

Belarus' FOREIGN POLICY INDEX

№ 22 September–October 2014

Dear readers,

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We are glad to present the twenty-second issue of Belarus Foreign Policy Index, a publication that explores the country's five priority foreign policy dimensions throughout September and October 2014.

Belarus ratified the **Eurasian Economic Union** (EEU) Treaty, albeit with an express proviso that it would meet all of its obligations in the framework of the bloc only if all trade barriers are completely removed. Despite this move to deepen the integration process, there is still plenty of room for tensions to build, one example being the discord over the Russian tax maneuver in the oil sector, as well as the re-export of the products, to which Russia had applied an import ban.

Noteworthy in the relationships with the **European Union** is the significant number of consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and EU member states. As a result of these activities, the EU dimension of the Index for the first time came up to the Russian dimension, settling at 22 points. Efforts to flesh out the bilateral agenda continued, and the third round of consultations on modernization was held.

The relationship between Belarus and **China** became an important source of disillusionment for the Belarusian authorities. In this context, China had to take demonstrative steps to try to resolve the accumulated bilateral issues. These moves are designed to seek to extend the favored treatment for China in Belarus for as long as possible.

Belarusian foreign policy efforts in the **developing countries** were as intense as never before (with 29 points). Moreover, many of those activities were reported in the regions that were previously "undiscovered" by Belarus's foreign policy. The trend towards the search for new solutions in conditions of the rapidly changing international situation became even more apparent.

The relationship with **Ukraine** continued to develop at an impressive pace. Belarus is interested in keeping one of its largest sales markets, whereas Kyiv wishes to ensure the maximum security of its northern border and neutralization of Russia's attempts to impose trade limitations. Belarus's transit significance is growing, while Russia's arrangements to limit imports from Ukraine enable Minsk to fill the vacant market niches.

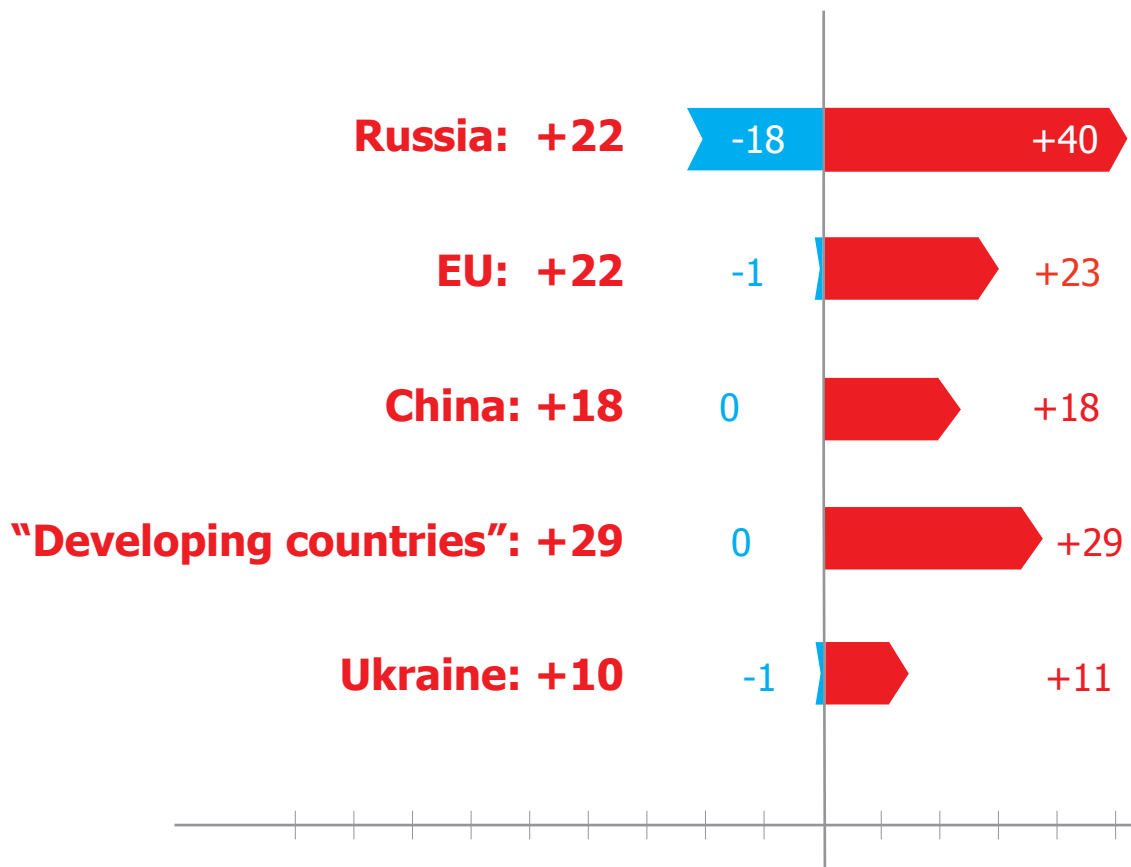
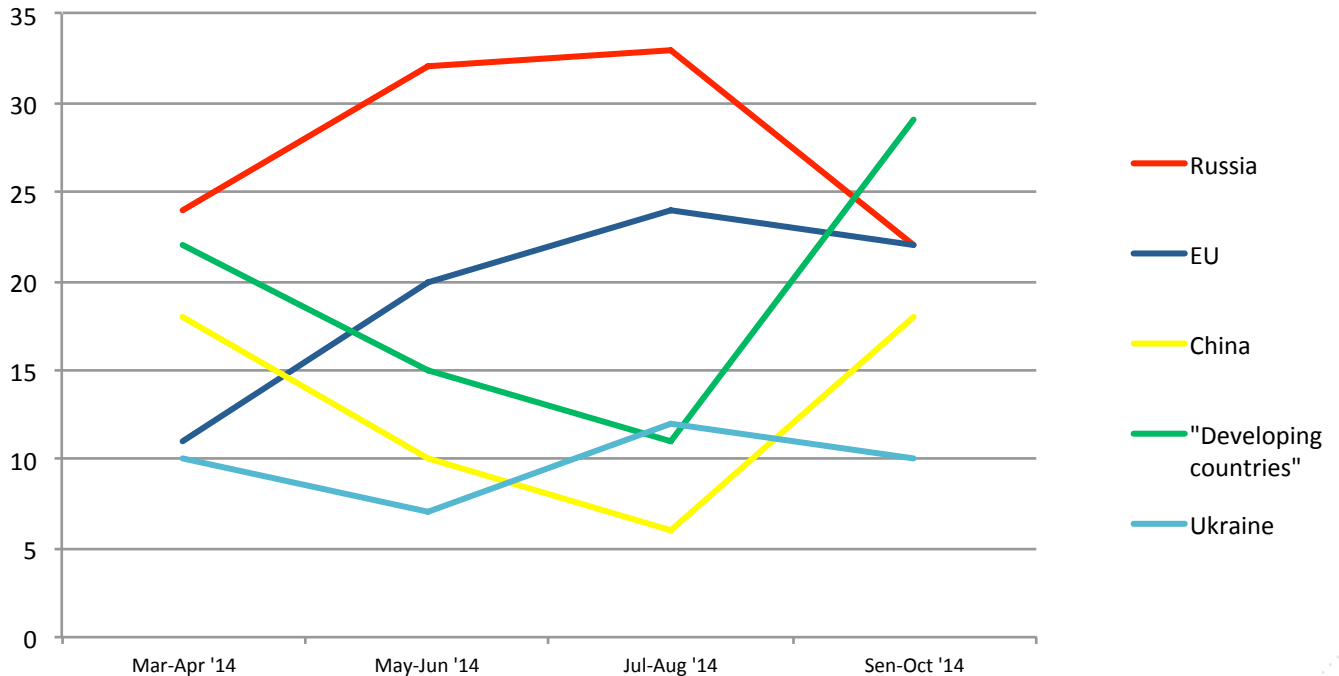
We wish you a pleasant reading and, as always, we kindly invite you to share your comments and insights.

