

Belarus' FOREIGN POLICY INDEX

№ 21 July–August 2014

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We are glad to present the twenty-first issue of Belarus' Foreign Policy Index, which explores the country's five foreign policy dimensions in July and August 2014.

The landmark event of the period was the Customs Union–Ukraine–EU Summit that took place in Minsk on 26 August. The factor that dominated the international policy framework in the region was the Ukrainian crisis, which naturally shaped the relationships between official Minsk and Russia, the European Union and Ukraine itself.

The authors of the Index note that the reasonable position of the Belarusian administration on Ukraine, which resulted in the recognition of Minsk as a negotiating platform, improved the international image of the country and has potential to speed up the normalization of its relationship with the West.

However, if the crisis in Ukraine should further escalate, the Belarusian administration may have no choice but take a more specific stance on its relations with Ukraine. The unwillingness of the Belarusian leadership to sacrifice its ties with Ukraine may cause tensions between Minsk and Moscow.

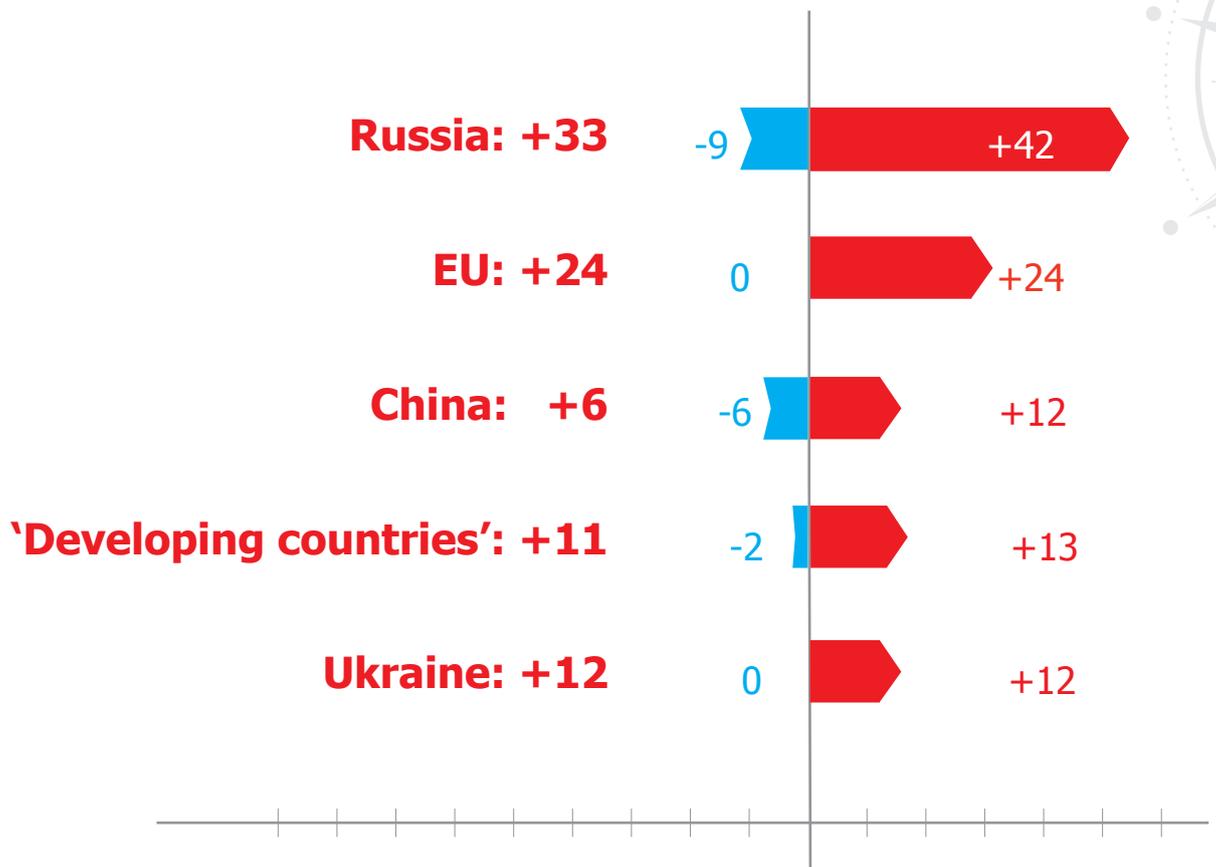
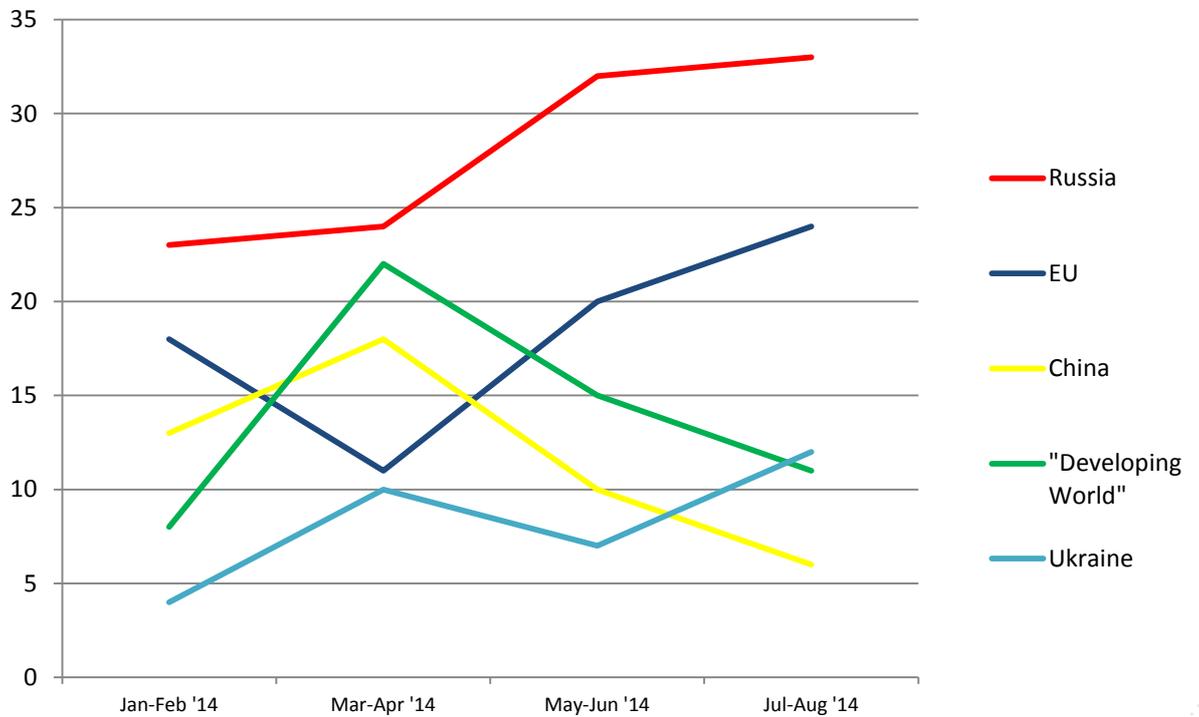
Belarus has been increasingly critical of its relations with China. Focus seems to have been shifted from ambitious declarations about high-profile, albeit hardly realizable projects towards smaller yet more realistic arrangements.

Difficulties persist in Belarus's relations with the countries of the Middle East, which is mostly due to the instability in the region. Against this backdrop, Minsk continued making efforts to promote its relations with African and South Asian countries. The Belarusian government has introduced new instruments in order to reinforce its foreign economic contacts, especially when it comes to lending schemes. The administration is faced with a challenge to make up, at least partially, for the country's foreign trade deficit through the promotion of trade with developing economies.

We wish you a pleasant reading and, as always, we kindly invite you to share your comments and insights.

Dzianis Melyantsou
Editor
Belarus' Foreign Policy Index

Relations development indices:



Developments in Belarus–Russia relations

+42



-9

Summary index: +33

Total positive points: +42

Total negative points: -9

Main trends

In July and August, cooperation between Belarus and Russia continued to expand, and contacts at the bilateral and trilateral level (involving the president of Kazakhstan) became more active. Belarus kept building up its relations with Russian regions. The country's senior officials participated in numerous consultations with Russian ministries and agencies, including consultations in the framework of multilateral international institutions concerning further development of Eurasian economic integration.

