



Belarus' FOREIGN POLICY INDEX

March-April 2013

Dear readers,

We proudly present the thirteenth issue of Belarus' Foreign Policy Index, which focuses on five foreign policy priorities of Belarus in March and April 2013. The most significant change recorded in that period is the step-up in Belarus's foreign policy efforts in all areas—all of the foreign vectors are positive; some of them have seen marked improvements.

Russia has confirmed its commitment to a thoroughly measured support for Belarus, while showing its willingness to subsidize the economy of its ally to a level sufficient not to allow its collapse. Official Minsk had another chance to show its limited negotiability and readiness to make decisions that the Kremlin wants from it only in exchange for significant economic concessions. In the foreseeable future, Belarus and Russia are bound to reach some sort of compromise in a framework, where the Kremlin is building up its demands. It looks like Belarus will have to say goodbye to some of its assets and will not dare make any sharp moves against Russia.

The relationship between Belarus and the **European Union** was developing at a very high pace, as the period under monitoring was marked by an unprecedented number of diplomatic and political contacts. Importantly, all of these contacts have reached a high state level. It cannot be ruled out that some of the political prisoners may be released soon, and Foreign Minister Makiej will be allowed to visit the EU Member-States. The negotiation process will continue and become more common for the high state level.

During the period under review, it became apparent that the hopes of the Belarusian authorities to achieve some political breakthrough in the relations with **China** in the wake of the rise to power of a new party and state administration were vain. In the meantime, the Belarusian expert community is increasingly concerned that Belarusian-Chinese relations are developing according to the Chinese scenario and turn out to be more economically beneficial to Beijing than for Minsk. During the next two or three months, Chinese capital will continue its campaign to penetrate into the Belarusian banking sector and high-tech industry. Breakthroughs in the implementation of the most significant Belarusian-Chinese projects are unlikely, and so are new substantial Chinese loans to Belarus.

A most important trend observed in the last two months is the surge in Belarus's efforts in the **developing world**. The Foreign Ministry and the administration of the state have made some specific moves to intensify collaboration, including the visit by President Lukashenko to Southeast Asia and the Near East. New attempts will follow to expand contacts in Africa, especially the relationships with Nigeria, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique. The monarchies of the Persian Gulf and Turkey seem to find it a crucial aspect of their relations with Belarus to withhold Minsk from collaborating with Syria and Iran. The Belarusian administration manages to benefit from the interest of those countries in order to build up its

4 Russia

7 EU

10 China

12 'Developing countries'

16 Ukraine

19 Annex

March-April 2013

international influence. This position is yet another proof of the extreme pragmatism of Belarus's foreign policy.

In the relationship with **Ukraine**, one of the most sensitive issues for Belarus — the deliveries of Belarusian oil products to that country—was rapidly resolved. Apparently, following reshuffles in the Ukrainian government and appointment of a new supervisor of the relations with Belarus, Minsk managed to find some common ground with V. Yanukovich's circle. Against this backdrop, the political contacts between the two countries 'thawed', which is confirmed by a telephone conversation between the two state leaders and agreement to have a top level meeting quite soon.

It is probable that during the oncoming top level meeting the Belarusian administration will complete the ratification of the State Border Treaty with Ukraine, meaning that the single most lingering problem of the bilateral relationship will finally be removed from the agenda. It can also be forecast that in its ongoing geopolitical game official Kyiv will be interested in stepping up its collaboration with Minsk. This direction will also come in handy if Ukraine keeps on 'flirting' with the European Union and, more likely, if Ukraine gets closer with the Customs Union.

We wish you a pleasant reading and traditionally invite you to make comments and share opinions.