Dzianis Melyantsou

Editor

Belarus Foreign Policy Index

Relations development indices:



Developments in Belarus–Russia relations

+40



-18

Summary index: +22

Total positive points: +40

Total negative points: -18

Main trends

In September and October 2014, contacts between Belarus and Russia were stepped up in both the bilateral and multilateral formats. Official Minsk once again served as a platform for multilateral talks of the CIS nations.

During the two months in question the parliaments of Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan ratified the Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), thus giving a new impetus to Eurasian integration. The forecasts that Belarus would stonewall the ratification being dissatisfied with the limitations and exceptions included in the document proved to have been inaccurate. The ratification did take place; although official Minsk made a special statement that Belarus would meticulously meet its EEU obligations only if its partners removed barriers, limitations and exceptions in trade.

Therefore, despite positive trends in the development of the Belarus–Russia relationship, there is still room for the appearance of tensions. One example is the disagreement between Belarus and Russia caused by the Russian tax maneuver in the oil industry (a reduction in export duties with a simultaneous increase in the minerals extraction tax). Numerous claims to the Belarusian side and instances of return of products back to Belarusian manufacturers initiated by the Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (Rosselkhoznadzor) became another source of tensions, along with Russia's efforts to frustrate the re-export of the banned imports via the Belarusian border.

Description of the key events

In September and October 2014, cooperation between Belarus and Russia further expanded. On 29 September, the Belarusian state budget received USD1.55 billion of Russia's state loan previously approved by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. On 3 October, the Russian government approved another state loan to Belarus amounting to USD10 billion to finance 90% of the contracts associated with the construction of the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant in Astraviec. On 15 October, the commander of the Russian Air Force said that a Russian airbase, where Su-27 fighters would be deployed, was expected to be established in Babrujsk in 2016, and later that month the Russian defense minister reported the completion of supplies of four S-300 air defense systems to Belarus.

The highlights of the period include the ratification of the Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) by the Belarusian parliament on 9 October, as well as the agreement on additional Russian subsidies.

The ratification of the EEU Treaty became possible after Belarus and Russia reached an agreement on the compensation to Belarus for the possible losses caused by Russia's tax maneuver in the oil industry. Although Russia initially took a hard-line position on the issue, it eventually agreed to pay Belarus a compensation amounting to USD700 million by transferring the entire amount of oil export duties to the Belarusian budget in 2015.

Nevertheless, the issue of such compensations in the following years (2016 and 2017) remains unresolved, which leaves room for discrepancies in the future.

The day after the ratification of the EEU Treaty, the heads of the EurAsEC member states signed the agreement on the disestablishment of the organization in connection with the achievement of a higher level of integration in the EEU format.

Despite the positive integration dynamics, representatives of the Belarusian administration continued making critical remarks about Russia. When ratifying the EEU Treaty, the lower chamber of the Belarusian parliament, the House of Representatives, made a special statement about the need to abolish all of the limitations and exceptions in the new integration entity. On 14 October, Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Siamaška said that there were disagreements concerning integration projects with Russian partners. On 17 October, the Belarusian president made a few barbed remarks about Russia during his press conference for the Russian regional media. Specifically, he referred to the Russian tax maneuver as a manifestation of that country's imperial ambition and claimed that some of the lands in the Pskov, Smolensk, and Bryansk Regions of Russia had once been the territory of Belarus. At the same time, on 13 October, Lukashenka said that Belarus could not see itself apart from Russia.

Another source of possible tensions in the relationship between the two countries is the re-export of the products that are banned in Russia, especially foodstuffs, from the countries that supported sanctions against Russia. The Belarusian side has always emphasized at the official level that it is doing its utmost to prevent illegal re-export. For example, on 1 September, an agreement was reached to set up an interstate working group to improve the system of mutual supplies of animal and plant products.