Compared with May and June, the public discourse of the relationship between Belarus and Russia lacked declarations about the need to ensure equal conditions for economic activities and cancel all exceptions in the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). The Belarusian president shifted the focus of his official rhetoric to the necessity to further promote integration within the Union State and the EEU, as well as to preserve the 'Slavic brotherhood' of the peoples of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia.

At the same time, tensions between Belarus and Russia remained in certain issues. The main sources of tensions are the re-export by Belarus of the goods that are banned in Russia, complications in the coordination of positions and interests in the framework of the Eurasian economic integration project, and support that the Belarusian administration shows for official Kyiv.

Description of the key events

In early July, Belarus received a USD 450 million state loan from Russia in the scope of the intergovernmental agreement of 31 January 2014. On 24 July, the Russian Ambassador to Belarus said that Russia had offered Belarus to place production facilities in its territory to manufacture several thousand products for its defense industry complex, and on 13 August, Belarus and Russia reached an agreement on additional supplies of food to Russia with a view to overcoming the Russian trade embargo.

The Belarusian president, who slammed the exceptions that remained in the regulatory framework of the emerging Eurasian Economic Union back in May, changed his rhetoric and started making statements supporting integration within the Union State and the EEU, as well as the preservation of the 'Slavic brotherhood' of the peoples of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia.

For instance, during Vladimir Putin's visit to Minsk, Lukashenka said: "if necessary, we will stand back to back to protect ourselves, and we will fight the way we once fought."¹ On 17 July, the president said that Belarus would continue building up strategic partnership with Russia and that "Belarus had no other option."² On 6 July, Lukashenka emphasized the "brotherly union of the three nations — the Belarusians, Ukrainians, and

1. Lukashenka on relations with Russia: if need be, we will stand back to back and will protect ourselves -http://naviny.by/rubrics/politic/2014/07/02/ic_news_112_438395/

2. Belarus will keep strengthening its strategic partnership with Russia — Lukashenka -http://www.belta.by/ru/all_news/president/Belarus-prodolzhit-ukrepljat-strategicheskoe-partnerstvo-s-Rossiej--

Russians” and called for the immediate resolution of the crisis in Ukraine³.

Against the backdrop of frequent contacts with the Ukrainian leadership, this rhetoric was probably supposed to advertize Belarus as a neutral platform that could be used to hold a crisis meeting on Ukraine involving all stakeholders — Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukrainian separatists, the European Union, and, possibly, the United States. During the period under review, active communication between the leaders of Belarus and Russia continued in the run-up to the meeting on Ukraine. Specifically, telephone conversations between Aliaksandr Lukashenka and Russian top officials were held on 14 July, 7 August, 13 August (twice) and 19 August.

Finally, on 26 August, Minsk played host to an unprecedented Ukraine–European Union–Customs Union summit, attended by the presidents of Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy, Günther Oettinger, EU Energy Commissioner, and Karel De Gucht, EU Trade Commissioner. Although no serious progress was reached in the matter of the resolution of the Ukrainian crisis during the meeting, the Belarusian administration managed to improve its international image and preserve good relations with both Ukraine and Russia, which had to admit Belarus’s role as a neutral negotiating platform.

The Belarusian administration continued building up its relations with Russian regions. Specifically, meetings with the governors of the Tver, Sverdlovsk, Smolensk, Tambov, Astrakhan and Khabarovsk Regions were held during the period under analysis. Furthermore, a delegation of the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of Belarus visited the Amur Region and reached an agreement to build five facilities at the Vostochny space-launch complex; whereas the Belarusian agriculture minister told the governor of the Kaliningrad Region about the possibility of replacing the goods banned in Russia with Belarusian-made products.

These opportunities are important for Belarus in the context of the poor competitiveness of Belarusian products in the Russian market and decreasing mutual trade turnover. According to the National Statistics Committee, in January–July, two-way trade between Belarus and Russia amounted to USD 18.486 billion, a decrease by 4.9% from the first half of 2013, which included USD 7.608 billion of export supplies (down by 6.9%) and USD 10.878 billion worth of import (down by 3.4%). Belarus recorded a trade deficit of USD 3.27 billion⁴.

Tensions between Belarus and Russia remained in certain issues. For example, Belarus has not received the sixth and final installment of the EurAsEC Anti-Crisis Fund (ACF)’s loan amounting to USD 440 million. On July 23, the director of the project group for financial loans of the AFC project unit said that the provision of the final installment would be considered at the end of the year.

There were some other complications as well, specifically, Belarus was said to be re-exporting the goods that were banned in Russia. Vladimir Putin signed on 6 August the decree “On the application of certain special economic measures with a view to ensuring the safety of the Russian Federation” in order to limit import from the countries that had supported sanctions against Russia. On 11 August, Lukashenka said that Belarus was supposed to support the ally and disallow transit of commodities that were banned in Russia. On 12 August, Sergey Dankvert, Head of the Federal Agency for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Supervision, visited Belarus to discuss this issue. Nevertheless, on 26 August, Putin said that Belarus allowed the re-export of banned products, thus pointing to a sensitive spot in the relations between Belarus and Russia.

Special efforts need to be made to effectively coordinate the two countries’ interests in the framework of the Eurasian economic integration project. For example, on 16 August, Prime Minister of Belarus Michail Miasnikovič said that “unscrupulous Customs Union

3. Lukashenka calls for filling the crack in the Slavic union and ending the war in Ukraine - http://naviny.by/rubrics/society/2014/07/06/ic_news_116_438482/

4. Belarus’s foreign trade with individual countries in the first half of the year 2014 - http://belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/otrasli-statistiki/torgovlya/vneshnyaya-torgovlya_2/operativnye-dannye_5/dannye-ovneshnei-torgovle-respubliki-belarus-po-otdelnym-stranam/

partners" failed to comply with previous agreements when clearing automobile tires through customs.

One of the most sensitive issues in the relationship between Belarus and Russia is Belarus's special attitude to the Ukrainian administration, its stance on the armed conflict in southeast Ukraine, and on the recognition of the annexation of Crimea. Belarus keeps supporting Ukraine in various issues and is using its balancing position between Russia and Ukraine as a bargaining chip in its relations with the European Union and the United States.

During the period under review, the Russian administration never openly expressed its concern over the development of Belarusian–Ukrainian relations; however, it is quite likely that the Kremlin is quite displeased with the way official Minsk supports Ukraine.

Forecast for the near term

The situation in Ukraine remains a significant factor that shapes the relationship between Belarus and Russia. In the near future, meetings in Minsk will likely continue, especially those of the Trilateral Contact Group.

Nevertheless, should the crisis further escalate, the Belarusian administration might be faced with a hard choice, as it will have to take a more specific stance on its relations with Ukraine as a result of the continued pressure coming from the Russian partners. Given the country's difficult economic situation, the unwillingness of the Belarusian leadership to sacrifice its established ties with Ukraine may lead to what the Russian administration may interpret as unfriendly actions by the Belarusian authorities, which could bring about further tension.

This kind of tension may most likely emerge by mid- or late November, when the Council of the EurAsEC Anti-Crisis Fund considers giving Belarus the next loan installment, and the Belarusian parliament discusses the Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union. Lukashenka may play the card of Belarus's relations with Ukraine to put pressure on the Russian administration and get it to cancel all exceptions and limitations in the emerging EEU and enjoy further economic preferences.

And still, giving the oncoming presidential election in Belarus, it is unlikely that such tensions, even if they emerge, will run high for too long.

Developments in Belarus–EU relations

+24



0

Summary index: +24

Total positive points: +24

Total negative points: 0

Main trends

The month of July saw quite intensive diplomatic contacts between Minsk and Brussels. The high point of that process was the visit by Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius to Minsk. The trend kept growing stronger in the context of both the bilateral agenda and the Ukrainian crisis.

The three-week vacation lull in mid-summer was followed by a major breakthrough in the relations between official Minsk and Brussels, as two Vice-Presidents of the European Commission came to Minsk, including the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Trade Commissioner. The visit became possible only because Minsk played host to the Customs Union–Ukraine–European Union summit. That was the peak of the bilateral relations to date since the end of 2010 and a major achievement of Belarusian diplomacy in its European efforts, which opens up additional opportunities for further normalization of the bilateral relations.

