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Статья поступила в редакцию 10.12.2021 г.

УДК 339.5 (476+510)

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## DEEPENING TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE NEW INTERNATIONAL CONDITIONS

*The article defines the relevance of trade and economic cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the PRC, analyzes the dynamics of the main indicators of foreign trade in goods and services for the period 2016–2020 between the countries, the main articles of export-import operations were studied, certain aspects of the expediency and possible directions of deepening trade and economic cooperation of the PRC in the Republic of Belarus in the emerging international conditions were established.*

**Keywords:** trade and economic cooperation; export; import; balance of foreign trade turnover; the Chinese market for baby food, wood products, pharmaceuticals; deepening.

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## УГЛУБЛЕНИЕ ТОРГОВО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ И КИТАЙСКОЙ НАРОДНОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ В НОВЫХ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ УСЛОВИЯХ

*В статье определена актуальность торгово-экономического сотрудничества Республики Беларусь и КНР, проведен анализ динамики основных показателей внешней торговли товарами и услугами за период 2016–2020 гг. между странами, исследованы основные статьи экспортно-импортных операций, установлены определенные аспекты по целесообразности и возможные направления углубления торгово-экономического сотрудничества КНР и Республики Беларусь в складывающихся международных условиях.*

**Ключевые слова:** торгово-экономическое сотрудничество; экспорт; импорт; сальдо внешне-торгового оборота; китайский рынок детского питания, продукции деревообработки, фармацевтической продукции; углубление.

The development of foreign trade cooperation is of dominant importance for the economy of the Republic of Belarus, as it ensures the flow of goods, services, information, capital between our country and the rest the world [1].

Currently, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is one of the most important trade and economic partners of the Republic of Belarus [2].

The development of relations of comprehensive strategic partnership between the Republic of Belarus and the PRC meets the long-term interests of Belarus, strengthens its international positions, contributes to ensuring the development of the entire range of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation [3].

Currently, the target area of cooperation with the PRC is collaborative development in trade, investment, financial and innovative areas, the creation and implementation of joint projects of enterprises.

In the context of the volatility of the global economy, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China are strengthening and trade and economic cooperation. Main indicators of foreign trade in services of the Republic of Belarus and China are evidenced in table 1.

*Table 1.* Main indicators of foreign trade in services of the Republic of Belarus and China for the period 2016–2020, thousand US dollars

Indicator	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Growth rate, %
Turnover	1 003 062,8	620 320,0	575 970,3	621 191,4	730 289,9	72,8
Export	332 306,8	306 804,8	351 837,3	270 329,3	360 980,1	108,6
Import	670 756,0	313 515,2	224 133,0	350 862,1	369 309,8	55,1
Balance	-338 449,2	-6710,4	127 704,3	-80 532,8	-8329,7	—

Source: compiled by the authors based on [4].

Based on the presented table 1, it can be stated that for the period 2016–2020, the foreign trade turnover in services between the countries decreased by 27.2 % and amounted to 730,289.9 thousand US dollars. At the same time, exports of services for the study period

tend to grow by 8.6 %. In particular, the export of transport, tourism, education and health services is increasing [5].

The volume of imports of services decreased by 44.9 %. The balance of foreign trade turnover in services remains negative, but at the same time it shows a tendency to reduce the deficit.

The dynamics of the main indicators of foreign trade in goods of the Republic of Belarus and the PRC for the period 2016–2020 is presented in table 2.

*Table 2.* Main indicators of foreign trade in goods of the Republic of Belarus and China for the period 2016–2020, million US dollars

Indicator	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Growth rate, %
Turnover	2602,2	3106,8	3640,1	4480,9	4457,1	171,2
Export	472,7	361,5	481,9	673,3	748,2	158,3
Import	2129,5	2745,3	3158,2	3807,6	3708,9	174,2
Balance	-1656,9	-2383,8	-2676,3	-3134,3	-2960,7	—

Source: compiled by the authors based on [6].

The data of table 2 shows that the foreign trade turnover of goods between the Republic of Belarus and the PRC for the period 2016–2020 has increased significantly. The increase in this indicator was 71.2 %. Positive trend in bilateral cooperation is represented by the increase in the value of exports, which is characterized by an increase of 58.3 %. A negative trend is the increase in imports for the study period by 74.2 %. There is also a deficit in the foreign trade turnover throughout the entire period of the study.