Nevertheless, during the period under review, Rosselkhoznadzor revealed dozens of instances of the re-export of banned products, and sent illegal consignments back to Belarus. In mid-September, Rosselkhoznadzor complained about Belarusian fish-processing companies, which increased fish purchases from Norway, and in late October, it considered imposing a ban on supplies of Belarusian pork and pork products to Russia. On 27 September, Rosselkhoznadzor even addressed a proposal to the Belarusian government to carry out joint phytosanitary control on the external border of the Customs Union in order to duly account for all products imported in Belarus; however, Belarus rejected the proposal.

Minsk continued to play host to meetings of the OSCE–Ukraine–Russia Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine, which on 5 October resulted in the Minsk ceasefire agreement in the two eastern regions of Ukraine. Belarusian President Lukashenka continued maintaining contacts with the Ukrainian administration and refused to acknowledge Crimea to be de jure a part of Russia; nor did he recognize the independence of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR). Nevertheless, the Ukrainian issue took a backseat in the relationship between Belarus and Russia, giving way to integration processes.

Forecast for the near term

In November and December, Belarus and Russia will likely seek to further deepen their relationship without encountering any new problems following the successful ratification of the EEU Treaty.

Nevertheless, Belarus's statement about the need to cancel all of the limitations and exceptions within the EEU, which was made at the moment of the ratification of the document, shows that the Belarusian side is not ready to make any concessions to Russia and will continue to assert its own interests within the framework of integration projects.

The Belarusian president is very much interested in having Russia support him during the next presidential election in the fall of 2015, and he will have to seek a fragile balance between the wish to have Russia's backing at the election, need to have further prefer-

ences, and willingness to keep his special position on the Ukrainian crisis in order to maintain the trade ties between Belarus and Ukraine and further pursue dialogue with the European Union and the United States.

Other problems that can cause additional tensions include the re-export of food-stuffs and other goods that are banned in Russia via the Belarusian border, as well as the possible existence of a new “solvent/diluent scheme” that is suggested by the skyrocketing export of Belarusian bitumen mixtures, which in January–August 2014 showed an increase by 95 times year-on-year.

Developments in Belarus–EU relations

+23



-1

Summary index: +22

Total positive points: +23

Total negative points: -1

Main trends

The trend towards a consistent increase in diplomatic contacts, which was first reported more than 18 months ago, continued during the two months in question. The significant number of consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and EU member states is also noteworthy.

The agenda for the relationship between Belarus and the European Union was gradually fleshed out. The third round of consultations on modernization was held.

A separate trend is the conversion of efforts by official Minsk to resolve the Ukrainian crisis into diplomatic capital in its contacts with the European Union. Despite the persisting problem of political prisoners, Belarus's attempts to act as a peacemaker provided an additional impetus for the relationship with the European Union to move into a more constructive track.

Description of the key events

While the bilateral agenda dominated in the Belarus–EU relationship during the period under review, several important events were held in the multilateral format within the framework of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) project.

On 4–5 September, Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna visited Sweden. In addition to bilateral meetings with Swedish diplomats, she participated in an informal meeting of deputy foreign ministers of the EaP member states, as well as Germany, Poland, and Sweden.

On 9 September, Kupčyna represented Belarus at a meeting of the heads of Foreign Ministries of the EaP member states in Baku within the framework of the fourth round of EaP informal ministerial dialogues. Topping the agenda for the meeting was the discussion of prospects for the development of the Eastern Partnership initiative against the backdrop of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. Specifically, the diplomats spoke about the preparation for the fourth EaP summit that is scheduled to take place in Riga in May 2015. Aliena Kupčyna reiterated Belarus's position, which can be summarized in the following points:

- The need to revise the Eastern Partnership in the context of the Ukrainian crisis and challenges emerging in connection with the signing of EU Association Agreements by Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine;
- The importance of the individual approach to all of the partner countries with all of their interests, priorities, and requirements taken into account;
- The supremacy of the unconditional compliance with the principle of the equality of all of the partner countries whatever their integration ambitions;

- The need to ensure the practical impact of the Eastern Partnership, including through the strengthening of the business dimension and intensification of the project-based engagement in transport, trade, energy, and border management;
- The importance of pursuing dialogue and cooperation between the two integration blocs: the European Union and the future Eurasian Economic Union.

On 29 September–1 October, Aliena Kupčyna led a Belarusian governmental delegation, which participated in the third round of consultations on modernization between Belarus and the European Union in Brussels. This time the consultations focused on water management, waste reclamation, and conservation of biological diversity, improvement of radiological monitoring, development of the energy and transport systems of Belarus, and use of alternative energy, as well as accession of Belarus to the Union's thematic mechanisms and programs. Therefore, the work "to identify the best future form of the engagement between the government of the Republic of Belarus and the European Union", which is the ultimate objective of the consultations on modernization, continued.

In September and October, the relationship between the EU and Belarus was marked by the results of Minsk's peacemaking efforts to resolve the Ukrainian crisis. A reminder: on 26 August, Minsk played host to a meeting of the presidents of Ukraine, the Customs Union member states, as well as three high-ranking officials of the European Union. In the follow up, Minsk hosted meetings (on 5 and 19 September) of the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine, where agreements were reached for the opposing parties to cease fire and pursue related activities.

Minsk's intermediary efforts did not result in a breakthrough in the relationship between Minsk and Brussels; nevertheless, the Ukrainian crisis as a whole and Belarus's role became, in the words of Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland Tomasz Orłowski, "a catalyst of collaboration". Another catalyst contributing to this collaboration is Russia's sanctions against European food makers. During the two months under review, representatives of political and business communities of Belarus's neighboring EU member states stepped up their efforts seeking to process their products in Belarus and re-export them to Russia. For example, according to the vice-chairman of the Chamber of Agriculture of Lithuania Bronius Markauskas, "thousands of tons [of dairy products] were exported in under three weeks. This process started in mid-September."¹

The decision by the Council of the European Union on 30 October to extend its sanctions against Belarus looked somewhat contradictory to the general trend. At the same time, twenty-four individuals were crossed out from the list (including several journalists working for the state-run media), along with seven companies. The list currently comprises 201 individuals and 18 companies.²

The Belarusian Foreign Ministry condemned the decision of the EU Council calling it "another missed opportunity to eliminate the main obstacle to the normalization of our relationship and beginning of substantive work to build mutually beneficial collaboration in the interests of our citizens." Interestingly, the reaction of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry turned out to be quite reserved. In a special statement commenting on the decision to extend the sanctions, the Foreign Ministry noted a positive side: "a certain reduction of sanction lists is a step in the right direction, although an insufficient one."