Description of the key events

The period under monitoring coincided with summer vacations; however, this fact did not make the two summer months boring and uneventful for the bilateral framework.

The first significant event registered during the period under review was the visit of a Belarusian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna to Brussels, where the second round of consultations on modernization was held. The first round of talks was held in Minsk on 28 May. This time the agenda for the meeting included trade and investment issues. The Belarusian Foreign Ministry said in a statement following the negotiations that the main objective of the visit was to “identify the best future form of the engagement between the government of the Republic of Belarus and the European Union.” This can be regarded as gradual progress towards the fleshing out of the bilateral agenda and a natural continuation of the trends described in the previous Index issues.

During her stay in Brussels, Kupčyna met with Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood, and Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner for International Cooperation, as well as Matthias Ruete, Director General of the Directorate General for Home Affairs. She discussed draft agreements on visa facilitation and readmission with Ruete. Therefore, both components of the bilateral agenda that came to be at the end of 2013 and beginning of 2014 — the visa- and modernization-related ones — continued their gradual development.

The participation of Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej in a ministerial meeting of the Eastern Partnership member states in Brussels on 22 July became an even more significant event during that period. The ministers discussed the prospects of the development of Eastern Partnership in the context of the situation in the region and following the signing of the European Union Association Agreements by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. They also considered the preparation for the next EaP summit that is scheduled to take place in Riga on 22 May 2015. The speech by the Belarusian foreign minister

contained official Minsk's traditional arguments supporting the need for the European Union to work out a differentiated approach to its partner countries and importance of preventing the appearance of new separating lines in the light of Russia's non-membership in the Eastern Partnership initiative. Makiej also had bilateral meetings with the leadership of the European External Action Service, European Commission and foreign ministers of the EU member states and the EaP member states.

The very fact of Belarus's involvement in that meeting at the level of the foreign minister is quite important, as there were many instances in recent years, when official Minsk delegated deputy ministers thus showing its discontent at the way the bilateral relations with the European Union developed. A conclusion can be drawn that the Belarusian authorities currently have an overall positive attitude to the progress of the negotiating process. Minister Makiej said in an interview to STV Television Channel following his visit: "the attitude of the West to Belarus has changed for the better recently amid the situation in the region and in the world." The minister nevertheless noted that "the fundamental approaches to Belarus have not changed."

Incidentally, in early July, the EU removed the names of eight officials from its list of Belarusian persons subject to sanctions, and added one name. The list now comprises 225 names and 25 enterprises. The move was not particularly significant, but many observers called it a positive step towards normalization of relations.

The most important event of the first half of the period under review was the visit by Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius to Belarus on 24–25 July. That was the second official visit of an EU foreign minister (after the visit by Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs to Vitebsk in April 2013) since the marked aggravation of the bilateral relations with the European Union as a result of the brutal dispersal of a rally in Minsk on 19 December 2010. Interestingly, Linkevičius was received by Prime Minister Michail Miasnikovič. The officials discussed economic issues, specifically, infrastructure projects. Following his meeting with the premier, the Lithuanian foreign minister participated in negotiations in the Belarusian Foreign Ministry to address a broad range of issues pertaining to the bilateral framework and future development of the Eastern Partnership. There is no doubt that Ukraine was high on the agenda. Linkevičius also met with representatives of the Belarusian opposition.

The diplomatic surge observed in July was followed by the quiet 'holiday season', and the first three weeks of August were quite uneventful. The lull was interrupted by the Customs Union–Ukraine–EU Summit on 26 August. The European Union was represented by Catherine Ashton, Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy, Günther Oettinger, Vice-President of the European Commission and EU Energy Commissioner, and Karel De Gucht, EU Trade Commissioner. In addition to her participation in the summit, Catherine Ashton held a bilateral meeting with President Aliaksandr Lukashenka, where she thanked the Belarusian leader for his initiative to host peaceful negotiations.

Naturally, the meeting and the high level of the European representatives that were involved only became possible in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. However, the fact of the high-level contact itself can be regarded as a serious achievement of Belarusian diplomacy, including in Europe, and potentially opens up new opportunities for the development of relations between Belarus and the European Union.

An example of such potential opportunities almost immediately followed the Minsk summit — on 28–29 August, Uladzimir Makiej paid a working visit to Poland. He met with his Polish counterpart Radosław Sikorski. The diplomats focused on the talks in Minsk and prospects of the resolution of the Ukrainian crisis. Interestingly, according to a report by the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, Belarus and Poland agreed to hold a separate meeting centered on bilateral relations. During a media briefing, Makiej said that the conversation was "extremely open and sincere." Also on 28 August, Makiej held negotiations with Deputy Prime Minister of Poland and Minister of Economy Janusz Piechociński. During the second day of his visit, the Belarusian minister met with representatives of Polish businesses.

Forecast for the near term

The relationship with the European Union will be developing in two contexts in the next few months: the bilateral context and in the framework of the Ukrainian crisis, where official Minsk has managed to gain recognition as a negotiating platform.

In the bilateral dimension, the relations will progress along the two tracks outlined in the agreed agenda — those related to modernization and visa facilitation. However, it is hard to forecast any breakthrough developments.

In the context of the Ukrainian crisis, the relations between Minsk and Brussels will be developing especially favorably. If official Minsk manages to retain its status as a venue for talks and succeeds in facilitating the achievement of any progress in the peaceful negotiations, Belarus will de facto enjoy the status of a mediator and peacemaker, an all-new image for the “last European dictatorship,” at least for the period of active negotiations over the handling of the crisis in Ukraine.

Developments in Belarus–China relations

Summary index: +6

Total positive points: +12

Total negative points: -6

+12

-6

Main trends

In July and August, official Minsk kept growing more critical about its cooperation with China than any time before — this trend was first reported in early 2014 and has grown markedly stronger since then. This process resulted from the obvious lack of any significant Chinese loans and joint projects that would prove beneficial to Belarus on the one hand, whereas on the other hand, support from Russia was expanding, which is why the need for foreign loans was not as urgent as previously.

Focus in the relationship between Belarus and China seems to have been shifted from ambitious declarations about high-profile, albeit hardly realizable projects towards smaller yet more realistic arrangements that both sides can profit by.

Description of the key events

Many of the events in the framework of the Belarus–China relationship that occurred during the period under review took place in July and were associated with visits by senior officials of that country and holding of a regular meeting of the Belarus–China Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation. These meetings and negotiations, amid the continuing disillusionment of the Belarusian leadership with the outcomes of previous collaboration projects, resulted in a new peak — a conference with the president focusing on the use of Chinese loans.

The list of most significant Chinese visitors during that period included Vice Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Zhou Li, an authority on the former Soviet Union, who had headed China's diplomatic missions to Ukraine and Kazakhstan before his appointment to the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The visit of that high-ranking party functionary was mostly associated with the agreement between the Belarusian Presidential Executive Office and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the exchange of experts, a project launched a few years ago.

The next important meeting was the visit by a substantial business delegation of China led by Zhong Shan, First Deputy Minister of Commerce and co-chairman of the Belarusian–Chinese Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation, which coincided with the scheduled meeting of the Commission. The Belarusian side regarded that visit as an opportunity to redirect the development of the bilateral relationship toward a track that would be more beneficial to Belarus. Deputy Prime Minister Anatol Tozik drew the attention of the Chinese partners to the fact that Belarus wished to have direct investments from China, rather than loans, let alone tied loans.

Prime Minister Michail Miasnikovič spoke in much detail about the need to develop the transport and logistics infrastructure connecting China, Russia and Belarus — he must have referred to the Silk Road Economic Belt project, which is being discussed in China

now. Further, the head of the Belarusian government suggested that the Chinese side either join the existing Belarusian–Russian industrial production projects or include Belarusian partners in similar Russian–Chinese projects.

Commenting on the joint projects between Belarus and China, the premier and his deputy pointed out that the development of the China–Belarus Industrial Park should be stepped up, and so should be the joint production of automobiles at BelGee. Both Miasnikovič and Tozik insisted that the Chinese side should be more actively involved in those major projects, including through the provision of loans, especially direct loans to concerned economic entities rather than the state. To facilitate this process, Belarus is ready to allow Chinese banks to operate in its territory.