The structure of Belarusian exports to China traditionally includes potash fertilizers, products of the Belneftekhim Concern (caprolactam, polyamides, synthetic filament bundles), integrated circuits, flax, information carriers, fiberglass. It should be noted that in 2016 the share of potash fertilizers in total exports was 63 %, while in 2020 this figure fell to 43 %. [7]. There was also a reduction in the supply of engineering products. At the same time, exports of Belarusian agricultural products and woodworking products are growing significantly [8]. In 2020, exports of Belarusian agricultural products to China increased by 1.9 times compared to the previous year and amounted to \$ 255.2 million USD. At the same time, in comparison with the same period in 2015, exports increased by 13 times [9]. 105 Belarusian agricultural producers are now accredited in China.

China is the world's largest importer of food products and the Chinese market is one of the main directions for the development of Belarusian food exports (China occupies the second position after Russia for this export item). In the total structure of Belarusian exports, dairy products account for 6.8 %, meat and edible meat by-products — 5.5 %, animal and vegetable fats and oils — 4.1 % [10]. Supplies of poultry meat, dairy products, soybean and rapeseed oil, beef, chocolate and confectionery products and other products to China have increased significantly.

The main items of import from China to the Republic of Belarus are the following:

- communication equipment and spare parts: mobile phones, communication equipment for wireless communication and cordless telephones;
- computing machines for automatic information processing, laptops of various modifications, system units and wireless input-output devices;
- parts and accessories for cars and tractors: brakes, suspension shock absorbers, gearboxes;
- electric railway locomotives;
- metal structures made of ferrous metals: sheets used in metal structures, as well as sections and lattice masts used to install equipment in GSM communication networks, etc.;

- electric transformers: chargers for batteries of various equipment, transformers with liquid dielectric, etc.

The intensification of import supplies of certain items from China to the Republic of Belarus for the period 2018–2020 is related to the construction of the Great Stone Industrial Park and the modernization of Belarusian industrial enterprises and infrastructure facilities, in particular, power grids. At the same time, the supply of finished products in the form of metal doors in recent years has practically stopped.

Special attention should be paid to the fact that, despite the global slowdown in business activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China have stabilized the dynamics of bilateral foreign trade cooperation.

As we have identified and indicated above, the indicator of the balance of foreign trade turnover throughout the entire period of the study has a negative value. Despite the increase in the value of exports, import volumes are dominant.

In the context of the study, certain aspects were established on the expediency and possibility of deepening trade and economic cooperation of the PRC in the Republic of Belarus in the current international conditions. In particular, in the short term, from the perspective of China's national interests, most popular goods will be high-throughput intellectual equipment, vehicles, food and medical equipment [10].

Further, it should be noted that the baby food market in China is quite capacious and shows an upward trend, which is due to a change in demographic policy. Currently, the dominant part of the baby food market in China is represented by foreign brands. The largest share in the total volume of Chinese imports of baby food is occupied by countries such as the Netherlands, Ireland, France, Germany, New Zealand, Korea, etc.

In the Republic of Belarus, the only company with modern and high-tech equipment for the production of baby food, dairy products, food for pregnant and lactating women is Bellakt OJSC. For the category of baby food, certain requirements are imposed by the consumer, the main of which are quality and safety, the biological value of the product, a reliable brand and price. In this aspect, the Republic of Belarus has significant export potential and competitive advantages over foreign suppliers. Ingredients for children's and sports nutrition also have the potential to increase exports to China (Belarus exports whey in large volumes to China). It should be noted that in December 2020, on the basis of successful laboratory tests, three revised applications of Bellakt OJSC were sent to the Chinese side for registration of baby milk nutrition formulas to complete the accreditation procedure necessary for the sale of this product in the PRC market. Also extended for a five-year period (from 01.01.2021 to 31.12.2024) accreditation of the Belarusian dairy baby food «Bellakt», necessary for its import into the PRC [7].