1 Lithuanian dairy producers offer Belarus to make money on re-exports to Russia. - http://naviny.by/rubrics/eu/2014/10/16/ic_news_627_446947/

2 Among the individuals and companies crossed out from the "blacklist" were businessmen Uladzimir Piefcijeŭ, and Anatol Ciernaŭski, as well as several companies owned by another Belarusian businessman Jury Čyž. Sanctions were lifted before the Court of Justice of the European Union issued rulings on their respective claims.

Forecast for the near term

There is every reason to believe that during the next few months, the trends outlined above will continue. Belarus will be working on the normalization of the relationship, and Brussels will reciprocate Minsk's efforts.

Unless the Belarusian administration all of a sudden decides to take the issue of political prisoners off the agenda, this normalization process will take quite long. If the Belarusian authorities make up their mind to make this move, we may see a breakthrough in the bilateral relations, specifically, in the talks over visa issues, where Belarus expects an official response of the EU to the proposals that Belarusian diplomats brought forward back in June.



Developments in Belarus–China relations

+18



0

Summary index: +18

Total positive points: +18

Total negative points: 0

Main trends

In September and October 2014, the Belarus–China relationship was developing in the context of the growing disillusionment of the Belarusian side with the way the collaboration with China had been progressing. The trend was first reported back in late 2013, but since then Chinese partners have succeeded in keeping the hopes of the Belarusian authorities high enough to continue working together, including by referring to future accomplishments. However, this strategy seems to have lost its effectiveness by September 2014, especially against the backdrop of additional financial injections from Russia and certain improvements in Belarus's relationships with the West.

The Chinese side must be quite well aware of the expectations of its Belarusian partners and had to make demonstrative moves to both provide financing and bring down tensions that had piled up in the bilateral relations. All of those arrangements had been designed to have Belarus maintain its favorable treatment of China for as long as possible.

Description of the key events

During September and October 2014, the relationship with China was shaped for the most part by the outcomes of the conferences held in February and August to address cooperation with China, where President Aliaksandr Lukashenka gave an overall negative rating to the way the collaboration was developing. The two big conferences with the president over a relatively short time span of less than a year became a wake-up call for Chinese partners. China responded almost immediately, the highlight of its response being Lukashenka's meeting with Zhang Gaoli, First Vice Prime Minister of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, on 26 September. Right after the meeting, an announcement was made that the Ministry of Finance of Belarus and the China Development Bank (CDB) had signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which comprised a provision for China to open to Belarus two long-term credit lines totaling up to USD1 billion.

These arrangements caused a stir in the Belarusian media, as positive comments and statements concerning Belarus's collaboration with China followed. However, one should keep in mind that it is only a memorandum that the two countries signed, with China making no real commitment. As of today, a credit line amounting to up to USD15 billion remains open to Belarus. There is no accurate information as to the amount of disbursements, but according to some sources, Belarus has so far used less than USD8 billion throughout all of the years of bilateral collaboration.

We noted in our previous issues of the Index that real loans that Belarus received from China remained very close to nil during a very long period of time. In January–September 2014, Chinese loans disbursed to Belarus totaled USD295.6 million, whereas the coun-

try's payments under previous loans amounted to USD159.3 million. Apparently, it is hard to find any good economic motive for China to open a new credit line to Belarus, the main reason lying in the political dimension — it is imperative that the effectiveness of the cooperation between Belarus and China should be made obvious. Again, almost immediately after the meeting between Lukashenka and Zhang Gaoli, the Chinese government provided 150 million yuan (about USD25 million) in gratuitous aid to the Belarusian government to develop electricity networks in the China–Belarus Industrial Park (CBIP).

Moves were also made to demonstrate the effectiveness of the CBIP project itself. On 3 September, a statement was issued (only by the Belarusian side, though) that ZTE Corporation, which had been advertized as one of the most active participants in the project, was getting ready to become a CBIP resident. On 19 June, representatives of Chinese business communities promised that the first resident would be registered in the Park by 20 July 2014. The Foreign Policy Index issue covering that period warned that those expectations were too optimistic, and those doubts turned out to be well justified. Moreover, the commencement of the process to register the first CBIP residents will raise very serious issues, especially those associated with Russia's concerns that the CBIP might turn into a "window" for China to illegally import its products to the Single Economic Space.

In this context we should note that even the Belarusian side expects the first building of the Park to be completed as late as August 2015. So far, the economic activities for CBIP residents have not been identified, so the launch of CBIP's own productions in the short term is out of the question. Even the building that is planned to be completed in August 2015 is an office block.

In order to step up the work to launch the CBIP project, a special Belarusian–Chinese working group was set up in October 2014, co-chaired by Economy Minister of Belarus Mikalaj Snapkoŭ and Deputy Minister of Commerce of China Zhong Shan.

A third Chinese region — along with the Heilongjiang and Guangdong provinces — is on its way to pursue more active cooperation ties with Belarus — the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR). This work is underway as part of the ambitious project referred to the Silk Road Economic Belt. Specific statements have already been voiced that the CBIP should be regarded as an integral part of that Chinese project. Because the new Silk Road initiative is projected to span a few decades, it is easy to imagine the time required for the CBIP to become a fully operational project.