Commenting on trade tendencies, the Belarusian officials also pointed to Belarus's unacceptably high deficit in the two-way trade with China, which was an unprecedented thing, as these concerns had never been voiced by any senior functionaries before, and the only official who had made statements of this kind was V. Macel, an adviser at the Foreign Ministry.

These concerns of the Belarusian senior officials have not been shared by Chinese partners so far, which suggests that China only regards Belarus as a convenient market to sell its own products, primarily by offering tied loans.

Another hard blow on the established positive image of the collaboration between Belarus and China was the statement by Deputy Prime Minister Anatol Kalinin, who said on 18 July that plans for the construction of a second runway at the National Airport Minsk had changed. Kalinin not only made it absolutely clear that the runway would be built without the involvement of any Chinese companies, but also gave reasons for such a decision — the estimated cost of the construction stands at approximately USD300 million, according to the Belarusian side, whereas Chinese contractors said the project would cost USD1.2 billion, four times its real value.

When it comes to the main joint project — the China–Belarus Industrial Park (CBIP), no significant progress was registered during the two months under review⁵. However, the other landmark project — the BelGee production of automobiles — did report some good news, as Chairman of the Development Bank of Belarus and member of the Eurasian Economic Commission Council Siarhiey Rumas said on 11 July that automobiles with a localization degree of at least 30%, as well as automobiles made by the Belarusian–Chinese joint venture BelGee would enjoy the right to free circulation in the Single Economic Space beginning August 2014. This is a serious achievement, since experts have warned that Russia might regard BelGee as a project to re-export Chinese vehicles to Russia and ban their sale locally. Automobile production with at least 30% of local components is a realizable project, and the chance to freely access the markets of Russia and Kazakhstan makes the project a potentially profitable one. As a follow up, Rumas saw to it that the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus opened a USD 10.9 million export credit line for TOO Virazh (Kazakhstan) to pay for supplies of Geely cars assembled by SZAO BelGee to the market of Kazakhstan. The credit line was committed for 12 months at an annual rate of 1.9% against the insurance coverage by Beleximgarant.

On 29 July, consultations were held between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Russia concerning the situation in Northeast Asia and relations with China to discuss the main aspects of cooperation in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the SCO development prospects and opportunities for increasing Belarus's status in the organization. Belarus currently has the status of a dialogue partner.

5. The only CBIP-related statement was made by Aide to the Chairman of the State Committee on Science and Technology Jury Lukaševič, who said that the Belarusian Innovation Fund planned to use China's experience in the financing of venture capital projects and find experts for the CBIP project.

On 25 August, a conference with President Lukashenka was held to consider the ways Chinese loans are used in Belarus. Those present at the conference said that loans should be taken to finance only realistic paying projects, whereas tied loans were undesirable.

The experience of Central European economies (Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary) shows that they originally developed collaboration with China based on the Belarusian scenario; however, real competition, including between potential investors, introduction of European standards in the implementation of projects, as well as public control helped them get China to adjust its policies on those countries.

An important indication of growing dissatisfaction of the Belarusian administration with the Chinese dimension of its foreign policy was the article by Deputy Director of the Information and Analysis Center with the Presidential Executive Office A. Macevila "Celestial Manna" posted on the website of the BelTA news service, which justifies the policy of taking a very cautious attitude to Chinese loans.

Forecast for the near term

The next few months will hardly see any landmark events in the framework of the relationship between Belarus and China. Skilful Chinese diplomats will do their best to wear off the negative impression caused by the harsh statements by the country's senior officials. However, the trend towards an increasingly cautious attitude to collaboration with China suggests that the two countries will gradually change from high-profile, yet barely implementable projects to better-balanced constructive engagement.

Developments in Belarus's relations with the 'Developing World'

(Asia, Africa and Latin America)

Summary index: +11

Total positive points: +13

Total negative points: -2

+13

-2

Main trends

Complications remained in Belarus's relationships with the countries of the Middle East, mostly because of the instability in the region. Against this backdrop, official Minsk continued its attempts to strengthen its ties with African economies and South Asian countries.

New Belarusian embassies have been opened in Asia and Africa, as Belarus is rearranging the network of its foreign officers. This process is close to completion.

The Belarusian government has introduced new instruments to strengthen foreign economic ties, primarily by offering new lending schemes. At the same time, Minsk is looking for new ways to intensify the engagement with developing economies, specifically through multilateral collaboration projects (China–Mongolia, Russia–Asian countries) or scholarships for trainees (Mozambique).

Description of the key events

Middle East

Sudan. On 7–10 July, a Sudanese delegation led by Vice Speaker of the Sudanese parliament Issa Bushra visited Belarus. The composition of the delegation was not reported; however, according to Sudanese sources, it included Agriculture Minister Ibrahim Mahmoud. Following the visit, a series of memoranda of understanding were signed by the Ministries of Agriculture, Industry and Health⁶.

On 8 July, Issa Bushra and Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej discussed bilateral cooperation issues, the interaction between the two countries in the international scene, including the holding of the scheduled meeting of the Joint Belarusian–Sudanese Commission for Cooperation⁷. Bushra also had a meeting with Deputy Chairman of the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of the Belarusian parliament, Viktor Huminski⁸.

Iraq. On 23–24 August, Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej paid an official visit to Iraq. The Belarusian delegation included representatives of the Ministry of Industry and Belneftkhim concern, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That was the first visit of this level to Iraq since 2003, when the contacts between the two countries were minimized because of the American invasion.

The Belarusian foreign minister was received by Iraqi President Muhammad Fuad Masum. Makiej also had meetings with incumbent Prime Minister of Iraq Nouri al-Maliki, candidate for the post of the prime minister, speaker of the Iraqi parliament, vice-premier for energy

6. Sudan, Belarus sign memos of understanding, Sudan Safari, 15 July 2014 - http://english.sudansafari.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6222:sudan-belarus-sign-memos-of-understanding&catid=6:sid&Itemid=6

7. On the meeting between Foreign Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Makiej and Vice Speaker of the Sudanese parliament Issa Bushra - http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ab48a247457fb4f7.html

8. Huminski: Sudan is a key partner for Belarus in the African region, 10 July 2014 - http://blr.belta.by/all_news/politics/Gumnsk-Sudan-dlja-Belarus---adzn-z-kljuchavyx-partnera-u-afrykanskm-regene_i_69249.html

and oil and the foreign minister. During the visit, Makiej signed an agreement on the promotion and mutual protection of investments between the two governments. Makiej also had a meeting with Iraqi business communities, whereas Deputy Industry Minister of Belarus Hennadz Sviderski and Deputy Chairman of Belneftekhim concern Uladzimir Sizoŭ presented products manufactured by Belarusian enterprises⁹. Amid the ongoing crisis of the Iraqi state the visit will hardly have any significant results, though.

Libya. On 27 August, three out of four Belarusian citizens captured by the Libyan regime more than three years ago were finally released. According to media reports, the release resulted from efforts by the Russian Foreign Ministry¹⁰. Because of the aggravation of the military and political situation in Libya, Belarusian diplomats were temporarily evacuated from Tripoli to Tunisia. The Foreign Ministry noted that the embassy in Libya remained operational and maintained contacts with the Libyan authorities¹¹.

South Asia

Sri Lanka. On 8-10 July, a Belarusian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Valiancin Rybakoŭ visited Sri Lanka. The 20-strong delegation included representatives of MTZ, MAZ, and the Belarusian Academy of Sciences, Belarusian National Technical University, and Viciebsk State Medical University, leading engineering, petrochemical and pharmaceutical companies. On 8 July, a Belarus–Sri Lanka Business Forum and business matchmaking session were held. On 9-10 July, the first meeting of the Joint Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation took place. On 10 July, the Belarusian delegation participated in the second round of consultations between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries. Rybakoŭ met with the minister of industry and commerce, the minister of economic development, deputy foreign minister and minister of petroleum industries¹².

Pakistan. On 11 July, Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej held a meeting with Minister of Defense Production of Pakistan Rana Tanveer Hussain, who had visited Belarus in the framework of the Seventh International Exhibition of Arms and Military Machinery Milex 2014¹³. Belarusian media provided virtually no coverage for the visit, though.

