forum, agreements were reached on the

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<sup>60</sup> The National Pavilion of Belarus is presented at the exhibitions in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/natsionalnyj-paviljon-belarusi-predstavlen-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-471340-2021/>

<sup>61</sup> Minsk Automobile Plant presented a new gas dump truck at the exhibition in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. -2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minskij-avtozavod-predstavil-novyj-gazovyj-samosval-na-vystavke-v-uzbekistane-471501-2021/>

<sup>62</sup> MAZ signed a contract for delivery of machinery to Uzbekistan for \$1 mln [Electronic resource]. - 2021. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-podpisal-kontrakt-na-postavku-tehniki-v-uzbekistan-na-1-mln-471344-2021/>



construction and reconstruction of a dairy complex using Belarusian technologies on Uzbek soil.

Another important area of interaction between the two countries is the intensification of partnership Belarusian-Uzbek regional ties, which are becoming one of the most important areas of cooperation in the current environment. The I Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, which took place in Minsk in July 2019 and opened up new partnership opportunities in such areas as industrial cooperation, agro-industrial complex, and food industry, and brought together "more than two hundred representatives of such regions as Andijan, Bukhara, Jizzak, Namangan, Samarkand, Khorezm, Fergana, and Tashkent regions" from the Uzbek side alone<sup>63</sup>.

On the Belarusian side, one of the active participants of this forum was Vitebsk region, the positive dynamics of its trade and economic cooperation with Uzbek partners has been observed over the past few years. Suffice it to say that in 2019 Uzbekistan entered the list of key partners of Vitebsk among the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. At that time, the foreign trade turnover between the parties increased by more than a quarter and exceeded nine million dollars. Export supplies from the Belarusian region "increased one and a half times - up to 6.7 million dollars. Exports of food products amounted to \$0.9 million, or 13.4% of its total volume. <...> Cheese and dairy products of the Postavy Dairy Plant, Verkhnedvinsk Creamery, Polotsk Dairy Plant, as well as meat products of the Vitebsk Meat Processing Plant are already familiar to Uzbek consumers and are in good demand among them"<sup>64</sup>. In addition, the Vitebsk region successfully supplied the Uzbek market with baby food, vaccines to combat diseases in pets in a wide range, and pharmaceuticals.

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<sup>63</sup> Zalesky, B. Sustainability as a formula for growth. Features of international cooperation based on the innovative component / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2021. - C. 37.

<sup>64</sup> Tikhonov, A. Belarusian-Uzbek agrarian forum: afterword / A. Tikhonov // [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://produkt.by/story/belorusko-uzbekskiy-agrarnyy-forum-posleslovie>

In 2021, the Belarusian region's mutual trade with this Central Asian country exceeded \$12.5 million, with Vitebsk's exports accounting for almost \$10 million, which was again based on medicines, cattle meat, milk and whey powder, butter, cheese, as well as polyethylene, plastic and fiberglass products, and fiber-optic cable. In addition, the joint venture of the leather and footwear holding Marco started its activities on Uzbek soil. Other projects in the sphere of production cooperation are in the pipeline. In particular, starting from 2020, Vitebsk region is negotiating the opening of a joint venture with BelVitunipharm OJSC in Uzbekistan, which will initially trade in medicines with a subsequent transition to their production. In December 2021, a representative office of the Belarusian manufacturer of veterinary drugs was opened in Tashkent. And already "the issues of project financing are being worked out in order to reach the sales of medicines in the amount of \$2 million per year"<sup>65</sup> .

Among other promising areas of interaction between the region's enterprises and Uzbek partners in March 2022 were discussed supplies of fruit and vegetable and meat and dairy products, as well as cooperation in such segments of the industrial sector as mechanical engineering, energy, chemical and gas industry. The activation of partnership ties of Vitebshchina with a number of Uzbek regions and especially with Namangan region should play an important role in this process. The fact is that Vitebsk and Namangan regions signed an agreement on cooperation in trade and economic, scientific, technical and cultural areas in July 2019 in the framework of the I Forum of Regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan, already mentioned above. This document should help build mutually beneficial trade and economic ties between enterprises and organizations of the regions,

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<sup>65</sup> Pushnyakova, A. Uzbekistan can become for the enterprises of Vitebsk region a springboard for supplies to Asia / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-mozhet-stat-dlja-predpriyatij-vitebskoj-oblasti-tramplinom-dlja-postavok-v-aziju-491940-2022/>

provide "comprehensive support to business structures in concluding mutually acceptable contracts for the supply of goods and services. There is also talk about joint business seminars, exhibitions and fairs with the participation of representatives of entrepreneurial and business circles"<sup>66</sup> .

The agreement on cooperation between the administrations of free economic zones (FEZ) Vitebsk and Kosonsoy-Pharm, signed at the same time, is also intended to expand possible areas of trade, economic, and investment interaction between the Belarusian and Uzbek regions. The agreement not only creates a basis for sharing experience and promoting partnership between FEZ residents, but also forms the basis for combining the potential of the parties in carrying out joint activities. Note that "Kosonsoy-Pharm" was among the seven pharmaceutical FEZs established in May 2017 in six Uzbek regions. In addition to it, then appeared "in Karakalpakstan - "Nukus-pharm", Jizzak region - "Zomin-pharm", <...> Syrdarya region - "Sirdaryo-pharm", Surkhandarya region - "Boysun-pharm" and Tashkent region - "Bustonlik-pharm" and ""Parkent-pharm""<sup>67</sup> . They have special tax, customs and currency regimes on their territories. All of them specialize in the development of enterprises in the pharmaceutical field. Several residents of FEZ "Vitebsk" are also engaged in the same sphere. That is why "attraction of investments into projects on creation of production of medicines, medical products is one of the most promising directions of cooperation between the administrations of the two FEZs"<sup>68</sup> . And there is every reason to believe that this interaction between the Belarusian and Uzbek free economic zones will further strengthen the emerging partnership ties between Vitebsk and Namangan regions.

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<sup>66</sup> Namangan region will cooperate with Vitebsk [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: [https://nampravda.uz/ekonomika/namanganskaya\\_oblast\\_budet\\_sotrudnicat\\_s\\_vitebskom.html](https://nampravda.uz/ekonomika/namanganskaya_oblast_budet_sotrudnicat_s_vitebskom.html)

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

<sup>68</sup> FEZ "Vitebsk" and Uzbek "Kosonsoy-farm" will develop investment cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2019. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/sez-vitebsk-i-uzbekskaja-kosonsoj-farm-budut-razvivat-investitsionoe-sotrudnichestvo-352766-2019/>

The documents signed during the visit of the Belarusian government delegation to Tashkent in April 2022 can also serve as an indication of what other areas of Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation will be intensified in the very near future. Thus, the Ministry of Innovative Development of Uzbekistan signed a memorandum of cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and an executive program of scientific, technical and innovative cooperation for 2022-2023 with the State Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus also signed two significant documents: a memorandum of understanding with the State Committee for Veterinary Medicine and Livestock Development of Uzbekistan; a roadmap for further development of cooperation in agrarian science, education and innovation development for 2022-2023 with the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan, which, in turn, also signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus on further development of scientific-technical and innovation cooperation. Finally, an agreement on cooperation in the field of livestock breeding was signed by Belplemzhivobedinenie and the Uzbekchorvanasl agency.