Nevertheless, the disillusionment with the Chinese cooperation voiced by the Belarusian authorities became a factor enabling Belarus to enjoy a few positive changes in such a sensitive issue as two-way trade with China and the enormous deficit. China remains one of the least beneficial partners for Belarus in terms of the ratio of export supplies to imports. In 2013, this ratio was recorded at 14% (export) to 86% (import). To compare: in two-way trade with Poland, Belarus's export accounted for 33.1% of total supplies, and import reached 66.9%, while the ratio for Russia for the same period stood at 42.4% to 57.6%. Throughout 2011–2013, the gap between Belarusian export and import in its trade with China kept broadening, and the first positive trends were recorded as late as January–August 2014, when the export-import ratio reached 20-80. The change became a result of a slight increase in Belarusian export deliveries to China — by 3.6% year-on-year — amid a significant reduction in import (by 16.3% from January–August 2013). Importantly, the new trend comes on the back of certain deterioration of the bilateral relationship, which was first reported at the end of 2013 and is repeatedly emphasized by the president in many of his public speeches.

The engagement between the two nations in non-economic sectors is more successful. This is especially relevant for security-building efforts. During the two months under review, the two countries held the first meeting of the Belarusian–Chinese Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee, co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Anatol Tozik and Meng Jianzhu, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and secretary of the Central Politics and Law Commission of the Communist Party

of China, who is responsible for the operation of state security agencies in China. Apparently, collaboration between Belarus and China in this area will focus on control of information technologies and telecommunications.

Forecast for the near term

The outward progress in the resolution of some of the deep-rooted problems in the bilateral relationship that Belarus made during the two months under review is obviously a positive indication. However, this progress only shows that China seeks to pursue further contacts with Belarus according to its own scenario. On the other hand, when it sees this slight progress, the Belarusian administration immediately changes its negative attitude to its collaboration with Chinese partners. Now that the presidential election is close at hand, when Russia traditionally provides its financial backing, the Belarusian authorities will be more interested in having China's support for the strengthening of their control inside the country than in having additional Chinese financial injections.

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

(Asia, Africa and Latin America)

+29



0

Summary index: +29

Total positive points: +29

Total negative points: 0

Main trends

Belarus's foreign policy efforts in the 'Developing World' reached an unprecedented level of intensity throughout the two months in question. Moreover, many of the activities reported during that period were taking place in the regions that had previously been undiscovered for Belarus (West and East Africa), as well as new countries and new political entities (contacts with Kurdistan and the African Union, focus on the combat against terrorism in some countries).

However, the country's international contacts demonstrated in September and October that the Belarusian government did not have unlimited possibilities as far as efforts to step up international contacts were concerned. Against the backdrop of increasing contacts with the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa, some other area (including Asia) became somewhat neglected during the period under review.

The trend towards the search for new solutions in the rapidly changing international situation became even more obvious, Belarus's contacts with Kurdistan being a vivid example. First, Minsk benefited from the fact that some countries supported Iraqi Kurdistan's ambition for independence. Second, the Belarusian Foreign Ministry benefited from the wish of Iraqi Kurdistan to establish international relations of a de facto interstate level.

In the Middle East, Belarus continues to gravitate towards the allies of the West (Kuwait, the UAE, Kurdistan, and Pakistan), while maintaining minimum contacts with Syria and Iran and staying within the track of the Western policy of disregarding the demoralized central Iraqi government when pursuing deeper contacts with the Kurdish authorities.

Description of the key events

Middle East

Kuwait. A Kuwaiti delegation led by Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Finance Khalifa Musaed Hamada visited Belarus on 31 August–1 September. The second meeting of the Belarus–Kuwait commission for trade and economic cooperation was held. The Kuwaiti delegation met with Deputy Foreign Minister Valiancin Rybakoŭ and First Deputy Finance Minister Uladzimir Amaryn, had meetings in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus³.

Iraqi Kurdistan. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus Uladzimir Makiej on 16–18 September paid a working visit to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The delegation included representatives of the Ministry of Industry and business community of Belarus.

Makiej met with Masoud Barzani, President of Iraqi Kurdistan. The sides addressed opportunities for expanding the partnership and for Belarus to support Iraqi Kurdistan in its

3. О втором заседании Совместной Белорусско-Кувейтской комиссии по торгово-экономическому сотрудничеству 01-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c0380ad93bd08996.html

combat against the threat of terrorism, including through the economic and social development of the region. Makiej also met with the prime minister of Iraqi Kurdistan, deputy prime minister, minister for natural resources, minister of higher education and scientific research, minister of industry and commerce, minister of agriculture and water resources, and the governor of Erbil. Erbil played host to a meeting with representatives of the business community of Iraqi Kurdistan.⁴

On 30–31 October, a delegation led by the minister of agriculture of Iraqi Kurdistan visited Minsk. During his meeting with Foreign Minister Makiej, the official said Iraqi Kurdistan was interested in making use of Belarus's experience and technologies in the development of its agriculture.⁵

Egypt. An Egyptian delegation led by the minister of industry and foreign trade visited Belarus on 17–18 September. The second meeting of the Belarus–Egypt Trade Commission was held. The Belarusian and Egyptian participants discussed plans for the development of joint truck and tractor assembly factories in Egypt and mechanisms to promote automotive engineering supplies to the neighboring markets, as well as prospects of involving Belarusian companies and machinery in Egyptian construction projects. The Egyptian side was interested in the commencement of the preparation of the agreement on free trade between Egypt and the Customs Union member states.