Rana Tanveer Hussain had meetings with Belarus's Minister of Defense Jury Źadobin, Chairman of the State Military Industrial Committee Siarhieŭ Hurulioŭ, Director of the Research and Technical Center LEMT BelOMO Aliaksiej Škandarevič, Director of LLC Defense Initiatives Dzianis Paščenka and First Deputy Director of Belvneshpromservice Siarhieŭ Bufal. According to an official report by Pakistani media, "All these were high level meetings after which both sides announced their interest in establishing mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of defense production. Both sides agreed to develop a plan of actions for establishing military & technical cooperation between the two countries." Also attending the meetings were the top officials of Galosh General Trading Company, which is quite unusual, because the company is known as a trader of textiles and rice. According to a press release by the Pakistani government, "Minister Rana Tanveer during the visit of the stalls at the exhibition expressed interest in the following Belarusian products: electronic warfare means, optical and optical-electronic devices (particularly, night vision & thermal vision devices), spare parts for tanks and armored personnel carriers and explored prospects of joint ventures. A possibility to establish service centers and technical maintenance centers was also explored."¹⁴

9. On the official visit by Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej to Iraq - http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/cec8b8d782ec789f.html

10. "Evrozabota": Three Belarusian nationals have been released from a Libyan prison – 29 August 2014 - <http://news.tut.by/society/413418.html>

11. Belarusian diplomats have been evacuated from Tripoli – <http://news.tut.by/politics/409517.html>

12. On the visit of a Belarusian delegation to Sri Lanka – http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/dd217ac4549ad8b9.html

13. On the meeting between Foreign Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Makiej and Federal Minister of Defense Production of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Rana Tanveer Hussain - http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b0fd0ed6927fc178.html

14. 7th International Exhibition of Arms and Military Machinery MILEX-2014 explores ways for Developing Bilateral Cooperation, Islamabad: July 13, 2014 - <http://www.pid.gov.pk/press13-07-2014.htm>

In recent years, official Minsk has decided to intensify its relations with Pakistan. With this goal in mind, Belarus opened its embassy in Islamabad on 1 September. Pakistan is a new area for Belarus's military and technical cooperation. Given the fact that Ukraine played a crucial role in the modernization of Pakistani armored vehicles, one can assume that the current situation in Ukraine encourages Pakistan to seek contacts with Minsk in order to be able to maintain the military machines originating in (post)Soviet countries. Amid close contacts between Russia and India in the military and technical sector, Belarus is Islamabad's only alternative to Ukraine.

East Asia

On 29 July, Minsk played host to consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Russia concerning the situation in Northeast Asia and their relationships with China. The diplomats addressed the current situation and prospects of cooperation with Northeast Asian countries. Furthermore, partnership between Belarus and Russia was considered in their interactions with the countries of the region¹⁵.

Mongolia. On 6 August, Belarus's first Ambassador to Mongolia Stanislaŭ Čepurnoj presented his credentials to Mongolian President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj¹⁶. Belarus and Mongolia have maintained quite stable relations, especially in the economic sector, since the Soviet times. Bilateral relations are facilitated by contacts established dozens of years ago, and the available transport infrastructure.

Minsk may regard its relationship with Mongolia in a broader context. During his meeting with Zhong Shan, First Deputy Minister of Commerce of China, on 7 July, Prime Minister Miasnikovič suggested that China consider multilateral collaboration options, including in transportation and trade and logistics projects. "Our government has explored the possible scenarios for building logistics chains with our partners in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Mongolia, which could benefit China in its work with European economies, including with Western European states."¹⁷

Africa

Ethiopia. On 20 August, Belarus's first Ambassador to Ethiopia Zmicier Kupciel presented his credentials to Ethiopian President Mulatu Teshome¹⁸. Ethiopia is one of the most promising new partners for Belarus, and the opening of the Belarusian Embassy in Addis Ababa was long overdue both in the context of the expansion of relations with East Africa (for instance, with Kenya and Tanzania), and due to the fact that the African Union is headquartered in the Ethiopian capital city. Minsk had long been planning to step up its relations with Ethiopia, but progress was thwarted by the refusal of Belarus to extradite Ethiopian pilots in 2005 and the conflict with that country that followed¹⁹.

Mozambique. On 21–22 July, Prime Minister of Mozambique Alberto Vaquina visited Belarus (prior to his visit to Moscow). Mozambican media emphasized that he was planning to "renew the cooperation"²⁰ that stems from the Soviet times.

14. 7th International Exhibition of Arms and Military Machinery MILEX-2014 explore ways for Developing Bilateral Cooperation, Islamabad: July 13, 2014 - <http://www.pid.gov.pk/press13-07-2014.htm>

15. On consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Russia about the situation in Northeast Asia and relations with China - http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/a70c5262435cdd0e.html

16. On the presentation of credentials by Ambassador of Belarus S. Čepurnoj to Mongolian President T. Elbegdorj - http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ab64d7276703dcb0.html

17. Belarus is testing the waters for a new Chinese loan - <http://news.tut.by/economics/406021.html>

18. On the presentation of credentials by Ambassador of Belarus Z. Kupciel to Ethiopian President M. Teshome - http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/fbc5d571c70953c8.html

19. Further reading: Siarhei Bohdan, Belarusian Military Cooperation With Developing Nations: Dangerous Yet Legal, 05 December 2013 - <http://belarusdigest.com/story/belarusian-military-cooperation-developing-nations-dangerous-yet-legal-16322>

20. Primeiro-ministro Vaquina em Minsk para uma visita oficial à Bielorrússia, Notícias, 22-07-2014 - <http://noticias.sapo.mz/aim/artigo/10245922072014012004.html>

During his meeting with Alberto Vaquina, President Lukashenka said: “We have been looking for footholds in Africa very hard lately — the states that we could collaborate with. Mozambique could become such a country.” At the same time, Lukashenka admitted: “We have not established a regulatory framework for our relationship, and your visit will facilitate the intensification of our relations in this area.” Commenting on possible areas for cooperation between Belarus and Mozambique, Alberto Vaquina mentioned agriculture and the production of farm machines²¹.

Alberto Vaquina also held negotiations with Prime Minister Michail Miasnikovič, who “offered mechanisms of financial support” for the implementation of specific economic projects. Eleven areas for cooperation were identified, of them three were declared to be priorities at the initiative of Mozambique: a complete technology cycle of agricultural production, manufacturing of farm machines, and production of construction materials²². Specifically, he referred to the Belarusian-made tractors, which, according to the minister of industry and commerce of Mozambique, successfully passed tests in Mozambique and were offered at reasonable prices²³.

Belarus is also going to provide several scholarships for Mozambican students to be able to have training in Belarusian tertiary education institutions, along with financial support mechanisms — this is a new step in the relations with developing nations for Belarus.

“We are ready to consider providing contemporary financing mechanisms along with commodity supplies, in order to make trade and economic cooperation even more attractive,” said Michail Miasnikovič. He noted that the two countries could join efforts to develop deposits of minerals and gas together. The Belarusian government said it was ready to make use of relevant financing schemes, including export credit²⁴.

Following their meeting, the premiers of the two countries signed a joint declaration, whereas deputy foreign ministers signed a general agreement on cooperation between Belarus and Mozambique. The sides agreed to create an intergovernmental commission for cooperation in the near future.

Other

On 17 July, Aliaksandr Lukashenka held a conference for heads of foreign missions and demanded that they look for promising partners in various regions of the world and promote cooperation the way Belarus built its partnership relations with Venezuela. “Few people had expected us to succeed in that large-scale country project called ‘Venezuela’. But we proved that we are capable of dealing with most challenging engineering problems in the other hemisphere. The experience that we gained in Venezuela with blood and sweat should be used elsewhere in the world. We must look for and find new ‘Venezuelas’ in Asia, Africa and again, in Latin America²⁵.”

Lukashenka also noted the practical role of foreign offices. “If it becomes clear that for some reason — hostilities, the political situation, or anything else — bilateral economic relations with some country get stuck, or deteriorate, or cease to exist, you should file proposals for making adjustments to the network of foreign missions as soon as possible.”