Back in the fall of 2018, Belarus and Uzbekistan signed an intergovernmental agreement on socio-economic cooperation for 2019-2023, which "reflects the key agreements at the highest level on the development of Belarusian-Uzbek relations and bringing them to a qualitatively new level"<sup>69</sup>. As we can see, the tasks set in this document are being fulfilled by the parties very actively and successfully.

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<sup>69</sup> Zaleskii, B. Vector of post-Soviet integration. View from Belarus / B. Zalesky. - Palmarium Academic Publishing, 2019. - C. 228.

## Joint initiatives expose collaboration in innovative areas

In August 2022, Minsk hosted the ninth meeting of the joint intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan, where participants noted the importance of continuing systematic work for new promising joint initiatives in order to jointly achieve a multiple increase in the volume of mutual trade in the coming years. Recall that "in 2021, trade turnover between Belarus and Uzbekistan amounted to \$301.9 million and increased by 7.8% compared to 2020, exports - \$245.4 million (3.3% growth). The balance is positive - \$188.9 million"<sup>70</sup>. The main items of Belarusian exports in 2021 were meat and meat products, medicines, vinyl chloride polymers, milk powder, diagnostic reagents, vaccines, serum from blood, chipboard, cheese and cottage cheese. In the first half of 2022, the Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover exceeded \$190 million and increased by almost 40 percent. At the same time, the positive balance on the Belarusian side amounted to \$100.7 million. Now the parties see a real opportunity to achieve a mutual trade turnover of \$500 million. In this regard, Belarus is ready to increase supplies of food and agricultural goods, road-building, municipal and special equipment, dump trucks, woodworking products, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment.

As for industrial cooperation and the creation of joint productions, "a total of 103 organizations with Belarusian investments have already been registered in Uzbekistan, as well as representative offices of Avtopromsnabspedition LLC, Softclub LLC, AmantisMed LLC, Belvitunifarm LLC"<sup>71</sup>. In 2022, a good result of joint work can be considered the release of equipment based on the chassis of the Minsk Automobile Plant.

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<sup>70</sup> Golovchenko and Aripov discussed building up the trade turnover of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-i-aripov-obsudili-naraschivanie-tovarooborota-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-520574-2022/>

<sup>71</sup> Zaleskii, B. Result-oriented. Realization of opportunities of international economic relations / B. Zaleskii. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2022. - C. 23.

"If until recently only superstructures on ready-made machine kits were carried out, in April this year the first MAZ dump truck assembled in Uzbekistan was presented. There are all possibilities to ensure high localization of this production"<sup>72</sup>. Work is underway to resume production of Belarusian tractors in Uzbekistan. And "BELAZ is ready to supply Uzbekistan with completely new models of machinery for transportation of rock masses, which are both highly environmentally friendly and efficient"<sup>73</sup>. Belkommunmash is interested to take part in the development of Uzbek transport infrastructure and jointly implement initiatives to launch environmentally friendly passenger transport. Belarusian specialists are ready to offer a comprehensive solution for the creation of an efficient and safe system of public electric transportation: from the construction of the necessary infrastructure to the supply of the most modern models of vehicles. The implementation of such a project would be a truly landmark event in the development of Belarusian-Uzbek relations.

Indicators between the two countries have also increased in the field of agro-industrial complex. In the first six months of 2022, the turnover of agricultural products increased in both exports and imports. "Meat products, dairy products and baby food are exported to Uzbekistan. Imports are mainly represented by vegetable and melon products, grapes, dried fruits, nuts"<sup>74</sup>. For Uzbekistan's growing livestock industry, Belarus is ready to organize supplies of high-yield premixes with access to joint production of mixed fodder in this Central Asian country.

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<sup>72</sup> Agro-industrial complex, industrial cooperation, construction. Zayats on the plans of interaction with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/apk-promkooperatsija-stroitelstvo-zajats-o-planah-vzaimodejstvija-s-uzbekistanom-520299-2022/>

<sup>73</sup> Industrial cooperation, machinery supplies, woodworking. Belarus and Uzbekistan discussed mutual cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/promkooperatsija-postavki-tehniki-derevoobrabotka-belarus-i-uzbekistan-obsudili-vzaimnoe-520492-2022/>

<sup>74</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan discussed issues of further cooperation in the sphere of agro-industrial complex [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-obsudili-voprosy-dalnejshego-sotrudnichestva-v-sfere-apk-520545-2022/>

Speaking about Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector, Belarusian investors in Tashkent are successfully implementing a project to produce broad-spectrum antibiotics. Belarusian holding Belfarmprom and its colleagues in Uzbekistan are working out the possibility of establishing joint production facilities for the production of medical drugs in non-overlapping items. In the construction sector, the parties are interested in jointly designing Uzbekistan's infrastructure facilities, industrial buildings, healthcare facilities, including pharmaceutical industry. The Uzbek side is interested in Belarusian wooden house-building products. Given Uzbekistan's actively developing tourism sector and its need for environmentally friendly residential facilities, cooperation in this area is very promising.

Interesting Belarusian-Uzbek projects are also being implemented in the educational sphere. In particular, Baranavichy State University (BarSU) together with Samarkand State University and Jizzak State Pedagogical Institute are currently implementing "double degree" programs. It is assumed that students and master's students will be trained at BarSU and partner universities on the basis of Belarusian and foreign positive experience. "Recruitment is planned to be carried out in the specialties of "practical psychology", "preschool education", "psychology", "economics""<sup>75</sup>. And Brest State Technical University will cooperate with the Bukhara Institute of Engineering and Technology. In July 2022, the universities signed cooperation agreements to interact in organizing retraining and professional development of teachers from Bukhara in Brest. "We will start with this, further on we can cooperate on the first and second levels of higher

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<sup>75</sup> BarSU develops joint educational programs with Uzbek partners [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/bargu-razrabatyvaet-sovmestnye-obrazovatelnye-programmy-s-uzbekskimi-partnerami-520325-2022>

education"<sup>76</sup>. The institute in Bukhara is a major educational and scientific center in Uzbekistan. Education is conducted at eight faculties, higher education is received by more than 11 thousand students in 30 bachelor's degree directions.