The head of the Egyptian delegation was received by First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Siamaška and held meetings with the leaderships of the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Industry, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Simultaneously with the meeting of the Commission, a business matchmaking session with Egyptian businessmen was held at the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.⁶

The United Arab Emirates. Foreign Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Makiej paid a working visit to the United Arab Emirates on 21–22 October. He led a delegation comprising representatives of Belneftekhim concern, Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus, Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Sport and Tourism, Ministry of Energy, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Committee for Cooperation between the Governments of Belarus and the United Arab Emirates held its second meeting; the UAE part of the Committee is chaired by Anwar Mohammed Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

Belarus and the UAE signed agreements on extradition and on mutual legal assistance in criminal investigation, as well as a memorandum of understanding on political consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and the UAE. A Belarus–UAE business forum was held at the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Belarusian foreign minister met with Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Presidency Affairs of the UAE Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Khalifa Al Nahyan, Economy Minister and Chairman of the Energy Authority of Abu Dhabi. Further, the first meeting of the Belarus–UAE Business Council was held.⁷

On 28–29 October, President Aliaksandr Lukashenka paid a visit to the United Arab Emirates. During his meeting with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the sides resolved to identify three or four priority projects, which, if successfully

4. О визите Министра иностранных дел Беларуси В.Макея в Автономию Курдистан Республики Ирак 18-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/a9ef292524b2afd1.html

5. О встрече Министра иностранных дел Беларуси В.Макея с Министром сельского хозяйства и водных ресурсов Регионального Правительства Иракского Курдистана 31-10-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/b7377c7fc8b955b6.html

6. О втором заседании Белорусско-Египетской межправительственной комиссии 18-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/af723800866c33b9.html

7. О визите Министра иностранных дел Беларуси В.Макея в ОАЭ 22-10-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d944979a772679d3.html

implemented, would enable the two countries to take their relationship to a whole new level.

Lukashenka also met with the deputy prime minister and minister of the interior of the UAE and mentioned possibilities for Belarusian specialists to be involved in projects in the UAE. The deputy prime minister agreed that the "involvement of highly-qualified personnel from Belarus will become one of the main projects for bilateral engagement". Belarus and the UAE also addressed cooperation in the law-enforcement sector, which began back in 2005.

When meeting with the Deputy National Security Advisor of the UAE, Lukashenka said that he would instruct his government to identify commodity groups required in the UAE in order to boost two-way trade to USD500 million in 2015.⁸ It is planned that agriculture, industry, and education, aviation, military and technical cooperation, generation of investments, and creation of joint ventures will become the chief cooperation priorities.

Belarusian Ambassador to the UAE Raman Haloŭčanka noted the importance of the United Arab Emirates in the context of the supplies of Belarusian-made products to Africa. "Most of the commodity flows to Africa go through the UAE, their free trade zones and warehouses. Therefore, one of the significant high-potential projects that Belarusian exporters will be working on is the creation of warehouses in the free trade zones of the UAE for further distribution of goods to neighboring markets."

BelTA news service notes that Belarus has made progress in diversifying its export supplies to the UAE, where selected petrochemical products used to dominate. Furthermore, after a long pause, Belarus managed to resume MAZ truck supplies to that country and began exporting its tires.

Minsk hopes to further the export of its agricultural product deliveries to the UAE. Haloŭčanka said that Belarus was planning to considerably increase supplies of foodstuffs, especially of dairy products, vegetables, meat and sausage. Some of the Belarusian meat-packing companies seek Islamic halal certification in order to be able to work in virtually any region of the Middle East and the Muslim world.⁹

Iran. An Iranian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Ibrahim Rahimpour visited Belarus on 23–24 October. Consultations were held between the two Foreign Ministries, the Iranian delegation visited the Ministry of Industry, and some construction projects implemented with Iranian companies.¹⁰ Rahimpour was received by Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej.¹¹

Africa

Nigeria. A Belarusian delegation led by Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej paid an official visit to Nigeria. The delegation comprised representatives of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, MAZ, MTZ, and some other Belarusian companies.

Makiej was received by President of Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan. During Makiej's meeting with his Nigerian counterpart, a decision was made to expedite the consideration of draft agreements on trade and economic cooperation and promotion and mutual protection of investments. Makiej informed the Nigerian foreign minister about Belarus's plans to set up factories to assemble Belarusian trucks, tractors and farm machinery in Nigeria. The assembly of MTZ tractors is expected to start in Nigeria at the end of this year.

8. A working visit to the United Arab Emirates on 29 October 2014, http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/rabochij-vizit-v-objedinennye-arabskie-emiraty-10059/

9. Uladzimir Macvejeŭ, The History of Breakthrough: the UAE and Belarus are getting closer, 30-10-2014 http://blr.belta.by/person/comments/Uladzmr-Matsvee_i_3749.html

10. On the consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Iran, 23-10-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c1dff2ed519bba89.html

11. On the meeting between Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus Uladzimir Makiej and Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran Ibrahim Rahimpour, 24-10-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d112d5e4d15e4efd.html

The Belarusian foreign minister also met with the minister of industry, trade and investment of Nigeria and held a roundtable conference with representatives of Belarusian exporters and the Nigerian business community.

At a meeting with the Nigerian national security adviser Makiej addressed the current status and opportunities for the development of cooperation in the military and technical sector. International terrorism was called one of the most dangerous global challenges; therefore the two countries agreed to redouble efforts in this area.¹² Makiej emphasized: "We are ready to make the necessary contribution [to the combat against terrorism] and we are already making attempts to do so by stepping up bilateral collaboration between law enforcement agencies, and military and security agencies of the two countries."

Priority areas for cooperation include, according to Makiej, agriculture, mechanical engineering, oil and chemistry, food-processing and light industry, export of Belarusian-made mine trucks and road-building machinery, as well as joint assembly lines to make industrial commodities, export of farm machinery on lease terms, military cooperation, community transport, regional cooperation, and the interaction between the chambers of commerce and industry. He also mentioned the possibility for joint knowledge-intensive projects and training of Nigerian specialists in Belarus.¹³

South Africa. On 11–12 September, Minister of Foreign Affairs Uladzimir Makiej led a delegation of senior executives of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as of some Belarusian companies, to the Republic of South Africa. As part of his official visit the Belarusian foreign minister was received by South African President Jacob Zuma. They discussed mechanisms to step up bilateral contacts and "focused on the need to join efforts of the two countries internationally in order to seek a fairer world order".

During his meeting with the minister of international relations and cooperation Makiej emphasized the prospects of fostering cooperation between Belarus, including as a member of the Customs Union, and the Southern African Development Community, the African Union, and the BRICS.