According to the press service of the president, “the head of state expects a substantial breakthrough in the promotion of Belarus’s economic interests in the markets of the Mid-

21. Lukashenka: Mozambique may become a foothold for Belarus in Africa, 22 July 2014 - <http://news.tut.by/politics/407938.html>

22. Michail Miasnikovič meets with Alberto Vaquina, 22.07.2014 - <http://government.gov.by/ru/content/5625>

23. Bielorrússia vai montar tractores agrícolas em Moçambique, Macauhub, 2014/07/24 - <http://www.macauhub.com.mo/pt/2014/07/24/bielorrussia-vai-montar-tractores-agricolas-em-mocambique/>

24. Michail Miasnikovič meets with Alberto Vaquina, 22.07.2014 - <http://government.gov.by/ru/content/5625>

25. Lukashenka wants diplomats to look for ‘Venezuelas’ in various regions of the world - <http://news.tut.by/economics/407426.html>

dle East, and active development of new markets in Africa, and use of new mechanisms to enter the local markets of Latin America. The Belarusian side is interested in renewing major cooperation projects with Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and Libya as soon as the situation in those countries improves."²⁶

Forecast for the near term

The near future of the relations between official Minsk and most of its traditional partners in the Middle East looks quite hopeless (especially when it comes to Iraq, Libya and Syria). Minsk will probably try to reanimate its contacts with Iran using Russia's support, but it will act cautiously, because these relations are secondary to Minsk's engagement with the West. The main exception to this trend will be the strengthening of Belarus's relationship with Turkey, especially amid the growing influence of the part of the Turkish political elite that chose to pursue an expansion of Turkey's relations with Belarus in the late 2000s.

The most promising new areas for cooperation are some of the African countries (Angola, Nigeria, Mozambique), South Asia (Bangladesh, Pakistan Sri Lanka), and Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia). The relationships with Latin America will hardly break the deadlock in the near future, although Minsk is gradually working on plans to interact with some of the countries of the region (Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua).

Belarus will pursue a flexible policy while avoiding ideological associations and affiliation with any blocs. In the framework of such a policy, Minsk seeks closer ties with Pakistan, along with maintaining traditionally good relations with India.

The Belarusian government is facing a challenge of at least partially making up for the foreign trade deficit of the country through promoting commercial relations with developing countries. As a rule, two-way trade with those countries is characterized by a surplus for Belarus, albeit modest.

26. Conference with heads of diplomatic missions and consular institutions of Belarus, 17 July 2014 - http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/soveschanie-s-rukovoditeljami-diplomaticheskix-predstavitelstv-i-konsulskix-uchrezhdenij-belarusi-9265/

Developments in Belarus–Ukraine relations

Summary index: +12

Total positive points: +12

Total negative points: 0

+12



0

Main trends

During the period under review, the bilateral relationship remained as active and constructive as hardly ever before, and there were objective reasons for this: Belarus is interested in keeping one of its largest sales markets, whereas Kyiv wishes to ensure the maximum security of its northern border, uninterrupted deliveries of oil products, and neutralization of Russia's attempts to impose limitations on trade with Ukraine in the framework of the Eurasian integration project.

Official Minsk made use of the Ukrainian factor and succeeded in enhancing its international image by hosting talks to negotiate a peace plan for Ukraine.

Description of the key events

During the two months in question, Ukraine remained a priority in official Minsk's foreign policy. President Lukashenka was making statements on the Ukrainian crisis, and so were representatives of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry and Belarusian Ambassador to Ukraine Valiancin Vialička (in July and August he gave three long press conferences focusing on the bilateral relationship).

The main messages from official Minsk mostly involved the disinclination to support the Ukrainian 'federalization' scenario imposed by Russia, as well as guarantees that Belarus would not allow third countries to use its territory for military aggression against Ukraine. Also during the two summer months under review, the presidents of Belarus and Ukraine maintained regular phone contacts, which, according to respective reports by press services, were strictly constructive.

In July, Lukashenka came up with a series of initiatives aimed at resolving the armed conflict in Ukraine. He refused to characterize his own role as a mediator in that conflict, but preferred calling Belarus a 'venue for negotiations.' During his meeting with Leonid Kuchma on 31 July, he said: "I hate mediation. We will be doing our best for our Ukraine to try to bring down tensions in the east of the country." Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus V. Rybakoŭ formulated the stance of official Minsk in the following way: "Belarus has no plans to act as a mediator in the normalization of the situation in Ukraine, but will facilitate the resolution of the crisis." Apparently, Lukashenka's position should be attributed primarily to his unwillingness to come in contact with representatives of separatists, as it carries serious reputational risks.

Lukashenka's initiatives voiced in July resulted in a request by the president of Ukraine to hold the first meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group on the resolution of the situation in Donbass, attended by L. Kuchma (Ukraine), M. Zurabov (Russia) and representatives of the OSCE, in the capital city of Belarus. The meeting did not have any tangible results, though.

In July, the trade war between Belarus and Ukraine became quite heated, as the Ukrainian government imposed limitations on some Belarusian products. Specifically, a 55.29% duty was imposed on Belarusian confectionery and dairy products up until the end of 2016. A 60.05% duty was imposed on Belarusian beer, rubber tires, refrigerator components, electric bulbs and mineral fertilizers up until 2017. The measures were said to have been introduced in response to the introduction of licensing of imported beer and confectionery products by Belarus in May 2014.

According to Ukrainian experts, the oligarch Oleg Bakhmatyuk (the owner of Ukraine's only producer of potash fertilizers PAO Polimineral who was interested in expanding his own production of potash fertilizers) was the main lobbyist of the anti-Belarusian restrictive measures. Ukraine has the world's fourth-largest deposits of potash (estimated reserves amount to 7.8 billion tons, which compares to 4.2 billion tons in Belarus), which are not developed because of extensive import. Bakhmatyuk became more active following the reduction in the influence of another Ukrainian oligarch Dmytro Firtash, who had remained the key player in that market for a long time, acting as the dealer of Russian and Belarusian chemical trade in Ukraine²⁷.

After a series of intergovernmental consultations amid the apparent interest of the leaderships of the two countries to promote political contacts, the trade war was ceased in August, when both Belarus and Ukraine decided to cancel the trade limitations on a reciprocal basis.

Despite the bilateral trade war, Lukashenka together with his Kazakhstan counterpart Nazarbayev kept blocking various Moscow's initiatives aimed at imposing restrictive measures on Ukrainian products in the framework of the EurAsEC. The Belarusian authorities unilaterally refused to support Russia's initiative to place limitations on the import of Ukrainian potatoes, dairy products and beef.

An important factor for the bilateral relationship was the situation with oil product supplies. However, unlike in previous years, the Ukrainian authorities were interested in increasing supplies from Belarus, rather than cutting them. As a result of the spat between official Kyiv and the Kremlin, the import of oil products from Russia dropped, while projects to resume Ukraine's own oil-processing efforts became irrelevant, because Russia is the only possible supplier of crude oil. In August, Belarusian Oil Company notified its Ukrainian partners that due to maintenance operations at the Belarusian refineries it would not be able to meet its contractual obligations, and supplies would be 20% to 30% short of the target. On 4 August, this issue was discussed by the presidents of Belarus and Ukraine. Lukashenka said that he was aware of the problem and would do his best to help provide Ukraine with sufficient amounts of oil products. As a result, Belarus agreed to provide the transit of 15,000 tons of oil products from the Netherlands via the seaport of Ventspils.

The importance of Belarusian oil product deliveries to Ukraine can also be confirmed by the fact that the Ukrainian administration ignored the media scandal caused by the return of the runaway oligarch Sergiy Kurchenko (who is close to Russian Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin) as one of the major operators dealing in import supplies of Belarusian gasoline to Ukraine. Previously, the Ukrainian authorities had accused him of serious abuse in this sector.

In August, the Belarusian president continued his peacemaking activities seeking to turn Minsk into the permanent venue for negotiating the Ukrainian crisis. He de facto became the initiator of consultations of the Eurasian troika with the Ukrainian leadership with the participation of representatives of the European Union. His initiative coincided with a similar initiative by Brussels, where EU officials planned to get Putin and Poroshenko to sit down at the negotiating table. In this context, Minsk turned out to be a convenient and neutral venue for talks that suited everyone.