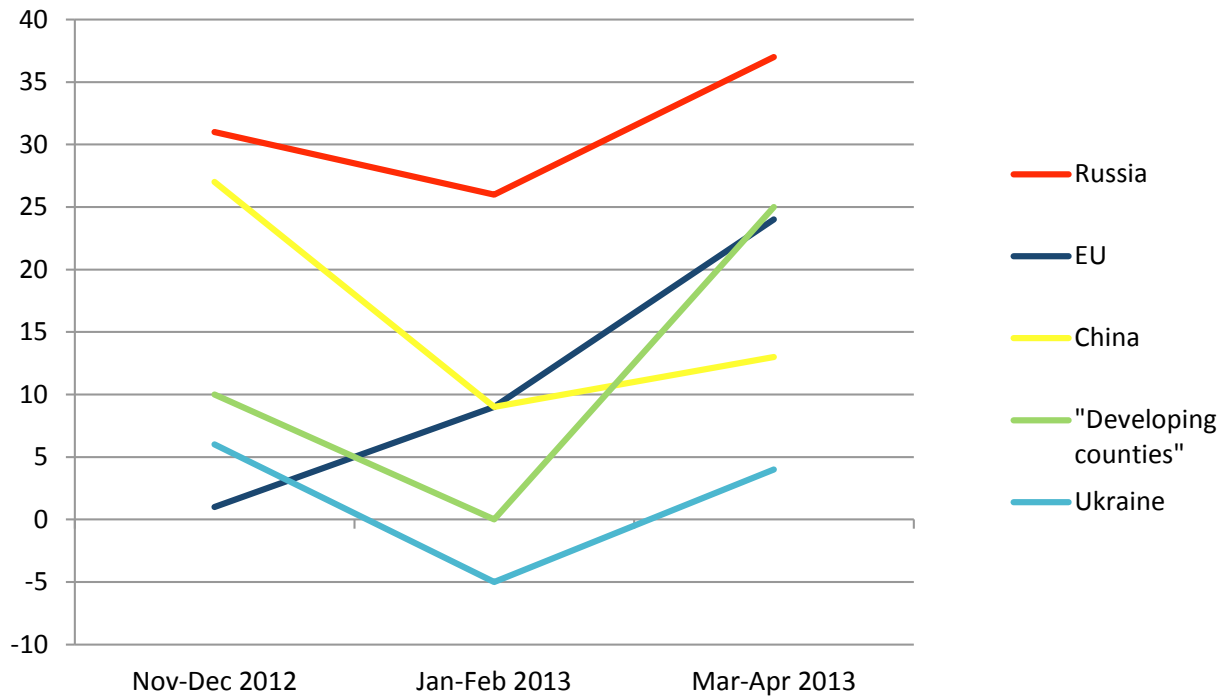
Dzianis Melyantsou

Editor, Belarus' Foreign Policy Index

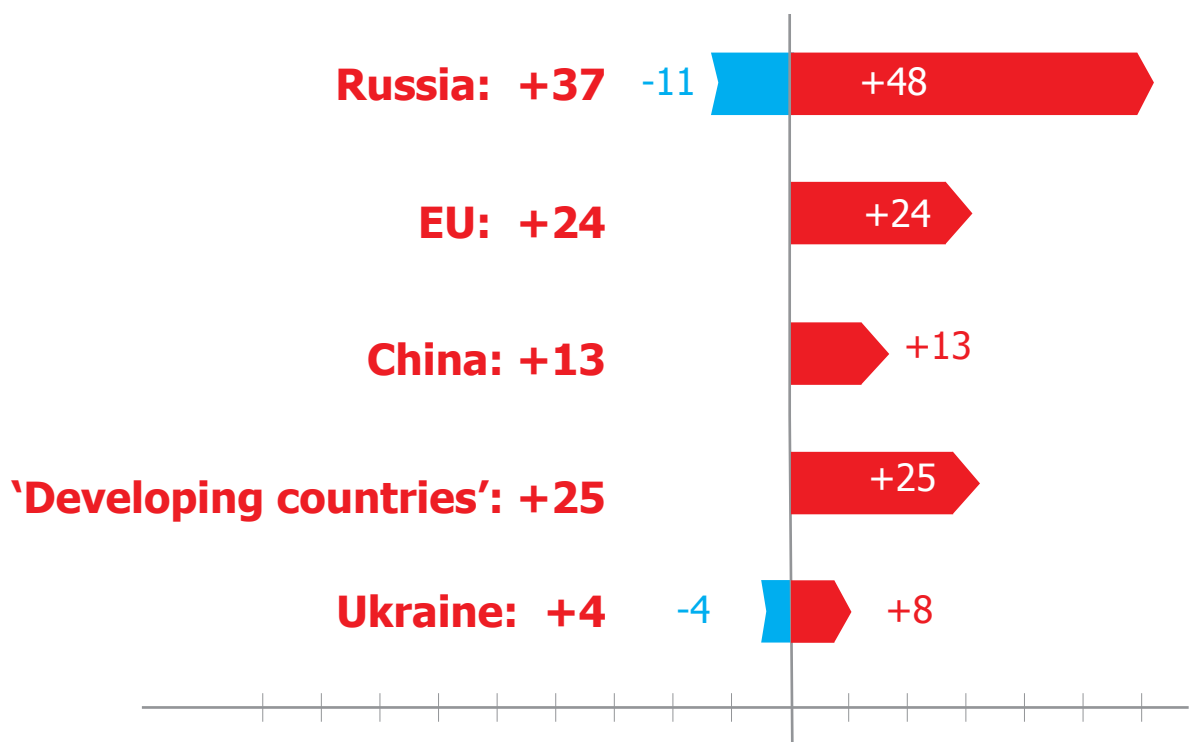
March-April 2013

Relations development indices:

Dynamics of the foreign policy vectors
(November 2012 – April 2013)



Relations indices for March-April 2013:



March-April 2013

Development of Belarus-Russia relations

+48



-11

Summary index: +37

Total positive points: +48

Total negative points: -11

Main trends

- 1) In March and April 2013, the relationship between Belarus and Russia went through yet another rough patch, and phases of this sort will be growing in number as integration processes in the framework of the CEA develop and Belarus has to ultimately meet its obligations. Russia has confirmed its commitment to the policy of thoroughly measured support for Belarus; however, it also displays its willingness to subsidize the economy of its ally to a level that would prevent a collapse and repetition of the 2011 scenario.
- 2) Official Minsk has once again demonstrated its limited negotiability and readiness to make decisions that the Kremlin wants from it only in exchange for substantial economic concessions.

Description of the key events

The main question that needed to be answered in the framework of the relationship between Belarus and Russia in the period from 1 March through 30 April 2013 was the one about the extent of concessions that official Minsk was going to offer Moscow and the extent of support that the Kremlin was ready to exchange for these concessions. The claims are clear: Russia insists on privatizing a number of Belarusian enterprises, including MAZ, Peleng, Minsk Wheeled Tractor Plant, Grodno Azot and Integral. If privatized, these assets will bring Belarus approximately USD 2.5 billion, which is exactly the target this country needed to meet to receive the scheduled installments of the EurAsEC Anti-Crisis Fund (ACF) loan (which have nevertheless been received). Furthermore, Moscow insists that Belarus should supply 3.3 million tons of oil products refined from Russian crude back to Russia this year at an agreed rate.

Belarus, for its part, insists on receiving the penultimate — fifth — installment of the EurAsEC loan, signing the annual fuel balance for 2013 with crude oil supplies fixed at 23 million tons, and being granted a de facto interest-free loan amounting to USD2 billion. Following heated talks between Russian and Belarusian teams of negotiators in February 2013, the situation seemed to get closer to the following scenario: Belarus agrees to privatize its assets, receives the fifth loan installment from the EurAsEC AFC and a USD2 billion 'modernization' loan, and the two countries ink the 23-million-ton fuel balance subject to the condition that Belarus supplies 3.3 million tons of refined oil to the Russian market. Official Minsk had hoped that the deals would be legally finalized at a session of the Supreme State Council of the Union State of Belarus and Russia on 15 March 2013.

However, the situation turned out to be quite different, mostly due to the fact that Russia's demands increased amid the reluctance of the Kremlin to indulge its western ally. During the period under review, Moscow announced two extremely important projects, which directly engage Belarus. First, Vladimir Putin voiced the plan to build a second line of the Yamal-Europe pipeline. Second, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu made a statement about the creation of a full-scale Russian airbase in Belarus. Both are crucial geopolitical projects for Russia; therefore, official Minsk believes it can put a huge price tag on both.

The construction of the Yamal-Europe-2 natural gas pipeline is an old Russian initiative, which has been repeatedly postponed because of the insufficient reliability of Belarus as a transit country. Since Beltransgaz was privatized and Belarus became part of the Common Economic Area (CEA), the risks have been minimized. Importantly, the project of a second Yamal-Europe line is backed personally by the Russian president and Putin's circle and may well result in big profits for big business.

The airbase project is treated as a milestone in the mutual relationship. As of today, two Russian military facilities operate in Belarus, but neither can be called a military base: there is a radar station near Baranavičy—a rocket warning radar—and the Russian Navy long-distance communication center in Viliejka. The former is designed for distant early warning of ballistic missile launches, specifically, from Germany, France, and the UK, and monitors the sky over most of Western Europe. The latter forwards signals to Russian ships and submarines in the Central and Northern Atlantic.

The construction of a full-scale airbase will enable Russia to not only significantly complicate another possible turn of official Minsk towards the West, which the Belarusian administration is cautiously trying to make right now, but also considerably consolidate its influence in this country. Essentially, as soon as Russia manages to ensure a serious military presence in Belarus, the issue of personalities in the top echelon of power in Belarus will become a lot less relevant than now. Some of the recent events have made it clear that A. Lukashenka is already unable to effectively argue against obvious bids to limit his authority—his attempts to mildly disavow the statement about the base and interpret the agreement as a purchase of “a few dozen” modern fighter aircraft were unconvincing.

The reform of the state administration that is currently underway in Belarus is noteworthy in this context, as it has boiled down to serious staff reductions in the state machine, which will have to perform the same functions. In authoritarian countries, such as Belarus, such moves can lead, on the one hand, to chaos and confusion in the system of state administration and, on the other hand, to further consolidation of clans of state officials. Under the circumstances, the threat of having internal processes controlled by an external power increases, and the construction of a Russian airbase with the de facto transfer of the Belarusian air defense controls to the Russian side may be perceived as one of the first steps in this direction.

Naturally, in these conditions, a USD2 billion loan and 2-4.5 million tons of crude oil (given the range of possible supplies, between at least 18.5 million tons and not more than 23 million tons) in exchange for five key enterprises, chance for Putin's circle to make big money on the construction of a new gas pipeline and major restrictions on sovereignty do not seem lucrative terms for official Minsk any longer. Having a clear picture of how much the Russian side will benefit from the deals, Belarus has adopted a 'you-have-to-share' attitude.