In January 2023, Belarus and Uzbekistan celebrated 30 years of diplomatic relations. In recent years, the two countries have significantly intensified bilateral dialog at the regional level as well. Suffice it to say that as of April this year, the parties have already signed 15 interregional agreements. "Delegations from the regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan regularly exchange visits. The practice of developing roadmaps for the implementation of interregional agreements has proved effective"<sup>77</sup>. Among the active participants of this interregional interaction are such oblasts as Vitebsk and Kashkadarya, Gomel and Fergana.

In particular, in October 2022, Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee signed a cooperation agreement with the khokimiyat of Kashkadarya region. This document promotes the building up of mutually beneficial "trade and economic ties between enterprises and organizations of the regions. In addition, it will define ways to develop cooperation in scientific and technical, tourist, cultural, sports and health care areas"<sup>78</sup>. In the same October 2022, several important documents were also signed, developing the interaction between the individual participants of this interregional partnership: two agreements and two memorandums of cooperation. As for the agreements, these are the interaction between the Eufrosinia Polotskaya

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<sup>76</sup> BrSTU will cooperate with the Bukhara Institute of Engineering and Technology [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/brgtu-budet-sotrudnichat-s-buharskim-inzhenerno-tehnologicheskim-institutom-514381-2022/>

<sup>77</sup> C. Rachkov: Belarus considers Uzbekistan as an important partner in Central Asia [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://sovrep.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/srachkov-belarus-rassmatrivaet-uzbekistan-kak-vazhnogo-partnera-v-tsentralnoj-azii-22630-2023/>

<sup>78</sup> Delegation of Vitebsk region in Uzbekistan will sign an agreement with the khokimiyat of Kashkadarya region [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/delegatsija-vitebskoj-oblasti-v-uzbekistane-podpishet-soglashenie-s-hokimijatom-kashkadarjinskoj-527596-2022/>



Polotsk State University and the Karshi Institute of Engineering and Economics, as well as between the P.M. Masherov Vitebsk State University and the Karshi State University. Memorandums were adopted between the free economic zones of the two regions, the concern "Meat and Dairy Products" and the enterprise for supply and processing of dairy products. In addition, the parties signed contracts worth about three million dollars. It's about food and woodworking products, as well as the supply of electrical equipment for the oil industry and measuring devices. And "Vitebsk region has been working out the issue of supplying its products to the Uzbek market. The Kashkadarya region was very interested in meat and dairy products, electrical appliances, cable products in terms of sharing the experience of enterprises in production within this country"<sup>79</sup>.

At the same time, the Belarusian and Uzbek regions planned to cooperate in other areas as well. For example, back in 2021, in the territory of the free economic zone of Kashkadarya region, the Vitsebsk holding Marko established an enterprise where more than two hundred employees sew shoes. Now Uzbek partners are interested in new competencies - in light industry, dairy farms, milk processing enterprises. In May 2023, at the XI International Economic Forum "Innovations. Investments. Prospects", held in Vitebsk, the parties proposed a number of other new areas of cooperation, including the linen industry. "Vitebsk region is ready to assist in providing varieties that can be grown under the conditions of Uzbekistan. This proposal is being prepared by specialists of RUE "Flax Institute". In addition, options for cooperation in woodworking are being actively worked out, in particular for the manufacture of individual wooden houses, furniture, including for

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<sup>79</sup> Enterprises of Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions signed contracts for \$3 million [Electronic resource]. - 2022. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/predpriyatija-vitebskoj-i-kashkadarjinskoj-oblastej-podpisali-kontrakty-na-3-mln-529745-2022/>

educational institutions of Kashkadarya region"<sup>80</sup>. There are also initiatives in the pharmaceutical industry. For better development of contacts in economic, tourism and other spheres, the parties plan to organize joint information tours. Thus, joint activities of Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions already create favorable prerequisites for both sides for the implementation of projects that in the future can strengthen new points of contact in mutual cooperation.

As for Gomel region, which is also actively developing cooperation with Uzbek partners, we note that its trade turnover with Uzbekistan has more than tripled over the past three years and amounted to 33 million dollars. And according to the results of 2022 Gomel exports increased almost one and a half times. "The main export positions of Gomel enterprises are paper, cardboard, wallpaper, chipboard boards, wood pulp, cattle meat, timber, paint, polyethylene products, wire, chemical threads, dairy products, agricultural machinery, furniture..."<sup>81</sup>. Among the regions of Uzbekistan interested in joint projects with Gomel partners is Fergana region, which intends to develop cooperation with the Belarusian region in the production of agricultural machinery, woodworking, chemical industry, and tourism. In February 2023, Gomel Oblast Executive Committee and Fergana Oblast Hokimiyat signed a roadmap for 2023, which includes various directions. And there are already concrete developments. In the near future, "it is expected to open a company store in Fergana region, where woodworking products of the Belarusian region will be sold. Some of them will be sent for

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<sup>80</sup> Vitebsk and Kashkadarya regions plan to organize infotours to intensify cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/vitebskaja-i-kashkadarjinskaja-oblasti-planirujut-organizovat-infotury-dlja-aktivizatsii-567511-2023/>

<sup>81</sup> Trade turnover of Gomel region with Uzbekistan has increased more than three times in the last three years [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/tovarooborot-gomelskoj-oblasti-s-uzbekistanom-vyros-bolee-chem-v-tri-raz-za-poslednie-tri-goda-549254-2023/>

re-export to the neighboring countries of Uzbekistan"<sup>82</sup> . And in Homel the idea to open a trading house for selling fruits, dried fruits and vegetables from Uzbekistan is being worked out. In addition, Fergana entrepreneurs are interested in joint production of chemical and pulp and paper products with Gomel companies. To all appearances, the roadmap of the two regions - Belarusian and Uzbek - will soon be filled in other areas as well.

Another interesting aspect of the interaction between Belarus and Uzbekistan is the development of Belarusian exports in the Uzbek market using exhibition specifics. Especially since there will be several such projects in 2023. In March 2023, Tashkent already hosted the 22nd international exhibition "Foodstuffs, Ingredients and Production Technologies - UzFood", where Belarus presented a large-scale exposition - The Taste of Nature - with the participation of more than 20 food producers. Concern Belgospishcheprom presented the products of confectionery factories Kommunarka, Spartak, and Krasny Izhevsk, which familiarized the guests of the Belarusian pavilion with the best products and production novelties - new types of confectionery products, chocolate and chocolate candies, wafers, cookies, chewy and jelly marmalade.

Meat processing enterprises and dairy producers, which are part of the Grodnoiasomolprom holding and the Brestmyasomolprom concern, were also well represented at the exhibition. These are Brest, Pinsk, Slonim, Volkovysk, Grodno and Oshmian meat processing plants, which offered high-quality beef in various versions, sausages, meat semi-finished products. In particular, the Grodno meat processing plant demonstrated new products, which brought to Uzbekistan raw smoked sausages "Vostochnaya" and "Kavkazskaya", boiled-smoked salami "Favorit" with olives, as well as with cheese.