The trilateral summit took place in Minsk on 26 August and involved the Eurasian troika (Aliaksandr Lukashenka, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and Vladimir Putin), the Ukrainian

27. "Battle for Potash", Comments, 31.07.2014 - <http://comments.ua/money/479730-bitva-kaliy.html>

President (Petro Poroshenko) and representatives of the European Union (Catherine Ashton, Günther Oettinger, and Karel De Gucht). Although no representatives of the United States were present at the summit, Belarusian Ambassador to Ukraine Valiancin Vialička said the Eurasian troika had voiced its wish to have representatives of the United States at the meeting.

Formally the summit was supposed to focus on the promotion of the relationship between the Eurasian Union and Ukraine following the coming into effect of the EU–Ukraine Association Agreement and the resolution of the conflict in Donbass. However, in practice, most of the participants in the talks used the occasion as a publicity stunt, and very few experts had expected any significant decisions. They turned out to be right, after all.

At the same time, the personal meeting between Lukashenka and Poroshenko and the preparations for the summit contributed to the strengthening of friendly relations between Belarus and Ukraine and personally between the two heads of state. At the summit, Lukashenka and Nazarbayev more or less kept their distance from Putin, thus creating a favorable atmosphere for Poroshenko. Ahead of the summit, the governments of Belarus and Ukraine promptly resolved all of the trade disputes. Other specific results of the summit include the decision to make Minsk a permanent venue for meetings of the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine. Lukashenka insisted that it was Poroshenko who had come up with the initiative.

According to Belarusian Ambassador to Kyiv Vialička, since hostilities started in Donbass, more than 26,000 Ukrainian refugees have come to Belarus. On 31 August, President Lukashenka signed a decree to simplify the procedures associated with the stay of Ukrainian refugees in Belarus and provide them with social support.

On 3 August, Ukraine's Interior Minister Arsen Avakov said that an agreement was reached with Belarus's MAZ on supplies of 52 vehicles to the southeast of Ukraine. Further, there were media reports that the Belarusian KGB was making efforts to prevent the recruitment of Belarusian citizens as mercenaries to be involved in hostilities on the side of the Donbass separatists.

On 30 July, an agreement was signed between the Belarusian government and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the approval of the Provision on the demarcation of the state border. The document was initialed by the authorized representatives of the State Border Troops Committee of Belarus and the Ministry of the Interior of Ukraine — A. Archipaŭ and L. Osavolyuk. The document describes the procedure for the demarcation of the state border and creates a regulatory framework for the operation of the Joint Belarusian–Ukrainian Demarcation Commission.

Forecast for the near term

Official Kyiv and Minsk will continue making efforts to further strengthen the bilateral relationship.

Political instability and aggravation of Ukraine's relations with Russia naturally eliminates the most pressing problem of two-way trade between Belarus and Ukraine — that of oil product deliveries. The dependence on Belarusian export supplies becomes critical for Ukraine in this market.

At the same time, amid the attempts by the oligarch O. Bakhmatyuk (who is close to the incumbents) to expand his production of potash fertilizers, this sector may soon turn into a sensitive point in two-way trade. However, it is not as crucial as trade in oil products.

Annex

Catalogue of events underlying the relations development index

Belarus–Russia relations

Date	Event	Point
1 July	Belarus and Russia approve the agreement on mutual early notification of a nuclear accident.	+1
2 July	Vladimir Putin visits Minsk. Aliaksandr Lukashenka and Putin open the new building of the Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Minsk and hold negotiations.	+3
7 July	Belarusian Ambassador to Russia Ihar Pietryšenka meets with Tver Region Governor Andrey Shevelev; agreement on the creation of a joint working group for the promotion of cooperation.	+1
8-9 July	A Belarusian delegation led by First Deputy Prime Minister Uladzimir Siamaška visits the Innoprom International Industrial Exhibition in Yekaterinburg; a meeting with the governor of Sverdlovsk Region and statement of intention to expand trade and industrial cooperation.	+1
9 July	Prime Minister Michail Miasnikovič calls for the creation of joint Belarusian-Russian companies in the defense industry.	+1
10 July	The Russian Defense Ministry signs a contract for the transfer of S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems to Belarus.	+3
11 July	Belarus's representative in the Eurasian Economic Commission Council Siarhiej Rumas says that sales of Belarusian-made machinery in Russia would be subsidized on an equal basis with Russian-made machinery starting 2015.	+1
14 July	A telephone conversation between Lukashenka and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev at the request of the Russian side.	+1
15 July	Lukashenka meets with Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Arkady Dvorkovich; Dvorkovich also meets with Prime Minister Miasnikovič, who assures that Belarus will meet deadlines for the chief industrial integration projects with Russia.	+1
16 July	A delegation of the Russian Air Force led by Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Viktor Bondarev attends the VII International Exhibition of Arms and Military Machinery Milex; meetings with Belarusian Air Force Commander Major General Alieh Dvihalioŭ and First Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Belarusian Armed Forces Major General Ihar Laŭrynenka.	+1
21 July	Lukashenka meets with Khabarovsk Region Governor Vyacheslav Shport and speaks about the need to expand cooperation between Belarus and the Khabarovsk Region; the governor also meets with the Belarusian premier, who says that an agreement has been reached on supplies of Belarusian-made farm machines to that Russian region on lease terms.	+2

№ 21 July–August 2014

Date	Event	Point
23 July	Director of the project group for financial loans of the EurAsEC Anti-Crisis Fund (ACF)'s project unit says that the provision of the final ACF installment will be considered at the end of the year.	-2
24 July	Russian Ambassador to Belarus Alexander Surikov says that Russia has offered Belarus to host production facilities to manufacture several thousand products for the defense industry complex.	+2
3 August	Ukrainian Interior Minister Arsen Avakov says that 52 units of Belarusian MAZ-made machines have been ordered for the anti-terrorist operation in the east of the country.	-2
4-5 August	Head of the Tambov Region administration visits Belarus and meets with President Lukashenka.	+1
7 August	Director of the Department for the Development of Entrepreneurship of the Eurasian Economic Commission says that Belarus has agreed to cancel limitations on the access to the import of alcoholic products in Belarus from the Single Economic Space (SES) member states in the foreseeable future.	+2
7 August	Putin and Lukashenka discuss Russian sanctions imposed on grocery produced in the West in a telephone conversation initiated by the Russian side.	+1
7 August	Belarusian Prime Minister Miasnikovič meets with Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak to discuss supplies of Russian crude oil for processing at the Belarusian oil refineries Naftan and Mozyr NPZ.	+2
8 August	Kaliningrad Region governor says that Belarusian Agriculture Minister Leanid Zajac has promised that Belarus would be able to make up for the banned import of foodstuffs in Russia.	+1
11 August	Lukashenka says that Belarus must not allow the transit of goods, against which Russia imposed sanctions.	+1
13 August	Lukashenka has two telephone conversations with Putin; they discuss the operation of the Eurasian Economic Union and the situation in Ukraine.	+2
13 August	Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Arkady Dvorkovich says that Russia has reached an agreement with Belarus on additional supplies of food to make up for the shortages caused by the food embargo.	+2
13 August	A Belarusian delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister Michail Rusy meets in Moscow with Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Dvorkovich and representatives of the Russian agricultural watchdog Rosselkhoz nadzor.	+1
16 August	Prime Minister of Belarus Miasnikovič says that "unscrupulous Customs Union partners" have failed to comply with previous agreements when clearing automobile tires through customs.	-1
17 August	Members of the Eurasian Economic Commission Council, including Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Siarhiey Rumas and First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Igor Shuvalov discuss the marking system for light industry products.	+1
19 August	Lukashenka, Putin and Nazarbayev discuss the relationships with Ukraine in a telephone conversation.	+1
20 August	Head of the Foreign Economic Department at the Agriculture Ministry Aliaksiej Bahdanaŭ says that Russian complaints about the absence of control of the re-export of the goods banned in Russia via Belarus are ungrounded.	-1
26 August	Putin says that Belarus re-exports to Russia the European-made goods that are banned in Russia.	-3