Woodworking products also have a certain export potential, since the Chinese market is currently characterized by a significant increase in the consumption of imported wood, including Belarusian. The export potential of Belarus in the field of woodworking was presented at the 15th China International Pallet Forum (the city of Changsha). In this context, it should be noted that there are Canadian, South and North American manufacturers in the Chinese woodworking market. In this regard, it is necessary to develop a certain export strategy and a unique product to develop competitive advantages. Employees of the Research Institute of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus found that about 30 % of the population of the PRC use disposable wooden chopsticks for food. The market capacity of disposable sticks is 45 billion pairs per year. In China, such sticks are considered more environmentally friendly cutlery than plastic and are in demand. Belarus has production capabilities for the production of disposable sticks, which, in turn, will ensure their export in the future. The option of producing wooden tableware (bowls, plates, vases, bread baskets, wicker baskets, carved cutting boards) in accordance with the growing demand due to its high environmental qualities for export to China is also being considered.

Environmentally friendly insulating fiberboard-boards, which are produced at OJSC Mozyr DOK (technological line of the Semvelkamp company), are of a certain importance in realizing the export potential of Belarusian woodworking products. Such slabs are used for insulating walls of wooden houses, soundproofing, thermal insulation of house facades, and also as a basis for flooring [10].

Following Belarusian goods with high added value have a certain significance, have export potential, but do not reach significant export volumes:

- mineral fertilizers containing three nutrients;
- motor vehicles for the transportation of goods with an engine (JSC «BelAZ» has a sufficient amount of production capacity, but the high import tariff (15 %) and state support for Chinese (local) manufacturers of similar products are constraining factors);
- elevators and lifts (import tariff 7 % and high competition from global leaders);
- medicines containing other antibiotics.

The market for medicines containing antibiotics in the PRC is about 1.4 billion USD. The main suppliers are Germany, as well as India and Switzerland, which have tariff advantages over other countries (4.8 % and 1.8 %, respectively) [10].

The Republic of Belarus has production capacities and export potential to conquer a certain niche in this market segment. In particular, the largest manufacturers of antibiotics are RUE «Belmedpreparaty» and OJSC «Borisov Plant of Medical Preparations».

The Republican Unitary Production Enterprise «Belmedpreparaty» is the largest pharmaceutical enterprise in the country, using high-tech technologies and producing 350 types of medicines. Each production site has its own engineering and technical infrastructure, fully meeting the needs of existing production, as well as having sufficient reserves for further increasing production volumes. The company puts into operation a production unit, which is equipped with modern equipment of Italian manufacturers, meets the requirements of GMP and carries out the production of sterile packaged antibiotics.

Open Joint Stock Company «Borisov Plant of Medical Preparations» is one of the leading manufacturers and exporters of medicines of a wide range of action, in the assortment of which there are more than 250 items. Export of products is carried out to neighboring countries as well as distant foreign countries on a regular basis. In the process of the company's development, the equipment fleet is regularly updated and production is certified for compliance with GMP standards.

Currently, RUE «Belmedpreparaty» and OJSC «Borisov Plant of Medical Preparations» do not supply pharmaceutical products to China. As it was established, the market of medicines in the PRC is quite capacious. The latest technologies, equipment and the most accurate methods of quality control of Belarusian pharmaceutical products are one of the main criteria for its competitiveness and allow us to conclude that it is possible to utilize the export potential in this market segment.

Thus, it can be concluded that in the new global conditions, the dynamic development of trade and economic activities, including in new areas, is of exceptional importance for the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China. Promising areas of bilateral cooperation will be the elimination of barriers in mutual trade; accreditation and certification of new types of products, including Belarusian enterprises; logistics processes and interactions in the transport sector; The solution of these issues will contribute to the deepening of mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation between the countries.

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*Статья поступила в редакцию 10.12.2021 г.*

УДК 332.135:338.43.01

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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRIFOOD SECTOR OF THE REPUBLIC BELARUS UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF INTEGRATION WITHIN THE EAEU

*The article examines the problems and prospects for the development of the agrifood sector of the Republic of Belarus in the context of integration into the Eurasian Economic Union. The factors of competitiveness of the agrifood sector in the context of regional integration are indicated. The directions of the agrifood policy of Belarus within the framework of the EAEU are substantiated.*

**Keywords:** competitiveness; agriculture; agrifood sector; Republic of Belarus; Eurasian economic union.