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<sup>82</sup> From combine-building to tourism: Gomel and Fergana regions intend to develop cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/ot-kombajnostroenija-do-turizma-gomelskaja-i-ferganskaja-oblasti-namereny-razvivat-sotrudnichestvo-549242-2023/>

The dairy segment was represented by Kobrin Butter and Cheese Factory, Minsk Margarine Plant, Luninets Dairy Plant, Lida Dairy Canning Plant, Molochny Mir, Molochny Gostinets and Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1. "Belarusian producers demonstrate a wide range of whole-milk products - milk, cream, kefir, cheese, cottage cheese, creams, yogurts"<sup>83</sup>. Oil and fat products and rapeseed oil could also be seen at the exhibition. Bread and bakery products were presented by Berestiisky Baker OJSC, and Bellact Company showed products for baby food. In addition, the products of such enterprises as Maloritsky Canning and Vegetable Washing Plant OJSC and Lidskie Food Concentrates OJSC were demonstrated.

Within the framework of the exhibition, an Uzbek-Belarusian business forum was held, which was attended by more than 50 heads and representatives of government agencies and business circles of the two countries, where cooperation in the field of agriculture and food was discussed, the food potential of Belarus was outlined, and the export potential of Brest and Grodno regions was presented. In addition, the business circles of the two countries held B2B negotiations, which took place separately and at the stands of Belarusian enterprises. As for the specific results of the exhibition, "Grodno Meat Processing Plant signed a contract for the supply of meat products worth \$500 thousand, and Minsk Margarine Plant - for the supply of its products worth 10 million Russian rubles. During the exhibition Minsk Dairy Plant No. 1 held negotiations on increasing sales volumes to its key partners in Uzbekistan, in particular, on the supply of butter and skim milk powder, and also signed a contract for the supply of dairy products"<sup>84</sup>. Bellact discussed opportunities to increase sales of

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<sup>83</sup> Belarus presented its exposition at the exhibition of food industry in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/belarus-predstavila-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-pischevoj-promyshlennosti-v-tashkente-557927-2023/>

<sup>84</sup> Belarusian enterprises intend to increase supplies to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskie-predpriyatija-namereny-narastit-postavki-v-uzbekistan-559267-2023/>

products, increase supplies of dried baby food and agreed to supply curd desserts and milk powder, including lactose-free milk, to this Central Asian country, while Molochniy Mir signed an agreement to supply almost two and a half thousand tons of whey powder and more than a thousand tons of milk powder.

Bobruiskagromash Holding is also one of the Belarusian companies that are actively interested in promoting their export products in the Uzbek market. In March 2023, within the framework of the international exhibition "Agriculture - AgroWorld Uzbekistan-2023", specialists of the Belarusian company held negotiations with key Uzbek partners - Metal processing, Planeta Servis and MCHJ Buxoro Agro Texnika Garant, "with whom further volumes of machinery deliveries were agreed, as well as technical design of machines to adapt them to the requirements of the Uzbek market. In addition, during the negotiations the representative of the holding familiarized the partners with the novelties of Bobruiskagromash machinery: cotton cultivator, seeders and heavy-duty trailers"<sup>85</sup>. Partners from Uzbekistan confirmed their interest in annual deliveries of agricultural machinery from Bobruisk. For reference, since 2022, machines for applying solid organic fertilizers and rotary mower-shredders have already been working in Uzbek fields.

In April 2023, Tashkent hosted the international industrial exhibition "Innoprom. Central Asia", which covered six thematic sections: mechanical engineering, metallurgy and materials, energy solutions, chemical industry technologies, information and telecommunications technologies, and infrastructure development. The exhibition featured an extensive Belarusian exposition Made in Belarus, which demonstrated the best industrial developments and innovative equipment of the country's engineering

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<sup>85</sup> Uzbekistan is interested in supplies of agricultural machinery "Bobruiskagromash" [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/uzbekistan-zainteresovan-v-postavkah-selskohoziyajstvennoj-tehniki-bobrujskagromasha-556555-2023/>

industry flagships. "7 major enterprises expressed their interest in participation <...>: Belarusian Metallurgical Plant, BELAZ, Minsk Tractor Plant, BATE, Scientific and Technological Park BNTU "Polytechnik", "Gomselmash", "StankoGomel"<sup>86</sup>.

Another important reserve of Belarusian-Uzbek economic relations is the intensification of partnerships between free economic zones (FEZs) of Belarus and Uzbekistan, whose residents can build cooperation in various areas. In March 2023, within the framework of the Third Congress of Free Economic Zones held in Gomel, constructive negotiations took place between the administrations of FEZ Gomel-Raton and Navoi, where they discussed the potential for mutually beneficial partnership. In particular, "the first direction is to sell in Uzbekistan the demanded types of products of FEZ "Gomel-Raton" residents. Uzbekistan is quite an interesting market. It has 36 million population. <...> There are a lot of foreign investments, infrastructure projects"<sup>87</sup>. Among the most demanded products of Gomel manufacturers the Uzbek side names such topical positions as industrial, boiler, heating, ventilation, cooling equipment, as well as energy-saving and energy-efficient technologies. In short, the Uzbek market is an important area for Belarusian exports in Central Asia. And this is just the beginning.

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<sup>86</sup> Belarus will present an exposition at the exhibition "Innoprom. Central Asia" in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavit-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-innoprom-tsentralnaja-azija-v-tashkente-557617-2023/>

<sup>87</sup> Industrial cooperation and access to new markets. Director General of FEZ "Navoi" about the partnership between Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/promkooperatsija-i-vyhod-na-novye-rynki-gendirektor-sez-navoi-o-partnerstve-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-557030-2023/>

## Growth points - industry, agriculture, healthcare, regions

In December 2023, Samarkand hosted the 10th meeting of the joint Belarusian-Uzbek intergovernmental commission (IGC) on bilateral cooperation, during which the parties discussed the state and prospects of trade and economic interaction, paying special attention to the spheres of industry, agriculture, and healthcare in order to fill the economic component of the partnership between Belarus and Uzbekistan with new practical content and ensure timely implementation of investment projects and trade contracts. It should be noted that the bilateral trade between Minsk and Tashkent today shows good dynamics. "In the first 10 months of this [2023] year, mutual trade turnover has increased by more than 20% and has already exceeded \$500 million"<sup>88</sup>. Nevertheless, it was noted at the IGC meeting that the parties still have significant untapped potential to multiply trade volumes by expanding mutual supplies of products in demand in the markets of the two countries.