In the meantime, the situation in the Belarusian economy has been growing worse. Inventories have piled up, and the National Bank of Belarus has announced that it will not spend gold and foreign exchange reserves to shore up the national currency, the very same way it did in the crisis-hit year 2011. The problems can be attributed to some extent to a drop in sales in the Russian market. Belarusian Ambassador to Russia I. Pietryšenka has redoubled efforts to negotiate additional supplies of Belarusian-made products with representatives of Russian regions. However, it is apparent that the problem will be getting more and more complicated. It is characteristic that unlike the late 1990s and early 2000s, these are not contacts to strengthen the Belarusian lobby, but attempts to sell even insignificant amounts of Belarusian-made products amid further reductions in competitiveness.

Under the circumstances, the Russian administration has to reluctantly sponsor the Belarusian economy, even though official Minsk fails to conscientiously meet its commitments. Nevertheless, some obligations turn out to be not as important as others. Russia is not really eager to keep a watchful eye on Belarus's meticulously meeting its commitments to supply oil products to Russia at an agreed price. One major reason for

March-April 2013

this is that there is a powerful petroleum lobby in Russia that firmly opposes increases in supplies and consequent reductions in prices for oil products.

The Kremlin will not connive at oil smuggling, though — on 26 April, the Eurasian Economic Commission issued a resolution to classify compound organic solvents as an oil product, which is subject to an export duty. At the same time, the Russian authorities seem to have turned a blind eye to supplies of Belarusian products at chronically dumped prices and limitations imposed on Russian-made products in the Belarusian market. Experts argue that the procrastination of privatization decisions by the Belarusian administration affects businesses close to D. Medvedev rather than those in the close circle of V. Putin, which is another reason for the mixed response by the Kremlin.

The Russian subsidies that help the authorities support the image of a relative well-being in the Belarusian economy may have exceptionally poor political consequences. Many experts note that Belarus has an inflation-devaluation economy, and the question is not whether the next devaluation move will happen at all, but when it will be made. The Belarusian administration will likely use the massive Russian backing to avoid devaluation this year. However, starting 2014, the situation may change, and the political consequences of devaluation in the year of elections to local councils and ahead of the presidential election of 2015 will be way more serious. All that will contribute to narrowing the room for A. Lukashenka to maneuver and increasing Russia's influence in Belarus.

Forecast for the near term

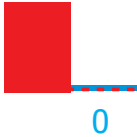
In the short term, as the Kremlin's appetites grow, Belarus and Russia will likely achieve a compromise. Belarus will probably have to surrender some of its assets, while the construction of an airbase or second line of the Yamal-Europe pipeline will not be challenged.

Russia will continue subsidizing the Belarusian economy at a level sufficient to support the current situation. However, this backing will further build up the load of Belarus's commitments to Russia, which include loans burdened with political and economic conditionality.

Belarus will not be making any sharp moves against Russia and will remain within the track that suits Moscow, hoping to have the final installment of the EurAsEC loan, a USD2 billion 'modernization' loan and approval of its scenario of the fuel balance. Nevertheless, Minsk will be making efforts to block the growth in Russia's influence by making use of the European Union and China, but these will be mostly backstage efforts.

Development of Belarus-EU relations

+24



Summary index: +24

Total positive points: +24

Total negative points: 0

Main trends

In March and April 2013, the relations between Belarus and the European Union kept developing in the track of non-confrontation logic, which has dominated the bilateral framework since the end of 2012. Two main trends can be outlined in the period under review:

- 1) Further intensification of diplomatic contacts. The period under review was marked by a large number of diplomatic and political contacts that was unprecedented for the last few years. Regular meetings between senior officials at the Foreign Ministry and diplomats of the EU Member States and institutions continued. Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna went to Paris and Brussels on working visits.
- 2) Contacts reached the high state level. During the review period, contacts between Belarus and the EU Member-States reached the high state level for the first time since the mutual relations cooled following the presidential election of 2010. This trend was manifested in the visit to Belarus by the foreign minister of Latvia and, most importantly, the visit by the Belarusian prime minister to Lithuania.

Description of the key events

As was forecast in the previous issue, intense contacts between Belarusian diplomats and their counterparts representing the EU Member-States continued. Belarusian ambassadors had meetings with diplomat, state officials and MPs of Hungary, the Czech Republic, France, and Austria. The administration of the Foreign Ministry was actively communicating with the heads of the diplomatic missions of the EU countries in Minsk. Ministerial consultations were held with Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Slovakia; bilateral thematic commissions with Germany and the Czech Republic convened during the period under review.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna proved especially active among the top Belarusian diplomats in March and April. She made two important visits during the first two months of spring—to Paris and Brussels.

In Paris, Kupčyna took part in the First Global Forum of Francophone Women and held a series of meetings in the French Foreign Ministry, with the vice-chairman of the parliamentary group of France-Belarus Friendship and administration of the largest French union of employers MEDEF International. According to reports by the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, the meetings addressed the entire range of Belarusian-French relations and the relationship between Belarus and the European Union, including in the framework of the Eastern Partnership initiative. It is noteworthy that following Kupčyna's visit to Paris, reports appeared in the Belarusian media that French diplomats took a stand in favor of mitigating the position on Belarus, specifically by advocating the lifting of the visa restrictions from Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej.

In Brussels, Aliena Kupčyna had meetings with representatives of European institutions. She met with Commissioner Štefan Füle, Chairman of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs Elmar Brok and Deputy Secretary General for the External Action Service Helga Schmidt. Apparently, as in contacts with the EU Member-States, official Minsk is

March-April 2013

trying to engage EU institutions in the negotiation process and minimize the opposition from the advocates of a tougher stance on Belarus.

An important development that took place in the period in question is the statement by the Belarusian Foreign Ministry about the decision to satisfy the request by Sweden and accredit the Swedish charge d'affaires. Following the diplomatic scandal, when Belarus and Sweden shut each other's embassies in August 2012, that was a crucial step towards mending differences in the relations with Sweden and the European Union as a whole.

The most important events of the two spring months were recorded in the scope of Belarus's relationships with Lithuania and Latvia. A working meeting between the Belarusian and Latvian foreign ministers took place in Viciebsk on 10 April. The ministers managed to align their positions and, possibly, even outline the roadmap for improving the mutual relations, at least that is what Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs said at a meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg on 22 April. In Viciebsk, the Latvian delegation took part in the signing of the Intergovernmental agreement on the regime of the Belarusian-Latvian state border.

Prime Minister Michail Miasnikovič's visit to Lithuania naturally became the most high-profile event of March and April. It was the highest-level visit of a Belarusian official to a foreign country since the presidential election of 2010. The official reason for the visit was the IX International Belarusian-Lithuanian Economic Forum; although there are no doubts that the political relationship was front and center during the meetings in Lithuania. Miasnikovič confirmed this when saying *"We believe that Lithuania's presidency in the EU in 2013 is an absolute must for us to make a reality of all the additional opportunities that we have in the Belarus-EU framework and make serious progress on the way to the normalization of Belarusian-European relations."*

During Miasnikovič's visit to Lithuania, Belarus closed the deal with Lithuania to acquire a 30% shareholding in a dry bulk cargo terminal in the seaport of Klaipeda. Belarus thus offered Lithuania a sort of guarantee of transit of Belarusian potash fertilizers via that country. Apparently, the contract is supposed to help Belarus garner Lithuania's support in its bid to improve the relationship with Europe.

The period under monitoring is also marked by certain changes in the rhetoric of the Belarusian authorities regarding the European Union. Their negative attitude is gradually replaced by neutral statements, which add up to "we do not tolerate dictates, but we are very much interested in improving our relations." The Belarusian audience is still fed the standard explanation of the sources of the confrontation with the European Union. There are several usual arguments—first, Belarus has close ties with Russia; second, "no one wants an independent and freestanding Belarus"; and third, "no one wants a competitor in the center of Europe."