Makiej also held negotiations with Minister of Trade and Industry of South Africa Rob Davies, who said he was satisfied with the prospects of joint projects, specifically the organization of a MAZ assembly factory. He went on to say that South Africa would be interested in being able to assemble Belarusian tractors and other types of machinery. The Belarusian foreign minister also met with representatives of the business community of South Africa.¹⁴

Ethiopia. A Belarusian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Valiancin Rybakoŭ visited Ethiopia on 14–15 October. The delegation comprised representatives of the Ministry of Industry, MAZ, MTZ, and some other companies and organizations. As part of the visit, consultations were held between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries at the level of deputy ministers to discuss, among others, mechanisms to support the pilot project to resume the assembly of Belarusian tractors (which operated in Ethiopia since 1984) and explore possibilities for the creation of other assembly factories to make Belarusian machinery. Further, the Foreign Ministries addressed ways for Ethiopia to use Belarus's agricultural practices and prospects of the involvement of Belarusian companies in Ethiopian infrastructure projects.¹⁵

12. On the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus Uladzimir Makiej to Nigeria, 09-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c91194a71cfa9dd7.html

13. A verbatim report of the news conference of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Uladzimir Makiej on 9 September 2014 in Abuja during his official visit to Nigeria, http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/ae49e96598bf8b43.html

14. On the official visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus Uladzimir Makiej to South Africa, 12-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/eed13b5b8babea2e.html

15. On the visit of a delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus V. Rybakoŭ to Ethiopia, 15-10-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/e1a1a7adc16957e1.html

Rybakoŭ also met with the leadership of the state corporation METEC and chairman of the African Union Commission. During his talks with senior executives at METEC an agreement was reached to expedite the preparation of a package of requisite documents to resume the operation of the facility to assemble Belarusian tractors.¹⁶

Kenya. A Belarusian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Rybakoŭ visited Kenya on 16–17 October. The delegation included representatives of the Ministry of Industry, MAZ, MTZ, and other companies and organizations.¹⁷

Consultations were held between the Foreign Ministries, attended by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kenya Amina Mohamed. Belarus and Kenya addressed activities to coordinate efforts to establish facilities to assemble Belarusian trucks and tractors, as well as prospects of the involvement of Belarusian enterprises in Kenyan infrastructure projects. The Belarusian delegation also had meetings in the Ministry of Industrialization and Enterprise Development and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.¹⁸

Latin America

Nicaragua. A delegation led by the deputy foreign minister of Nicaragua visited Belarus on 11–12 September, and the first meeting of the commission for trade and economic cooperation was held. Working groups for the promotion of cooperation held meetings in the Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and the Development Bank. The Nicaraguan delegation also visited MAZ and Dziaržynski Farm.¹⁹

Argentina. Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ visited Argentina on 24–25 September. He held talks with a deputy foreign minister of Argentina. Hurjanaŭ also met with the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation, and YPF oil company.²⁰

Uruguay. Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ visited Uruguay on 26–27 September. He held talks with Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay Luis Porto. Hurjanaŭ also visited the province of Florida, where he was received by the local governor. They discussed cooperation at the regional level, including in agribusiness, supplies of tractors and other farm machines.²¹

Chile. On 28–29 September, Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ visited Chile. During his talks with deputy minister of foreign affairs of Chile, a decision was made to sign an agreement on inter-ministerial consultations, trade and economic cooperation, foreign investments, and visa-free travel for holders of diplomatic and service passports. During Hurjanaŭ's meeting with the sub-secretary of mining of Chile, the sides addressed possible supplies of mining machinery and involvement of Belarusian companies in the implementation of a series of projects in that country.

Hurjanaŭ met with the general manager of Sotraser company to exchange insights on cooperation with Chilean businesses. The Belarusian official also familiarized himself with activities of several Chilean companies and discussed possibilities for establish-

16. On the visit of a Belarusian delegation to Ethiopia, 16-10-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/f9f284a51331bc39.html

17. On the visit of a Belarusian delegation to Kenya, 17-10-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c395111dc52c9bff.html

18. On the visit of a Belarusian delegation to Kenya, 20-10-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/cd-3021b6a84b6e2f.html

19. On the first meeting of the Belarus–Nicaragua Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation, 15-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c3323ca59c1714d5.html

20. On the visit of Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus A. Hurjanaŭ to Argentina, 25-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/bab33dfd0361cdec.html

21. On the visit of Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus A. Hurjanaŭ to Uruguay, 29-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/e3fc545968faa628.html

ing contacts with the Belarusian companies subordinate to the Industry Ministry and Belneftekhim concern.²²

Colombia. A delegation led by Head the Department for Europe of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia Francisco Coy visited Belarus on 28–29 September. Consultations were held between the two Foreign Ministries.²³

Peru. On 30 September–1 October, Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ visited Peru. Inter-ministerial consultations were held, along with meetings in the Ministry of Foreign Commerce and Tourism, the National Society of Mining, Petroleum and Energy (SNMPE), and the Confederation of Private Business Institutions (CONFIEP), where supplies of Belarusian mining and other equipment were discussed, as well as the development of collaboration with Peruvian business.²⁴

Cuba. A delegation led by the first deputy minister of commerce of Cuba visited Belarus on 20–21 October. The members of the delegation met with Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ and held meetings and talks at the Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Health, Development Bank, Belresursy concern, MTZ, and Dziaržynski Farm. The main objective of the visit was to discuss opportunities for the diversification of two-way trade.²⁵

Asia

Mongolia. A Mongolian delegation led by Deputy Minister of Construction and Urban Development of Mongolia Gochoosuren Baigalmaa visited Minsk on 20–24 September, and the second meeting of the joint Belarus–Mongolia Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation was held. The Mongolian delegation met with senior officials at the Ministry of Construction and Architecture, Minsk City Executive Committee, Ministry of Industry, and visited BelAZ, MTZ, MAZ, Dziaržynski Farm, Stadler Minsk, and the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.²⁶

Forecast for the near term

Minsk has markedly boosted its activity within the Asian dimension of its foreign policy, which, nevertheless, remained “uncovered” during the last two months. At the same time, one should expect further attempts to expand and deepen contacts with the previously undiscovered cooperation destinations, especially those in Africa.