Let's take the development of **industrial cooperation**. Since 2019, the number of enterprises from Belarus has quadrupled in Uzbekistan. And today, "there are 186 enterprises with Belarusian capital operating in the country, but there are all prerequisites for increasing this figure"<sup>89</sup>. Suffice it to say that in the first seven months of 2023, 33 enterprises from Belarus were established in the Central Asian republic. And in our country a total of 84 organizations with Uzbek capital have been established. In addition, Uzbekistan has already "opened representation of companies in the field of international transportation, software development, production of medicines

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<sup>88</sup> Aripov: Uzbek-Belarusian cooperation has reached a new level [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aripov-uzbeksko-belorusskoe-sotrudnichestvo-vyshlo-na-novyj-uroven-603582-2023/>

<sup>89</sup> Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan: we are interested in increasing the number of joint ventures [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predsdatel-tpp-uzbekistana-my-zainteresovany-v-uvelichenii-kolichestva-sovmestnyh-predpriyatij-603524-2023/>

and veterinary drugs. In 2022, a joint venture for the production of dairy products was opened in Tashkent<sup>90</sup>.

In this regard, the participants of the 10th IGC meeting proposed to further strengthen the substantive part of the draft joint roadmap for the development of bilateral cooperation for 2024-2025 in order to move to mutual investment and establishment of joint production facilities. And in this regard, the Belarusian side is already implementing projects on the assembly of special machinery, production of agricultural machinery for soil and cotton cultivation. In 2023, "the first Belarusian-Uzbek enterprise for the production of dry milk mixtures was launched, which will sell products made on the basis of Belarusian raw materials both to producers and processors in Uzbekistan and supply them to neighboring countries. In the city of Karshi there is a joint venture with the Belarusian manufacturer Marko for the production of footwear"<sup>91</sup>. There are also significant prospects for organizing production on Uzbek soil of Belarus tractors, diesel-generator and compressor units, medicines, woodworking and furniture production.

In general, Belarus has a lot to offer its Uzbek partners: machine-building products, food products, services, and the latest scientific and technical developments. Suffice it to say that exports of enterprises of the Belarusian Ministry of Industry to this Central Asian country almost doubled in the first three quarters of 2023, "trade turnover increased by more than 90% <...> over this period. Exports to Uzbekistan were based on the supply of tractors, refrigerators and freezers, automotive equipment, metal products, engines, hardware products, electrical transformers, as well as mowers,

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<sup>90</sup> Chervjakov: among our partner countries Uzbekistan is in the top ten in terms of trade turnover [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-sredi-nashih-stran-partnerov-uzbekistan-vhodit-v-desjatku-po-objemu-tovarooborota-586551-2023/>

<sup>91</sup> Golovchenko: Uzbekistan for us is one of the main trade partners in the region of Central Asia and the CIS [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/golovchenko-uzbekistan-dlja-nas-javljaetsja-odnim-iz-osnovnyh-torgovyh-partnerov-v-regione-tsentralnoj-603540-2023/>



starters, potato diggers, oil pumps..."<sup>92</sup> . In particular, JSC "Managing Company of Bobruiskagromash Holding" is planning to increase the volume of supplies of agricultural machinery to Uzbekistan in the near future, because "in Central Asian republics the most demanded models of agricultural machinery are tractor trailers for cotton transportation, tillage equipment, machines for organic fertilizers application and forage harvesting equipment"<sup>93</sup> . In addition to tractors, cooperation between the two countries in the field of industry will expand significantly, as "cooperation on cargo and passenger equipment, household appliances, elevator equipment is being discussed and developed quite extensively"<sup>94</sup> . Another example: the enterprises of the concern "Bellesbumprom", which are very familiar to the Uzbek market. In the first nine months of 2023, "exports of woodworking products, including furniture and pulp, increased by almost 24% compared to January-September last year <...>. Now the concern is working on the creation of a subject of commodity distribution network in Uzbekistan, which will open new opportunities for supplies to this country"<sup>95</sup> .

All these facts show that Belarus and Uzbekistan are successfully promoting the formation of a well-developed structure of cooperative ties in order to fully utilize the available production, scientific, technical, and innovation potential to fulfill the urgent and ambitious task of increasing trade turnover to one billion dollars. For more systematic work in general,

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<sup>92</sup> Ministry of Industry: export of our products to Uzbekistan in January-September doubled [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/minprom-eksport-nashej-produktsii-v-uzbekistan-za-janvar-sentjabr-vyros-vdvoe-603475-2023/>

<sup>93</sup> "Bobruiskagromash" plans to increase the supply of agricultural machinery to Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/bobrujskagromash-planiruet-narastit-postavki-selhoztehniki-v-uzbekistan-582084-2023/>

<sup>94</sup> Tractors, elevators, cargo equipment. How Belarus and Uzbekistan will cooperate in industry [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/traktory-lifty-gruzovaja-tehnika-kak-belarus-i-uzbekistan-budut-sotrudnicvat-v-promyshlennosti-596490-2023/>

<sup>95</sup> Export of enterprises "Bellesbumprom" to Uzbekistan for 9 months increased by almost a quarter [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/eksport-predprijatij-bellesbumproma-v-uzbekistan-za-9-mesjatsev-vyros-pochti-na-chetvert-603583-2023/>

the Belarusian side proposed to develop a program of bilateral economic cooperation within the framework of the 10th IGC meeting, while in certain sectors of the economy - to expand the formats of interaction to find new areas of partnership and pay attention to the functioning of sectoral working groups. For reference, we would like to remind that "meetings of the working group in the field of agriculture, as well as the mixed commission in the field of transport are held on a regular basis. It is advisable to organize the work of groups in the field of industry, medicine and pharmaceuticals, construction, light industry, woodworking, forestry and water management, which will be the working bodies of the intergovernmental commission"<sup>96</sup> . In addition, other new formats of interaction are being successfully implemented.