The same points were voiced during the annual address by Aliaksandr Lukashenka to the Belarusian nation and parliament on 19 April. He described the current status of Belarus's relations with the European Union when talking to journalists in Homiel Region on 26 April. He said: *"There is a process going on with the Europeans... We made it clear that our politics is absolutely transparent; we do not want any spats with the Europeans, we are a part of Europe, moreover, we are its geographical center. We would like a normal relationship with the European countries."* *"If you want to talk, let's talk. If not, let's wait."*

Forecast for the near term

Diplomatic contacts with EU representatives have reached a level, where both sides need to make practical steps towards each other and meet each other's terms in order to make more progress. The EU expects the Belarusian authorities to release the political prisoners who still remain behind the bars, whereas for official Minsk there are two priorities—to have the EU give up on its policy of sanctions and be invited to the November Eastern Partnership summit at the high level.

March-April 2013

In a few months to come, discussions of these matters will necessarily result in some specific moves by both parties. Some of the political prisoners may be released, and Foreign Minister Makiej may be allowed to visit the EU. Negotiations will continue, and high-level talks will become habitual.

Small border traffic with Lithuania and Poland remains on the agenda. The issue is especially relevant for Belarus's relationship with Lithuania, which is this country's main hope for the improvement of its relations with Brussels. Official Minsk attributes the absence of progress in the small border traffic issue to the need to thoroughly study the experience of the implementation of the identical agreement with Latvia. However, as is known, Lukashenka made no secret that the real reason for procrastination is the factor of the poor political relations. One cannot rule out that the two countries may reach progress in this issue in the next few months.

March-April 2013

Development of Belarus-China Relations

+13



0

Summary index: +13

Total positive points: +13

Total negative points: 0

Main trends

1) In March and April 2013, Belarusian-Chinese relations were developing quite smoothly in the track outlined by earlier agreements. A campaign to intensify efforts in Southeast Asia and other regions of the world, the challenge of improving the relationship with the West and some stormy events in the Russian front have somewhat overshadowed the Chinese vector of the foreign policy pursued by official Minsk.

2) During the period under review, it became clear that the hopes of the Belarusian establishment to attain some sort of political breakthrough in the relations with China in the wake of the election of a new party and state administration in that country (on 14 March, Xi Jinping became president of China) were vain. Meanwhile, the Belarusian expert community is increasingly concerned that Belarusian-Chinese relations are developing according to the Chinese scenario and bring more economic benefits to Beijing than to Minsk. These discussions alone caused serious concerns of the Chinese diplomats who work in Belarus. However, the Belarusian administration still hopes to profit from potential multi-billion bailout investments from China.

Description of the key events

On 19 April, President Lukashenka traditionally lauded the engagement with China in his annual address to the nation and parliament. According to the head of state, "*...it [engagement] has reached a higher level of credit and investment cooperation. We have been talking a lot and doing a lot about the China-Belarus Industrial Park. I believe it essential to step up collaboration with Chinese partners in telecommunications, IT and renovation of cable networks in our country.*"

In March and April, the China-Belarus Industrial Park (CBIP) indeed took a front seat—the general layout of the Park was submitted for public hearings, and the CBIP project was officially presented in Guangzhou and Harbin. State ideologists, specifically Deputy Director of the Information and Analysis Center at the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Belarus Aliaksiej Macevila, are drawing stunning pictures of the immediate economic prosperity in Belarus as soon as it launched the CBIP. However, in his article 'Mirror Park' A. Macevila himself asked the questions that many Belarusians have been asking for more than a year now, while receiving no answers—there is no specific list of productions and companies, no reported assessment of foreign workforce, and the future of many cottages near Smaliavičy remains vague. Nevertheless, even the deputy director of the Information and Analysis Center failed to answer these questions, making an optimistic assumption that everything will be fine. Unfortunately, the main question—why it is Belarus that should become the springboard for Chinese investments in Eastern Europe—remained unanswered, and so was the question what Beijing will ask in exchange if Belarus is really that springboard.

Being well aware that the CBIP will not produce any real results any time soon, and that



these real results may be quite modest, the Belarusian Foreign Ministry is trying to do its best to improve the situation with the permanently increasing deficit in Belarus's trade with China. In March and April 2013, Belarusian Ambassador to China V. Buria held a series of meetings with potential partners, and on 25 April, a large Chinese delegation of businessmen was received by Deputy Prime Minister A. Tozik.

Credit cooperation with China is also of major interest to the broad public. China's role in the flotation of Belarusian bonds in the markets of Southeast Asia is uncertain. Official Beijing naturally provided assistance in this matter (this is proved by the numerous trips of representatives of the National Bank, Belarusian Finance Ministry and Economy Ministry to China in the period from November 2012 through February 2013). However, the fact that China de facto refused to place Belarus's sovereign bonds abroad indicates the pragmatic position of China concerning Belarus.

The Belarusian Finance Ministry has committed the loan amounting to more than USD 322 million that it previously received from the Export-Import Bank of China to RUP Mahilioŭaŭtador for the reconstruction of the Babrujsk- Žlobin section of the M-5/E271 Minsk-Homiel motorway. However, the loan was extended by the Chinese side previously and was mentioned in one of our previous issues (No.11). Therefore, out of the broadly advertised USD 15-16 billion worth of Chinese loans, nothing was provided to Belarus in March and April 2013.

During the period in question, some indirect evidence of the rivalry between Russia and China over China's penetration in Belarus became conspicuous. Despite the fact that the new Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, made his first visit as the president to Russia rather than the originally expected United States, many experts argue that tensions are building up in Russian-Chinese relations. Belarus is an essential part of this competition, although it mostly develops behind the curtains and is virtually unknown to the wide public.

During his annual address to the nation and parliament on 19 April, Lukashenka dressed down the Energy Ministry for nontransparent collaboration with Russian investors (he never mentioned the country, though, but it became known as a result of inspections) in the project to upgrade the Biaroza water power plant. Some unnamed diplomats were accused of lobbying for dubious companies (there are reasons to believe that the president referred to some of the staff members of the Belarusian Embassy in Russia). The situation is especially spicy because China Machinery Engineering Corporation is engaged in the reconstruction of that water power plant. The corruption scandal in the Energy Ministry might as well have been caused by the rivalry between Russia and China in the Belarusian market.

Forecast for the near term

The relations between Belarus and China will likely remain in the same track in the few months to come. Significant political contacts are highly unlikely, although at the level of ministries and agencies contacts will remain quite intense. Chinese capital will continue infiltrating in the Belarusian banking system and high technologies. Breakthroughs in the implementation of the most significant Belarusian-Chinese projects, such as the CBIP, are unlikely, and so are new substantial Chinese loans to Belarus.

In a longer term, however, certain complications in the bilateral relationship cannot be ruled out, possibly triggered by a chain of technological problems in the operation of Chinese equipment. As competition grows stronger between Russia and China, more problems may appear for Belarus, including the need to make a hard choice between the two partners.

The increase in the number of independent studies of Belarusian-Chinese relations, which tend to contrast strikingly with the rousing statements by official ideologists (for instance, the research study by Andrei Yeliseyeu 'Belarus-China: Much Sound And Little Sense') has caused concerns in the Chinese Embassy in Minsk, which is why a surge in the number of pro-Chinese publications in the state media should be expected soon.