№ 21 July–August 2014

Date	Event	Point
26 August	Trilateral negotiations between the presidents of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan in Minsk.	+3
28 August	The Belarusian agriculture minister visits the Astrakhan Region; during his meeting with the governor, he reaches an agreement on mutual supplies of food.	+1
30 August	A telephone conversation between the presidents of Belarus and Russia; they discuss the issues that they originally addressed during the Minsk summit.	+1
30 August	A telephone conversation between the Belarusian president and Prime Minister of Russia Medvedev.	+1
1 July - 31 August	Numerous statements by President Lukashenka supporting Russia and integration in the framework of the Union State and the Single Economic Space.	+3
Total		+33

Belarus–EU relations

Date	Event	Point
8-10 July	A Belarusian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna visits Brussels to participate in the second round of consultations on modernization..	+2
11 July	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Special Envoy for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia at the German Foreign Office Cord Meier-Klodt.	+1
15 July	A meeting of the Belarusian-Polish intergovernmental commission for cross-border cooperation in Minsk attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ and First Deputy Interior Minister of Poland Piotr Stachańczyk.	+1
15 July	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Ambassador of Italy to Belarus Stefano Bianchi.	+1
15 July	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the Swedish Embassy in Belarus Martin Oberg.	+1
21 July	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Ambassador of Lithuania to Belarus Evaldas Ignatavicius.	+1
22 July	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Ambassador of Ireland to Belarus Philomena Murnaghan.	+1
22 July	Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej participates in an Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting in Brussels.	+2
24 July	Prime Minister of Belarus Michail Miasnikovič meets with Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius.	+2
25 July	Talks between Uladzimir Makiej and Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius.	+1
28 July	Uladzimir Makiej meets with Ambassador of Estonia to Belarus Jaak Lensment.	+1
29 July	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Ambassador of Estonia to Belarus Jaak Lensment.	+1
31 July	Uladzimir Makiej meets with Ambassador of Germany to Belarus Wolfram Maas.	+1
21 August	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Ambassador of Poland to Belarus Leszek Szerepka.	+1
22 August	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Head of EU Delegation to Belarus Maira Mora.	+1
26 August	Aliaksandr Lukashenka meets with Catherine Ashton, Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy.	+3
28-29 August	Aliena Kupčyna visits Slovakia.	+1
28-29 August	Uladzimir Makiej visits Poland.	+2
Total		+24

Belarus–China relations

Date	Event	Point
2 July	Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Anatol Tozik meets with a delegation of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China led by Mr. Zhou Li.	+2
7 July	Prime Minister Michail Miasnikovič and Anatol Tozik meet with Mr. Zhong Shan, First Deputy Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, co-chairman of the Belarusian-Chinese commission for trade and economic cooperation, and China's official in charge of international trade negotiations.	+2
	A series of statements about the need to adjust the relationship with China.	-1
8 July	The Belarusian Innovation Fund plans to use China's experience in the financing of venture capital projects and find experts for the China–Belarus Industrial Park, says Aide to the Chairman of the State Committee on Science and Technology Jury Lukaševič.	+1
9 July	Anatol Tozik meets with Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China Ms. Fu Ying during a visit of a parliamentary delegation of China on 7–9 June.	+2
11 July	Automobiles with the localization degree of at least 30%, as well as automobiles made by the Belarusian-Chinese joint venture BelGee will be granted the right to free movement in the Single Economic Space beginning August 2014, said Belarus's representative in the Eurasian Economic Commission Council Siarhiej Rumas.	+2
18 July	The second runway of the National Airport Minsk will be built without involving China Precision Machinery Import-Export Corporation (CPMIEC), BelTA learned from Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Anatol Kalinin.	-2
29 July	Consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Russia on the situation in Northeast Asia and relations with China at the level of Head of the Office for Asia, Australia and Oceania of the Foreign Ministry of Belarus Andrej Hrynkievič and Ambassador-at-Large of the Foreign Ministry of Russia Grigory Logvinov, as well as the leadership of the First Asia Department of the Foreign Ministry of Russia. They also addressed the main aspects of cooperation in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the SCO development prospects, and opportunities for increasing Belarus's status in the organization.	-1
7 August	The science parks of Minsk and its twin-city Changchun plan to intensify cooperation, Vice Mayor of the Changchun Municipal People's Government Mr. Bai Xugui told reporters after he met with Minsk Vice Mayor Andrej Damaracki.	+1
20 August	The Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus opens a USD10.9 million credit line for TOO Virazh (Kazakhstan) to pay for supplies of Geely cars assembled by the Belarusian company BelGee to the market of Kazakhstan.	+1
23-24 August	First exhibition of industrial products manufactured in the Gansu province of China takes place in Hrodna.	+1
25 August	A conference focusing on the use of Chinese loans. A statement on the need to invest the borrowed funds only in paying joint projects.	-2
Total		+6

Belarus's relationships with the 'Developing World'

Date	Event	Point
7–10 July	A delegation led by Vice Speaker of the Sudanese parliament Issa Bushra visits Belarus.	+1
8–10 July	A delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Valiancin Rybakoŭ visits Sri Lanka.	+1
10–11 July	Minister of Defense Production of Pakistan Rana Tanveer Hussain visits Belarus.	+1
17 July	Lukashenka's statement about the need to step up contacts in the developing world.	+1
1 August	Evacuation of the Belarusian Embassy in Libya.	-2
6 August	Accreditation of the first Belarusian ambassador in Mongolia.	+2
20 August	Accreditation of the first Belarusian ambassador in Ethiopia.	+2
21–22 July	Prime Minister of Mozambique Alberto Vaquina pays an official visit to Belarus.	+3
23–24 August	Foreign Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Makiej pays an official visit to Iraq.	+2
Total		+11

Belarus–Ukraine relations

Date	Event	Point
July–August	Aliaksandr Lukashenka's peacemaking initiatives; Minsk turns into a venue for negotiations of ways to resolve the Ukrainian crisis; regular statements supporting the territorial integrity and unitary nature of Ukraine, promises that Belarus will not become a foothold for aggression against Ukraine for third countries.	+2
July–August	Belarus refuses to support Moscow's initiatives to impose trade restrictions on Ukrainian products.	+2
30 July	Agreement is signed between the Belarusian government and Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the approval of the Provision on the demarcation of the state border.	+1
August	Cessation of the trade war as a result of simultaneous lifting of mutual trade limitations by Belarus and Ukraine.	+2
August	Resolution of the gasoline crisis.	+1
August	Decree of the Belarusian president simplifying procedures for the stay of Ukrainian refugees in Belarus and provision of social support.	+2
August	Reports about the activity of the Belarusian KGB in preventing the recruitment of Belarusian citizens as mercenaries to be involved in hostilities on the side of the separatists.	+1
26 August	Lukashenka meets with Petro Poroshenko during the Minsk summit.	+1
Total		+12

Event ranking scale:

- Economic and political integration, creation of customs unions, common markets, supranational bodies (ratification and coming into effect of relevant treaties) – **5-7 points**
- Signing/ratification of a crucial agreement (on cooperation, trade, tariffs, visa-free travel, etc., signing of documents on integration) – **4 points**
- Top-level official visit (president and premier) and bilateral meetings – **3 points**
- Large-scale interstate contract, loan arrangement, provision of economic aid – **3 points**
- Official visit at the level of a minister (key ministers: foreign minister, interior minister, defense minister, economy minister, finance minister, trade minister) and head of the presidential administration; contract negotiations – **2 points**
- Official visit at the level of a deputy minister (and non-key ministers), a parliamentary delegation, exhibition, business forum, days of national culture, important diplomatic contacts and negotiations – **1 point**
- Positive statements by the president, Belarusian Foreign Ministry, parliamentary resolutions, positive materials in state or state-controlled media (monitored media include Sovetskaya Belorussia, BelTA, Zviazda, Belarusian Television – 1st National Channel, 2nd National Channel) – **1 point**
- Adverse statements by the president, Belarusian Foreign Ministry, media, adverse parliamentary resolutions, negative materials in the state media – **minus 1 point**
- Protraction of ratification of treaties, non-invitation to events, failure to provide support internationally – **minus 2 points**
- Infringement of treaties, default on mutual commitments (by the Belarusian side) – **minus 3 points**
- Trade wars, antidumping investigations – **minus 3 points**
- Commodity boycotts, embargoes, recall of diplomats, ambassadors – **minus 4 points**
- Severance of diplomatic relations, provocations, military operations – **minus 5-7 points**