Among them is the **Women's Business Forum**, which was held for the first time in Minsk in September 2023 and brought together participants from the two countries in various areas: light and heavy industry, science and education, and machine building. Let us say at once that by the end of the plenary session, the participants of this meeting signed "14 memorandums and agreements on cooperation, including an agreement on the establishment of a joint leather and footwear production. 15 contracts worth Br93.5 million, or 350 billion Uzbek soums"<sup>97</sup> . In particular, light industry enterprises of Belarus and Uzbekistan have signed contracts worth more than two and a half million dollars. Thus, an agreement on the intention to create a joint venture for dressing sheepskin-fur, karakulevo-fur, fur-fur raw materials was signed between Furskins Company and "Marko". "Agreements on cooperation between "Uztekstilprom" association and design center of

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<sup>96</sup> Leonid Zayats on the results of the meeting in Samarkand: The decisions taken will contribute to the strengthening of bilateral ties [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/content/10747>

<sup>97</sup> During the First Belarusian-Uzbek Women's Business Forum contracts for Br93.5 million were concluded [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/vo-vremja-pervogo-belorussko-uzbekskogo-zhenskogo-biznes-foruma-zakljucheno-kontraktov-na-br935-mln-586641-2023/>

"Kamvol" OJSC have been reached. A memorandum of intentions was signed for the purchase of worsted fabrics for school assortment of Charog'on Tekstil LLC. A contract for the supply of denim clothing was also signed between Kalinka CJSC and Chichiq Mega Bizness LLC" .<sup>98</sup>

It should be noted that Bellegprom Concern's enterprises have been successfully cooperating with Uzbek partners since 2018. Holding "Marko" is working within the framework of a joint venture to re-stitch shoes. About 250 thousand pairs have already been produced, but this is not the limit. The goal is to increase the output to millions of pairs of shoes. "And since sheepskin is in demand in Belarus for making linings and insoles for winter shoes, but we [in Belarus] do not have this type of raw material, it is very important to enter into industrial cooperation in order to motivate both sides in terms of quality, technical component and business"<sup>99</sup>. Another example: "Milavitsa has been working on lingerie alterations with a company in Tashkent since January 2023. And in Smorgon, together with the Uzbek side, a business project is being implemented to create a vertically integrated complex for the production of cotton yarn and cotton yarn products. "This is the first enterprise that will make a finished product in Belarus from raw materials obtained in Uzbekistan"<sup>100</sup>.

Within the framework of the section "Expanding Industrial Cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan" of the Women's Business Forum, the Belarusian side presented opportunities for expanding industrial cooperation. In particular, "metropolitan enterprises [in Minsk] are interested

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<sup>98</sup> The enterprises of light industry of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed contracts for more than \$2.5 million [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/predpriyatija-legproma-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-kontrakty-bolee-chem-na-25-mln-586396-2023/>

<sup>99</sup> Lugina told about the prospects of cooperation between enterprises "Bellegprom" and companies from Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/lugina-rasskazala-o-perspektivah-sotrudnichestva-predpriyatij-belleproma-i-kompanij-iz-uzbekistana-586553-2023/>

<sup>100</sup> Belarus and Uzbekistan realize joint projects in the field of pharmaceuticals and light industry [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-i-uzbekistan-realizujut-sovmestnye-proekty-v-oblasti-farmatsevtiki-i-legproma-592648-2023/>

in finding new partners to sell their products in the market of the region [Uzbekistan]"<sup>101</sup> . And they are already effectively cooperating with their Uzbek colleagues. For example, Minsk Automobile Plant acts on the market of this Central Asian country as an independent exporter on the basis of the existing joint production. In particular, in September 2023, "Minsk Automobile Plant and FE LLC "MAZ-TASHKENT" signed a contract for the supply of MAZ machinery worth \$1 million"<sup>102</sup> and agreed to expand cooperation ties. As for Minsk Tractor Plant, it will supply about 500 BELARUS machines to Uzbek TEXAGRO-KLASTER LLC. "The amount of the deal exceeds \$8 million"<sup>103</sup> .

As for pharmaceuticals, it was noted at the Women's Business Forum that the Belarusian side is building an enterprise on Uzbek soil to produce probiotics, which are not produced in this country at all. In fact, "imports of medicines in Uzbekistan account for about \$1.5bn. Belarus is ready to supply its pharmaceutical products, as well as to propose to the health authorities of our countries to work out the possibility of creating production facilities in Uzbekistan for bulk medicines, antibiotics, antitumor drugs..."<sup>104</sup> . So, let us hope that this forum has indeed established useful contacts and made it possible to create additional conditions for attracting investment resources to the promising projects that were worked out at this Belarusian-Uzbek meeting.

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<sup>101</sup> Lazarevich: capital enterprises effectively interact with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/lazarevich-stolichnye-predpriyatija-effektivno-vzaimodejstvujut-s-uzbekistanom-586603-2023/>

<sup>102</sup> MAZ signed a contract on delivery of machinery to Uzbekistan for \$1 mln [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/maz-zakljuchil-dogovor-na-postavku-tehniki-v-uzbekistan-na-1-mln-586570-2023/>

<sup>103</sup> MTZ will supply about 500 tractors to Uzbekistan for more than \$8 mln [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/mtz-postavit-okolo-500-tractorov-v-uzbekistan-na-bolee-chem-8-mln-586567-2023/>

<sup>104</sup> Cherviakov: Belarus and Uzbekistan have created an impressive reserve for further development of cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/chervjakov-belarus-i-uzbekistan-sozdali-vnushitelnyj-zadel-na-dalnejshce-razvitie-sotrudnichestva-586639-2023>

And in November 2023, a three-day **medical forum** "Days of Health Care and Medical Education "Uzbekistan - Belarus" was held in Minsk, which touched upon almost all spheres of medical activity: high technologies, problems of primary care, personnel training, the work of the pharmaceutical industry, and the production of medical equipment. During these days, almost 120 agreements were signed, as well as a "road map, in which, according to all the principles of the target planning program, tasks, deadlines, resources and responsible executor will be defined"<sup>105</sup> . The day before, Belarusian cardiac surgeons, oncologists, and pediatric surgeons as part of medical teams traveled to Uzbekistan, where they "performed more than 100 operations and provided more than 250 consultations in various regions of the country"<sup>106</sup> . And the Minsk Scientific and Practical Center (MSPC) of Surgery, Transplantology and Hematology has already hosted about 30 specialists from various hospitals in Uzbekistan, and also proposed an initiative to organize a Minsk center in Tashkent. And we also note that "46 patients from Uzbekistan have received high-tech medical care in MNPC of surgery, transplantology and hematology. Including 3 liver transplants and 10 kidney transplants. The potential for further joint work in this area is quite large"<sup>107</sup> .