March-April 2013

Development of relations with the 'developing world'

(Asia, Africa, Latin America)

+25



0

Summary index: +25

Total positive points: +25

Total negative points: 0

Main trends

- 1) The main trend is the surge in the activities targeting the developing world. Belarus had minimized these contacts in previous months; therefore, the Foreign Ministry and the administration of the country took specific steps to step up collaboration with the developing world. President Lukashenka led the campaign, paying visits to Southeast Asia and the Near East.
- 2) While looking for new partners (especially in Southeast Asia and Latin America), Belarus is also working on expanding new forms of engagement and promoting its products in new markets. In its relations with financially and legally reliable countries Belarus allows credit schemes of supplies.
- 3) Some of the countries in the Near East (the monarchies of the Persian Gulf and Turkey) find it an important aspect of their relationships with Belarus to hold this country from collaborating with Syria and Iran. They mostly succeed, while enabling the Belarusian administration to draw certain benefits from those countries' interest and increase its international influence. This position is yet another proof of the extreme pragmatism of Belarus's foreign policy.

Description of the key events

Southeast Asia

One of the main events of the period under review is the visit by President Lukashenka to Southeast Asia. According to official media, the tour resulted in approximately USD 400 million worth of contracts. On 18-20 March, the 'state visit' by the Belarusian state leader to **Indonesia** took place. It was Lukashenka's first visit to that country, which has become one of the foreign policy priorities for Belarus since 2009. An interesting new feature of collaboration is the new format for the deliveries of Belarusian engineering products. *"Importantly, this package that we offer includes export crediting on attractive terms, and maintenance."* So far Belarus has been trying to avoid crediting mechanisms and has focused entirely on sales. Lukashenka emphasized Belarus's willingness to work with Indonesia in the military and technical sphere¹.

On 21 March, Lukashenka went to **Singapore**. That country is important not so much as a trade partner—in 2012, two-way trade totaled only USD 26.5 million—as a regional meeting point and a major communications, business, financial and technology hub. Singapore is expected to help Belarus with its limited personnel and financial potential to boost its activity in Southeast Asia. One example is the Singaporean office of ZAO Belarusian Potash Company, which accounts for potash supplies to Southeast Asia. Belarus is

1. On 19 March, Aliaksandr Lukashenka met with President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. 19.03.2013 <http://www.president.gov.by/press143072.html#doc>

also interested in raising Singaporean finance, both as investments and by way of placing Belarusian securities in the Singaporean financial market.

An important aspect of this engagement is the affinity towards the Singaporean authoritarian state model, which has been repeatedly displayed by many Belarusian top officials. However, Lukashenka understands the Singaporean model in his own way, as a state that is independent of external factors. *"The first prime minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, relied on the country's own forces and over a brief period of time, by historical standards, turned the country from a 'third world' nation into a global leader,"* the Belarusian president said, adding quite expressively that Belarus chose the development path based on the interest of its people, the way Singapore did². The two countries reached mutual understanding politically, and on 24-25, Speaker of the Singaporean Parliament Halimah Yacob paid a visit to Belarus.

On 27-29 March, Hanoi played host to the first round of talks between the Customs Union and Common Economic Area (CEA) Member-States and **Vietnam** over the creation of a free trade area. Belarus was represented by a delegation led by Deputy Director of the Department for Foreign Economic Activity of the Foreign Ministry Ihar Nazaruk. The post-Soviet integration initiative therefore runs a good chance of moving beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union.

The relations between Belarus and Vietnam have a stable status. The two months in question contributed to the positive dynamics — on 2-10 April, a Belarusian delegation led by Economy Minister Mikalaj Snapkoŭ paid a visit to Vietnam and Laos. The delegation also included representatives of the Foreign Ministry, Industry Ministry, State Science and Technology Committee, some concerns and companies.

On 11-12 April, a Vietnamese delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son visited Belarus; ministerial political consultations were held. Vietnam will remain one of the key partners of Belarus in the developing world.

Near East and North Africa

Turkey. Instead of the announced visit by a Turkish delegation led by a deputy science minister, on 29 March, a sensational visit by the Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, took place and was somewhat misinterpreted by the Belarusian media. That was the first visit to Belarus by a Turkish official of this level. According to official reports by the Belarusian media, the Turkish delegation visited Minsk to sign an agreement on mutual visa-free travel and readmission.

However, these documents could have been signed without the participation of the foreign minister himself, who is currently incredibly busy taking part in the international initiatives concerning the Syrian crisis. Davutoğlu has de facto authored a new expansionary Turkish policy in the Near East, and the visit should be regarded in the framework of the Syrian problem, which dominates the Turkish external agenda. Unlike official reports by the Belarusian state media, the Turkish Foreign Ministry and the media admitted that Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej and Davutoğlu addressed regional issues, including Syria and Iraq³.

Given the current perception of Belarus as an ally of the Syrian government, as well as the idea that the efforts to depose the Syrian government have encountered obvious difficulties, Davutoğlu's visit to Minsk had probably been caused by the need to discuss the Syrian issue and could have incorporated a proposal of possible support by the Turkish side for Belarus's campaign to mend its relations with the West in exchange for the ces-

2. Singapore is an ideal platform to promote Belarusian products in the Asia-Pacific Region 21.03.2013 <http://www.president.gov.by/press143139.html#doc>

3. Dışişleri Bakanı Davutoğlu Belarus'a bir çalışma ziyareti gerçekleştirdi. <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-davutoglu-belarus-a-bir-calisma-ziyareti-gerceklestirdi.tr.mfa>; Davutoğlu, Belarus'ta. 29 Mart 2013 <http://www.yirmidort.tv/politika/davutoglu-belarusta-h35975.html>

March-April 2013

sation of its contacts with official Damascus.

Turkey and such a prominent international figure as Davutoğlu could indeed facilitate Belarus's contacts in the West, but Ankara's interest in Belarus was hardly sincere and will hardly remain in the long run. Turkey must have been more interested in liquidating a channel of arms supplies to the Syrian government from Belarus, something that the U.S. government has already accused Minsk of.

Iran. On 28-29 March, an Iranian delegation led by that country's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast paid a visit to Belarus. Ministerial consultations between the two countries centered on information issues; and several lower-level meetings took place. Belarus has minimized its contacts with Teheran over the last two years, refraining from sending high-level officials to that country and receiving sporadic Iranian delegations. This behavior has been prompted by both the reluctance to cause a negative response by the West and development of relations with Arab countries (Qatar and the UAE), which were encouraging Belarus to phase down its relations with Iran, which the conservative monarchies of the Persian Gulf regard as a threat.

The political frictions between various groups of the Iranian establishment in the past few years have also produced a negative impact on the relationship between Belarus and Iran—they are especially strong ahead of the presidential election in Iran, slated for this June. It is noteworthy that against the backdrop of these tensions the Belarusian ambassador to Iran in March met with one of the most scandalous figures in Iranian politics—advisor to the Iranian president and head of the Secretariat of the Non-Aligned Movement Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei⁴. Mashaei may become one of the likeliest candidates at the upcoming elections.

The UAE. On 25-26 March, A. Lukashenka paid a visit to the United Arab Emirates. The format of the visit was not quite clear, because the Belarusian president met with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, but not any of the higher-ranking officials corresponding to Lukashenka's own status. According to official statements, Belarus and the UAE addressed collaboration in agriculture, industry and military and technical cooperation.