A separate topic of the medical forum is the training of medical personnel. Today, Belarus and Uzbekistan see prospects for intensifying bilateral cooperation in such key areas as cardiology, oncology, transplantation, pediatric surgery, maternal and child health care, as well as

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<sup>105</sup> Ministers of Health of Belarus and Uzbekistan signed agreements on cooperation [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ministry-zdravoohraneniya-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-podpisali-dogovory-o-sotrudnichestve-602477-2023/>

<sup>106</sup> Minister of Health of Uzbekistan: Belarusian specialists performed more than 100 operations in Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/ministr-zdravoohraneniya-uzbekistana-belorusskie-spetsialisty-proveli-v-uzbekistane-bolee-60-operatsij-602505-2023/>

<sup>107</sup> Petrishenko: the most important task is to do everything to improve the well-being of the peoples of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/petrishenko-vazhnejshaja-zadacha-sdelat-vse-dlja-povysheniya-blagopoluchija-narodov-belarusi-i-602449-2023/>

in the pharmaceutical industry and supplies of medical devices. From January 2024, by agreement of the parties, joint educational programs of network training will be organized in eight specialties of higher education and all areas of sub-specialties of clinical residency, and it is planned to introduce a system of training 150 sub-specialists under the internship program. And one more thing: for the first time since January this year training of nurses in six directions of the joint educational program according to international standards will begin. The fact is that Uzbekistan's healthcare sector pays special attention to the training of nurses. And they are well aware of the Belarusian experience in this subject. After all, 74 medical colleges are already functioning in Belarus and about 100 thousand nurses are trained in seven directions. In particular, the Vitebsk State Medical University (VSMU) and the college, which plan to accept students, interns and doctors from this Central Asian country, will help the Uzbek partners in this matter. "So far, VSMU has no more than a dozen students from Uzbekistan, who come to Vitebsk on their own and enroll in specialties that are attractive to them"<sup>108</sup>. But the first steps have already been made on cooperation of VSMU, for example, with Samarkand State Medical University and Bukhara State Medical Institute. And within the framework of the Medical Forum, four more agreements between VSMU and Uzbek universities were signed.

A new form of interaction between Belarus and Uzbekistan in the field of education was the **Forum of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions**, which met for the first time in October 2023 in Minsk - at the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics. This structure brought together "more than 30 heads of Belarusian and Uzbek universities, who actively engaged in a dialog, discussing topical issues of development of

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<sup>108</sup> Pushnyakova, A. In what Uzbek universities and colleges see cooperation with VSMU / A. Pushnyakova // [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-chem-uzbekskie-vuzy-i-kolledzhi-vidjat-sotrudnichestvo-s-vgmu-602248-2023/>

higher education systems of the two countries"<sup>109</sup> and signed a road map of cooperation, where, taking into account the trends in the educational market of Uzbekistan, a number of Belarusian universities will work out the issue of opening branches or joint faculties. Among the leaders in this context is the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU), which currently implements 75 joint educational programs with partner universities from Uzbekistan. One of the brightest examples of cooperation is the interaction between BNTU and Tashkent State Technical Transport University. "We are talking about the first joint educational program "2+2". From 2019 to 2023, similar programs have also been prepared and created with Islam Karimov Tashkent State Technical University, Karshi Engineering and Economic Institute, Tashkent Architecture and Construction University, Samarkand State Architecture and Construction University"<sup>110</sup>. The idea of the program is that Uzbek students spend the first two years of their studies at home and the next two at BNTU, so that graduates receive two diplomas at once - in Uzbekistan and in Belarus. And so in June 2023, the first graduation of diploma holders of the "2+2" program took place.

And another interesting format of cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan was mentioned within the framework of the 10th IGC meeting - it is the **Forum of Regions**, which should be given importance and "is planned to be held in Belarus"<sup>111</sup>. Recall that the First Forum of Regions of the two countries was already held in Minsk in 2019. As of April 2023, "the parties have already signed 15 interregional agreements. <...> The practice

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<sup>109</sup> The roadmap for cooperation signed by the heads of the Councils of Rectors of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/dorozhnyu-kartu-sotrudnichestva-podpisali-rukovoditeli-sovetov-rektorov-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-595530-2023/>

<sup>110</sup> BNTU awarded diplomas to the first graduates of joint educational programs of Belarus and Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-bntu-vruchili-diplomy-pervym-vypuschnikam-sovmestnyh-obrazovatelnyh-programm-belarusi-i-uzbekistana-574797-2023/>

<sup>111</sup> Aripov: Uzbek-Belarusian cooperation has reached a new level [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/aripov-uzbekske-belorusskoe-sotrudnichestvo-vyshlo-na-novyy-uroven-603582-2023/>

of developing roadmaps for the implementation of interregional agreements has proved effective"<sup>112</sup> . For this reason, it is necessary to continue to find partners for long-term cooperation in the regions.

**Fergana Oblast** and the **Bellesbumprom Concern** provide an interesting example in this regard. **The** fact is that Belarusian-Uzbek cooperation in the furniture, woodworking, and pulp and paper industries is now actively developing. "The result of work with Uzbek colleagues was the opening of the furniture house "Belarus" in Fergana. Now the products of three domestic factories are presented here - OFO "FanDOC", Yelsk furniture factory (a branch of OJSC "Mozyr DOK") and RUE "Newsprint Plant" (a branch of house building)"<sup>113</sup> . The parties plan to expand the assortment, as well as increase the number of Belarusian brands represented in the house of furniture. Another interesting idea is to create a showroom in the under-construction residential complex "Eco City" in Fergana, where products from Belarus, which are in demand in construction and arrangement of residential premises, will be presented: thermo-insulating panels, wallpapers, interior doors, furniture. And in the sanatorium-resort zone in Buvaydinsky district of Fergana region, supplies of wooden houses, saunas, and gazebos produced by the house-building branch of the Newsprint Plant RUE have been agreed upon.

**Hrodna Region**, which has agreements with three Uzbek regions, is among the active participants in interregional cooperation between Belarus and Uzbekistan. And now this Central Asian country ranks third in Hrodna's trade turnover with foreign countries. At the same time, a significant growth of mutual trade was registered in 2022 - 1.7 times. In 2023, the trade turnover

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<sup>112</sup> Zalessky, B. With a focus on results. Perspectives of an integrated approach to new partnership opportunities / Boris Zalessky. - LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2023. - C. 16.

<sup>113</sup> New showrooms and furniture supplies. "Bellesbumprom" on the development of cooperation with Uzbekistan [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novye-shourumy-i-postavki-mebeli-bellesbumprom-o-razviti-i-sotrudnichestva-s-uzbekistanom-561977-2023/>



increased by another 11 percent. "Grodno region supplies Uzbekistan with foodstuffs, woodworking products, petrochemicals, buys foodstuffs, yarn, fabrics, textiles in Uzbekistan, which is very much in demand by local light industry enterprises"<sup>114</sup>. Cooperation is also developing in the educational sphere: in 2023, 160 Uzbek students received higher education at Hrodna universities. And the parties have already outlined prospects for further development, including in the field of investment on the basis of the Grodnoinvest free economic zone.

Finally, let us consider another important tool for increasing Belarusian-Uzbek trade and economic interaction - **sectoral exhibitions**. In 2024, Belarus intends to participate in many international exhibition events in Uzbekistan, where major industry forums in agriculture, food, machinery and technologies for agro-industrial complex, industrial technologies, food and light industry, and scientific and technical achievements will be held. In particular, in March this year the Belarusian exposition will be organized in Tashkent at the 23rd international exhibition UzFood, in April - at the industrial forum Innoprom. Central Asia", in October - at the 8th textile exhibition UzTextileExpo Autumn, and in November - at the 18th food forum UzProdExpo/UzAgroExpo. Traditionally, Belarusian participants in these business events always attract great interest of visitors not only from Uzbekistan, but also from other Central Asian countries.