In pursuance of previous agreements, Minsk hosted the first meeting of the Joint Committee on Cooperation between the Governments of Belarus and the United Arab Emirates on 24-25 April. Unlike similar commissions for cooperation with other foreign countries, the level of representatives of the two countries was emphatically high. The Belarusian part of the Committee was headed by Foreign Minister Makiej, and the UAE part was led by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash. Following the meeting, Belarus and the UAE signed a number of documents between various agencies of the two countries. The UAE is of limited importance to Belarus's foreign policy. In 2012, two-way trade came to USD 20.8 million; Belarus recorded a USD 3.7 million surplus. At the same time, there is no doubt that the UAE is an important source of investments and an important market. Also, the UAE is a significant regional meeting point and communications, business and financial hub.

Latin America. The death of the Venezuelan state leader meant that the Belarusian administration lost its reliable ally in the region. This explains the high level of the Belarusian delegation to the funeral of Hugo Chavez. Following the official delegation comprising Head of the Presidential Administrative Department Viktor Šejman and First Deputy Prime Minister Uladzimir Siamaška, Lukashenka himself went to Caracas to attend the funeral (8 March).

4. On the meeting between Ambassador of Belarus V. Rybak and advisor to the Iranian president and head of the Secretariat of the Non-Aligned Movement E.R. Mashaei 06-03-2013 http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d6f4d8ae8865cea9.html

During his stay in Caracas, the president held a meeting with Bolivian President Evo Morales, where he said: "Belarus will do its best to establish the same relations with Bolivia that it had with Venezuela." Morales confirmed his intention to develop bilateral relations with Belarus. Lukashenka invited his Bolivian counterpart to visit Belarus and agreed to discuss several trilateral joint projects worth USD 2.3 billion with the new administration of Venezuela. It is planned that during the first half of 2013, the Belarusian Embassy in Venezuela will put together a working group to be coordinated by V. Šejman that will run the projects. Lukashenka also met with the leaders of Ecuador, Cuba and Haiti⁵.

Belarus welcomed the election of Nicolás Maduro, a close ally to former president Hugo Chavez, as new president of Venezuela⁶. If Venezuela manages to preserve at least some political stability, Belarus will be able to continue its engagement with that country, even partially.

On 14-16 March, an official Cuban delegation led by First Deputy Foreign Minister Marcelino Medina Gonzalez visited Belarus. A new round of Belarusian-Cuban consultations targeting an expansion of bilateral cooperation took place, accompanied by a number of lower-level meetings. In 2012, trade between Belarus and Cuba doubled, mostly owing to an increase in Cuban sugar supplies, to USD 102 million. Belarus exported USD 44.8 million worth of goods to Cuba.

Forecast for the near term

The intensity of the relations will likely go down. In March and April, it was unprecedentedly high partially due to the need to overcome the previous slump in the relations with the developing world. Belarus has been unable to fully restore these relations because of the political instability in many countries and in the wake of political crises in the Near East (Syria and Iran).

South and Southeast Asia, as well as the Near East, will remain the focus for Belarus's efforts to expand cooperation with the developing nations. New attempts to broaden contacts in Africa will follow, especially with Nigeria, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique.

Politically, Belarusian diplomacy has lost its traditional partners in North Africa — Libya and Egypt — for quite long, because the instability in those two countries will remain for a few years to come. Minsk has only one option—to redirect its efforts to Morocco and Algeria. The Belarusian ambassador to Libya already visited Morocco in April.

It looks like Belarus has discovered a quite safe scenario to cooperate with the antagonistic countries of the Near East and will keep to it in future. Minsk refrains from the excessively provocative support for Teheran and Damascus, but realizes that it is its ties with Iran and Syria that in some measure encourage the Arab regimes and Turkey, which confront those two countries, to seek contacts with Minsk. Therefore, it is lucrative for Minsk to keep its relations with Iran and Syria vague, i.e. to make it look like there is a possibility of serious connections with Teheran and Damascus, while keeping meticulously in line with international sanctions.

5. Aliaksandr Lukashenka attends Hugo Chavez state funeral 08.03.2013, <http://www.president.gov.by/press142816.html#doc>

6. Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus following the presidential election in Venezuela, Minsk, 15 April 2013, http://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c4c8d107e6ebffce.html

March-April 2013

Development of Belarus-Ukraine relations

Summary index: +4

Total positive points: +8

Total negative points: -4

+8

-4

Main trends

- 1) The period under review saw a rapid resolution of the most sensitive issues for Belarus, namely, the deliveries of Belarusian oil products to Ukraine. Ukraine is one of the key markets for Belarusian oil products. Apparently, following reshuffles in the Ukrainian government and replacement of the official supervising the relations with Belarus (S. Arbuzov, a key member of the 'Family', took over from Petro Poroshenko), official Minsk has managed to find some common ground with V. Yanukovych's circle.
- 2) Against this backdrop, the political contacts between the two countries 'thawed', which is confirmed by a telephone conversation between the two heads of state and their agreement to have a top level meeting soon.

Description of the key events

The months of March and April saw a new round of trade wars between Belarus and Ukraine. On 11 March, the Ukrainian Economic Development Ministry registered a complaint of four Ukrainian oil refineries with a request to carry out an anti-subsidy investigation into the import of Belarusian oil products. The complainants requested the ministry to impose a USD180-per-ton import duty on Belarusian products for five years.

According to them, Belarus provides its oil refiners with six types of subsidies worth a total of USD 180.84 per ton—the exemption from a fee amounting to 30% of currency proceeds (USD 165 per ton), partial payment of loan interests (USD 12.3 per ton), budget credits and loans (USD 1.24 per ton). Even partisan experts considered the claims abstruse; however, the complaints were accepted for further review.

Experts noted that the main lobbyists of the anti-Belarusian arrangements were the persons and organizations that control the Ukrainian oil refineries that have not yet undertaken modernization and are therefore unable to effectively compete with Belarusian imports. The situation changed a bit in early March. TNK-BP refused to sell Lisichansk Refinery, while the organizations controlled by the oligarchic group known as the 'Family' (led by President Yanukovych's older son Oleksandr) purchased Odessa Oil Refinery from LUKOIL. The 'Family', which currently controls the government, was supposed to have the final say in the possible imposition of the prohibitive duty.

In mid-March, Prime Minister M. Azarov, a mouthpiece for the 'Family', slammed the attempts to impose import duties on Belarusian oil products. He focused on the possibility that fuel prices might hike in Ukraine following the move. As a result, on 25 April, the



Interdepartmental Commission for Foreign Trade decided to reject the request to carry out the probe.

Experts attribute the decision to two factors. First, gasoline prices would have substantially increased in Ukraine if the duty had been introduced, which is extremely dangerous for the incumbents, who have recently grown increasingly unpopular. Second, there are serious problems with the supplies of crude oil. Processing Azeri crude in Ukraine is unprofitable, whereas Russia is reluctant to increase its supplies to Ukraine.

However, those were not the only reasons. The import of Belarusian gasoline is controlled by the 'Family' and must be an object of machinations that employ 'grey' schemes. Ukrainian experts estimate smuggled supplies of gasoline to Ukraine to account for up to 50% of the total imports, and about half of all imports are re-exported via off-shores. In February, Ukraine imported 398,608 tons of oil products, of them 187,336 tons were re-exported (via Belize and the Virgin Islands).

In early April, Belarus de facto shut its market to Ukrainian confectioneries. The Belarusian customs service started stopping consignments of Ukrainian confectionery products on the border citing the need to conduct additional inspections. At the same time, the two countries show their intention to resolve the conflict. Experts believe that the 'candy' war was caused, first of all, by the wish of the Belarusian side to restrain the expansion of the Ukrainian makers, who put pressure on the Belarusian producers, and, second, these are preventive measures that manifest the readiness of this country to oppose Ukraine's attempts to limit the import of Belarusian dairy products.