For example, in April 2023, at the forum "Innoprom. Central Asia", where about 300 companies took part, Belarus was represented by "leading enterprises from various industrial sectors and scientific and educational institutions, each of which presents its unique products and technologies at the exhibition, demonstrating the potential and opportunities for cooperation and promotion of manufactured products, scientific and technical

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<sup>114</sup> Trade turnover of Grodno region with Uzbekistan in 2023 increased by 11% [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/tovarooborot-grodnenskoj-oblasti-s-uzbekistanom-v-2023-godu-uvelichilsja-na-11-594414-2023/>

developments and services"<sup>115</sup> . Thus, BELAZ OJSC, the managing company of BELAZ-HOLDING, presented its promising development directions at the exhibition. In particular, the BELAZ-7558H dump truck with a payload capacity of 90 tons. Minsk Tractor Plant, among other things, demonstrated a specialized tractor BELARUS-80X, designed to meet the peculiarities of agricultural crops cultivation. And OJSC BMZ - the managing company of BMK Holding showed hot-rolled metal products for automotive and other industries. The stand of the Ministry of Education of Belarus presented more than 50 scientific and technical developments of six universities and organizations of the department, including new technologies and software complexes intended for use in industrial and scientific developments, as well as technologies, equipment and materials for the chemical and oil refining industry, machine building, and foundry production.

Also in April 2023, the International Exhibition "Healthcare / TIHE 2023" was held in Tashkent, where more than 250 companies from 13 countries participated and where a wide range of materials and technologies for laboratory and functional diagnostics, therapy and surgery, rehabilitation equipment, means of automation of medicine, equipment of medical institutions were presented. The visitors were also familiarized with the presented therapeutic and health-improving preparations, orthopedic means meeting all modern demands of the industry. Our country was represented at this exhibition forum by the Belarusian Prosthetic and Orthopedic Rehabilitation Center, which showed "technical rehabilitation equipment of its own production: products for children (with cerebral palsy, with dysplasia) and women after mastectomy (bodices, swimsuits), active

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<sup>115</sup> Belarus presents its exposition at the exhibition "Innoprom. Central Asia" in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavljaet-ekspozitsiju-na-vystavke-innoprom-tsentralnaja-azija-v-tashkente-563204-2023/>

wheelchair, orthopedic insoles, table for mechanotherapy and other, in total - more than 20 items"<sup>116</sup> .

Belarus is also a traditional participant of the UzTextileExpo Autumn international exhibition, which was held for the 7th time in October 2023 in the Uzbek capital and where 183 companies from eight countries, including China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan participated. "The Belarusian exposition this time was represented by major petrochemical exporters, including companies such as Naftan, Mogilevkhimvolokno and Svetlogorskhhimvolokno. The companies brought with them a rich assortment of products in demand among Uzbek and regional consumers"<sup>117</sup> . "Naftan" introduced visitors to acrylic fibers of its own production - a durable material widely used in the textile industry. "Mogilevkhimvolokno" presented polyester fiber for fabrics, insulation, syntepon, nonwoven fabrics. Polyethylene terephthalate, a high-strength plastic used in the production of containers, was also among the presented products of the enterprise. "Svetlogorskhhimvolokno" demonstrated nonwoven materials of high strength, polyester textile yarns, knitted fabrics in various designs - dyed, with lacquer effect, bleached, tufted, embossed and many others.

Finally, in November 2023, the Belarusian exposition Belarus - the Taste of Nature was presented at the leading agricultural and food exhibitions UzProdExpo/UzAgroExpo, where "more than 120 companies from Uzbekistan, Austria, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Iran, Italy, Kazakhstan, Cyprus, China, Kyrgyzstan, Netherlands, South Korea, Russia,

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<sup>116</sup> Belarusian technical means of rehabilitation will be presented at the exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/beloruskie-tehnicheskie-sredstva-reabilitatsii-predstavjat-na-vystavke-v-tashkente-560954-2023>

<sup>117</sup> Belarusian exposition is presented at the textile exhibition in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/beloruskaja-ekspozitsija-predstavlena-na-tekstilnoj-vystavke-v-tashkente-594563-2023/>

USA, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Czech Republic..."<sup>118</sup> . In particular, the Belarusian enterprise - Postavy Dairy Plant - presented its well-known products, including Cheddar Red, Parmesan Grand and Maasdam cheeses, which have already become a kind of classic. These products arouse the greatest interest among potential partners from Uzbekistan. Another Belarusian participant, Bretta, took part in the exhibition for the first time and expected successful contacts and fruitful results. The company showed a range of dry dairy products produced by the Luninets Dairy Plant, where among the products stood out milk powder under the brand name "Molochnaya Kapelka", which is made from skimmed pasteurized milk. This product can be used for preparation of non-caloric yogurts, ice cream, shakes, infant formulae. As for Slutsk Cheese Factory, it demonstrated in Tashkent an expanded line of its lactose-free products, including a novelty - lactose-free sweet cream butter "#Mozhno" and milk "#Mozhno A2". In addition, the assortment included glazed cheese, cottage cheese, milk with extended shelf life, sweet cream butter, chocolate butter, processed cheese. Finally, the Gomel meat processing plant brought to the Uzbek market products meeting halal standards, which included "Beef" sausage, raw smoked beef product "Santorini Prestige", poultry chips, raw smoked chicken product "Fileichka", as well as cooked-smoked beef products, including "Filey Firm". In addition, the meat processing plant presented its latest innovations, including such products as "Exquisite" tenderloin and "Gourmet" beef. Also new for the Uzbek market was the low-calorie sausage "Black Pearl" made from beef and poultry meat. Of course, the exposition of Belarus - the Taste of Nature aroused high interest on the part of visitors, including representatives of Uzbek business, government agencies and mass media.

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<sup>118</sup> Belarus presents its food products at the exhibitions in Tashkent [Electronic resource]. - 2023. - URL: <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/belarus-predstavljaet-svoju-prodovolstvennuju-produktsiju-na-vystavkah-v-tashkente-601144-2023/>

Returning to the 10th meeting of the joint Belarusian-Uzbek intergovernmental commission on bilateral cooperation, we note that Uzbekistan is Belarus's key partner in Central Asia. The two former Soviet republics celebrated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2023. And today, based on numerous facts, we can assert that the interaction between Minsk and Tashkent is experiencing a period of a peculiar flourishing, which is reaching a qualitatively new level and seeking to search for and expand new joint forms of cooperation to realize the objectives of strategic cooperation.

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