On 14 March, heads of the border agencies of Ukraine, Belarus and Poland M. Lytvyn, A. Boječka and D. Tracz signed an intergovernmental agreement on the point of junction of the state borders of the three countries thus creating a legal framework for the demarking of the point of junction of the state borders of the three states and facilitating arrangements to implement the state border regime in the locality.

On 4 April, President V. Yanukovich appointed former defense minister Mykhailo Yezhel new Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Belarus. Yezhel is a less influential figure than his predecessor V. Tikhonov. He does not represent the ruling elites; when a minister, he backed the oligarch Yuriy Ivaniushchenko, who has been losing his influence recently. Some experts believe, though, that the appointment may give an impetus to the bilateral collaboration in arms trade.

On 12 April, First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus U. Siamaška paid a working visit to Ukraine. He held talks with First Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine S. Arbuzov and Prime Minister M. Azarov to address ways to boost two-way trade, new projects of cooperation in power engineering, transport, mechanical engineering and agribusiness. An agreement was reached to hold this May the 22nd session of the bilateral intergovernmental commission presided by the vice-premiers. Also, Minister of Agrarian Policy M. Prysyzhnyuk is expected to pay a visit to Belarus to try to resolve some of the moot points. M. Azarov called for "reanimating our agreements on the creation of joint ventures to produce farm machinery."

On 15 April, Presidents V. Yanukovich and A. Lukashenka had a telephone conversation. The official media report says that the heads of state reached an agreement in principle to hold a top level meeting this May." The presidents also discussed the bilateral framework, the relationship between Ukraine and the Customs Union and potential for the creation of a civic movement of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia—this issue will be addressed by the two presidents "during the face-to-face meeting".

March-April 2013

Forecast for the near term

The establishment of mutually beneficial business contacts between official Minsk and the close circle of the Ukrainian president may set the stage for a more active bilateral collaboration.

There is a possibility that during the upcoming meeting between the two presidents, the Belarusian administration will complete the ratification of the State Border Treaty. This means that the single most lingering problem of the bilateral relations will finally be removed from the agenda.

It can also be predicted that in its ongoing geopolitical game official Kyiv will be interested in stepping up its collaboration with Minsk. This direction will also be highly sought if Ukraine keeps on 'flirting' with the European Union, while hoping to have some support from other Customs Union entities to mitigate the Kremlin's attempts to punish Ukraine, and, much more likely, in case Ukraine gravitates towards the Customs Union. In the latter case, Ukraine will have to seek support of the members of the Customs Union other than Russia in order to work out a common stand on how to minimize Moscow's appetites.

Annex

Catalogue of events underlying the relations development index.

Belarus-Russia relations

Date	Event	Point
4 March	A. Lukashenka meets with State Secretary of the Union State G. Rapota. The two address the agenda for the Supreme State Council session slated for 15 March.	+2
11 March	A. Lukashenka meets with Omsk Region Governor V. Nazarov during a visit by a delegation of that Russian region on 10-13 March. On 12 March, the delegation meets with Prime Minister M. Miasnikovič.	+2
11-12 March	Talks between First Deputy Prime Minister U. Siamaška and Deputy Prime Minister of Russia A. Dvorkovich. Belarus and Russia agree oil supplies in the second quarter of 2013 at 5.75 million tons.	+3
14 March	Belarusian Ambassador to Russia I. Pietryšenka meets with Governor of Leningrad Region A. Drozdenko.	+1
14 March	The Belarusian government approves additional agreement No.5 to the Agreement with OAO Sberbank of Russia on the terms of lending for the acquisition of Belarusian-made products in the Russian Federation.	+1
14 March	Belarus will increase supplies of oil products to the Russian market from the originally planned 2.1 million tons to 3.3 million tons, according to the press service of the Belarusian government.	+2
15 March	Belarusian Prime Minister M. Miasnikovič meets with St. Petersburg Governor G. Poltavchenko.	+2
15 March	A. Lukashenka takes part in a session of the Supreme State Council of the Union State. Russia does not make up its mind on additional loans to Belarus.	-3
17 March	Belarusian Ambassador to Russia I. Pietryšenka meets with Governor of Altai Krai A. Karlin.	+1
22 March	OAO Beltransgaz plans to increase transit of Russian natural gas via Belarus by at least 2 billion cubic meters in 2013, says OAO Beltransgaz Director General U. Majoraŭ.	+1
26-29 March	Joint staff training of the military administration of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation.	+1
27-29 March	Session of the Joint Belarusian-Russian Advisory Group for Arms Control.	+1
29 March	On 29 March, First Deputy Prime Minister U. Siamaška meets with State Secretary of the Union State G. Rapota.	+2
2 April	A. Lukashenka meets with Nizhny Novgorod Region Governor V. Shantsev during a visit by a delegation of that Russian region on 1-3 April.	+2
2 April	Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus U. Andrejčanka meets with First Deputy Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation I. Melnikov.	+2

March-April 2013

Date	Event	Point
2 April	Belarus and Russia reach an agreement on the access of Belarusian organizations to the nuclear power facilities in Russia and third countries under construction by the Russian side.	+1
4-5 April	Novosibirsk plays host to a session of the permanent seminar for Union State development at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union State.	+1
5 April	A. Lukashenka signs Decree No.155 'On the construction of a multi-use complex in Minsk' to hand over the land plot with Maskoŭski bus station to OAO Beltransgaz.	+1
8 April	Belarusian Industry Minister Dz. Kaciarynič meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Industry and Trade of Tatarstan R. Zaripov.	+1
8-10 April	Visit by a delegation of Chelyabinsk Region led by Agriculture Minister S. Sushkov. An agreement is signed for that Russian region to purchase 100 Belarusian-made harvesters.	+1
10-11 April	Consultations between the Belarusian and Russian Foreign Ministries.	+1
10 April	Belarusian Ambassador to Russia I. Pietryšenka meets with chief of staff of the Audit Chamber of the Russian Federation S. Shakhrai.	+1
11 April	A. Lukashenka meets with Governor of Penza Region V. Bochkarov. V. Bochkarov meets with Deputy Prime Minister M. Rusy.	+2
15-19 April	Days of St. Petersburg in Belarus. Industry Minister Dz. Kaciarynič and Minsk Region Governor B. Batura meet with Deputy Governor of St. Petersburg I. Golikov.	+1
16 April	Deputy Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus V. Huminski meets with a delegation of Yaroslavl State Duma led by its Chairman I. Osipov.	+1
17 April	Belarusian Ambassador to Russia I. Pietryšenka meets with minister of the government of Moscow S. Cherebin.	+1
19 April	A. Lukashenka's address to the Belarusian nation and the National Assembly of Belarus. Critical remarks about the merger between MAZ and KAMAZ.	-2
	Claims of the relationship of allies with Russia; support for the idea to build the second line of the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline.	+1
22 April	Joint Belarusian-Russian exercise of the special operations forces.	+1
23 April	A. Lukashenka meets with Russian Defense Minister S. Shoygu. A statement is made about the commitment to create a Russian airbase in Belarus. A joint board session of the Defense Ministries of Belarus and Russia.	+3
23 April	Deputy Prime Minister A. Kalinin makes a statement that Belarus will keep its efforts to sell the state shareholding in MTS cellular company.	-2
25 April	A delegation of Belarusian businesses meets with Yaroslavl Region Governor S. Yastrebov.	+1
26 April	A. Lukashenka makes a positive statement about the development of military and technical cooperation with Russia.	+1
	He disavows the statement about the creation of the Russian airbase in Belarus.	-2
26 April	A board meeting of the Eurasian Economic Commission prescribes to classify the compound organic solvent as an oil product subject to an export duty.	+1
27 April	The first meeting of the Business Cooperation Council of Belarus and Novosibirsk Region.	+1

March-April 2013

Date	Event	Point
29 April	Rosagromash accuses Belarus of unfair competition in the market for agricultural machinery.	-2
29 April	Belarusian Ambassador to Russia I. Pietryšenka meets with Deputy Chairman of the Government of Kaliningrad Region of Russia A. Silanov. A cooperation exchange of Belarusian and Kaliningrad companies in Kaliningrad.	+1
30 April	Belarus receives another USD440 million installment of the EurAsEC ACF loan.	+2
April	Repeated positive statements by high-ranking Belarusian officials about the project to build the Yamal-Europe-2 pipeline.	+1
Total		+37

Belarus-EU relations

Date	Event	Point
6 March	Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliena Kupčyna meets with Ambassador of France to Belarus Michel Raineri.	+1
13 March	Brussels plays host to the fifth meeting of the Belarus–EU Technical Dialogue on Environment and Climate Changes.	+1
14 March	Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej receives Political Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia Andrejs Pildegovičs, who pays a working visit to Belarus.	+1
19-22 March	Aliena Kupčyna pays a visit to Paris.	+1
25 March	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Head of EU Delegation to Belarus Ambassador Maira Mora.	+1
28 March	Uladzimir Makiej receives Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Andrius Krivas.	+1
28 March	Uladzimir Makiej meets with Ambassador of Italy to Belarus Arnaldo Abeti.	+1
8-10 April	Aliena Kupčyna visits Brussels.	+1
9 April	Belarus satisfies the request by the Swedish side to accredit the chargé d'affaires of that country to Belarus.	+2
9 April	Uladzimir Makiej meets with Ambassador of Lithuania to Belarus Evaldas Ignatavičius.	+1
10 April	Uladzimir Makiej holds a working meeting with Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs; the Intergovernmental agreement on the regime of the Belarusian-Latvian state border is signed.	+2
10-11 April	Visit by a delegation of Brest Region led by Brest Region Governor Kanstancin Sumar to Torino (Italy).	+1
15 April	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Ambassador of Lithuania to Belarus Evaldas Ignatavičius.	+1
15 April	Aliena Kupčyna meets with German Ambassador to Belarus Wolfram Maas.	+1
15 April	Aliena Kupčyna meets with the chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic to the Republic of Belarus.	+1
17-19 April	IX International Belarusian-Lithuanian Economic Forum in Klaipėda, attended by the prime ministers of Lithuania and Belarus. Belarus acquires a part of a terminal in the seaport of Klaipėda.	+3

March-April 2013

25 April	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Ambassador of Poland to Belarus Leszek Szerepka.	+1
March-April	Belarusian-Finnish consultations between the Foreign Ministries at the level of the heads of the political departments (5 March); Belarusian-Estonian consultations between the Foreign Ministries on consular issues (20-21 March); 11th session of the Belarusian-German Working Group on Trade and Investments (21 March); Belarusian-Lithuanian consultations between the Foreign Ministries (28 March); 5th meeting of the Belarusian-Czech mixed commission for economic, industrial and scientific and technical cooperation (23-25 April); political consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Slovakia (26 April).	+2
March-April	A series of contacts between Belarusian diplomats and parliamentarians of the EU Member-States.	+1
Total		+24

Belarus-China relations

Date	Event	Point
4 March	Belarusian Ambassador to China V. Buria meets with the mayor of Harbin.	+1
13 March	Belarusian Ambassador to China V. Buria meets with Li Fenglin, director of the Research Institute at the PRC State Council.	+1
14 March	A. Lukashenka congratulates Xi Jinping on his election as president of China and invites him to visit Belarus.	+1
2-16 April	Public hearings of the project 'General Layout of the China-Belarus Industrial Park'.	+1
5 April	The Belarusian Finance Ministry to commit the loan amounting to more than USD322 million received from the Export-Import Bank of China to RUP Mahilioŭaŭtador to finance the reconstruction of the Babrujsk- Žlobin section of the M-5/E271 Minsk-Homiel motorway.	+2
13 April	Belarusian Ambassador to China V. Buria meets with Deputy Director General of China Nuclear Power Engineering Co., Ltd. Zhang Chibo to discuss the creation of electrical power plants using solar cells in Mahilioŭ Region, as well as the construction of a solar panel production.	+1
14-19 April	A Belarusian delegation of construction specialists pays a visit to China. The visit is organized with the assistance of China's CITIC Construction.	+1
19 April	A. Lukashenka's address to the Belarusian nation and the National Assembly of Belarus. Positive remarks about the Belarusian-Chinese cooperation.	+1
23 April	The CBIP is presented in Harbin.	+1
25 April	Deputy Prime Minister A. Tozik meets with Vice-President of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Zhang Wei and a delegation of Chinese businesses.	+1
25 April	The CBIP is presented in Guangzhou.	+1
25 April	The general layout of the China-Belarus Industrial Park is completed. The Belarusian-Chinese business forum is held in Minsk.	+1
Total		+13

Belarus's relations with the 'developing world'

Date	Event	Point
8 March	President Lukashenka attends the funeral of the Venezuelan president. Talks with the leaders of Latin American countries.	+3
14-16 March	Working visit to Belarus by a Cuban delegation led by the first deputy foreign minister.	+1
18-20 March	Lukashenka's visit to Indonesia.	+3
21-24 March	Lukashenka's visit to Singapore.	+3
25-26 March	Lukashenka's visit to the UAE.	+3
27-29 March	A delegation led by the deputy director of the Department for Foreign Economic Activity of the Foreign Ministry of Belarus pays a visit to Vietnam.	+1
28-29 March	An Iranian delegation led by the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry visits Belarus.	+1
29 March	The Turkish foreign minister visits Belarus.	+2
2-10 April	A Belarusian delegation led by the economy minister visits Vietnam.	+2
2-10 April	A Belarusian delegation led by the economy minister visits Laos.	+2
11-12 April	A Vietnamese delegation led by the deputy foreign minister visits Belarus.	+1
24-25 April	The speaker of the Singaporean parliament visits Belarus.	+1
24-25 April	The UAE minister of state for foreign affairs visits Belarus.	+2
Total		+25

Belarus-Ukraine relations

Date	Event	Point
5-6 March	Meeting between the command staffs of Ukraine and Belarus and agreement to hold joint air defense exercise.	+1
14 March	The Agreement on the point of junction of the state borders of Ukraine, Belarus and Poland is signed.	+1
10 April	Belarusian Justice Minister A. Sližeŭski visits Ukraine and signs the Agreement on Cooperation.	+1
12 April	First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus U. Siamaška pays a working visit to Ukraine.	+1
15 April	A telephone conversation between Presidents V. Yanukovych and A. Lukashenka; their agreement to have a top level meeting in May.	+2
March-April	Visit of Prime Minister of Ukraine M. Azarov, announced a while ago, is delayed.	-1
March-April	Finalization of the ratification of the State Border Treaty between Belarus and Ukraine is delayed.	-2
April	The 'gasoline' trade war ends.	+2
April	The 'candy' trade war begins.	-1
Total		+4