Belarus has been making progress in its search for new channels for the development of relationships with the Middle East, thus successfully overcoming the crisis in Belarus’s ties with that region, caused by circumstances beyond Minsk’s control. Therefore, against the backdrop of the minimum level of contacts with Syria and Iran, Minsk’s contacts with the countries and state formations that appear to be the allies of the West in the region will keep growing stronger. At the same time, Minsk has no plans to give up on its contacts with Teheran and Damascus, because they provide it with additional bargaining chips in its relationships with the Arab world, western countries and Israel (enabling Belarus to trade its consent to phase down contacts with Iran and Syria for more beneficial terms of transactions elsewhere in the region).

22. On the visit of Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Belarus A. Hurjanaŭ to Chile, 29-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/bca6f1ebe097a264.html

23. On inter-ministerial consultations between Belarus and Cuba, 29-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c3c2264155edcb35.html

24. On the visit of Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus A. Hurjanaŭ to Peru, 02-10-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/bf39e8568c2e39b4.html

25. On the meeting between Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus A. Hurjanaŭ and a Cuban delegation, 21-10-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/e500d99f8388fa4e.html

26. On the second meeting of the joint Belarus–Mongolia Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation, 23-09-2014 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/cf2f380628b4cd25.html

The stagnation in Belarus's relationships in Latin America remains in place. Collaboration with Venezuela has shrunk, mostly because many of the old projects concluded (for the most part successfully). New projects in Venezuela are to a great extent hampered by the complicated political and economic situation in that country. At the same time, no serious progress in Belarus's relations with other economies in that region has been made lately.

Flexibility and search for new cooperation formats will remain the key features of Belarus's relationships with the "developing world". Ideological issues only become visible when Minsk deems it beneficial and safe to use them to further cooperation (for example, in its contacts with South Africa, but not with Iran), or when it needs to neutralize western criticism of Belarus's internal policy.



Developments in Belarus–Ukraine relations

Summary index: +10

Total positive points: +11

Total negative points: -1

+11

-1

Main trends

September and October saw the bilateral relations between Belarus and Ukraine continue developing at quite a rapid pace. Belarus is interested in preserving one of its largest sales markets, whereas Kyiv seeks 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.

Aliaksandr Lukashenka and Petro Poroshenko were publicly demonstrating mutual understanding and the proximity of their positions. Apparently, Kyiv is concerned over the likelihood of facing isolation in the former Soviet Union, and Lukashenka's support may turn out to be quite valuable. For his part, the Belarusian president is just as interested as Kyiv in deterring the Kremlin, because he is well aware of the possible threat to Belarus.

Description of the key events

In September and October, the Ukrainian dimension remained one of the foreign political priorities for official Minsk, and President Lukashenka remained the main newsmaker. His most significant statements on Ukraine were in his interview to Euronews (on 1 October) and during a news conference for the Russian regional media (on 17 October).

In his public addresses Lukashenka not only reiterated some of the earlier voiced statements supporting the territorial integrity of Ukraine and its leadership, but also made serious adjustments to some other policies.

Crimea was the first issue on the agenda — Lukashenka's position became more definite and more pro-Ukrainian. It can be illustrated by the following remark: *"it is unacceptable when some state violates the territorial integrity that has been guaranteed, and takes a part of territory away from any given country"* (from his press conference on 17 October). Commenting on why state borders cannot be remade, Lukashenka cited historical analogies: *"let's get back to Batu Khan times, to the times of the Mongol-Tatar Yoke, then we will have to give to Kazakhstan and Mongolia virtually the entire territory of Russia"* (interview to Euronews on 1 October).

He also clearly defined his position that Belarus finds it inconceivable to recognize the self-proclaimed Luhansk and Donetsk "people's republics": *"No, no, we have a totally different position. We would not like to see the Ukrainian state to disintegrate", "I originally said that I do not even consider the project of, say, Novorossia. I support the uniformity and integrity of the Ukrainian state"* (interview to Euronews on 1 October).

During the two months under review, Minsk established itself as one of the key negotiating platforms in the dialogue between the conflicting parties in the east of Ukraine. On 5 September, agreements to resolve the conflict were signed in Minsk, which resulted in

a ceasefire in Donbass. Following the Minsk summit, President Poroshenko thanked his Belarusian counterpart for the possibility to hold the talks in Minsk. Lukashenka said: *"we are proud that Minsk — the Belarusian land — has paved the way for this peace process. We will continue to do our best for the sake of peace in a brotherly nation"*.

Lukashenka's statement that he is ready to send Belarusian peacekeepers to Ukraine was rejected by official Kyiv, though. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said that Belarusian peacekeeping forces were not required in Ukraine, and should the Minsk agreements be violated, Ukraine would be able to sort things out independently in its own land.

Lukashenka's Ukraine-related efforts made him a popular figure in Ukrainian society. According to a study by the Rating Sociological Group published in September, Lukashenka topped the rankings of the most likable foreign presidents with 62%, followed by the U.S. President Barack Obama with 54%.

The demarcation of the Belarusian-Ukrainian state border is still underway. On 1 September, the Belarusian president signed Decree No.422 "On the demarcation of the State Border of the Republic of Belarus with Ukraine." The document simplifies some procedures associated with the demarcation process, a move that is expected to make demarcation operations faster and cheaper.

On 4 September, the Honorable Consulate of Belarus was solemnly opened in Kharkiv; the ceremony was attended by Belarusian Ambassador to Ukraine Valiancin Vialička.

On 15 September, Aliaksiej Bahdanaŭ, head of the general directorate for foreign economic activities at the Ministry for Agriculture and Food of Belarus, said that Belarus was ready to offer its assistance in the lifting of the veterinary and sanitary bans on the supplies of Ukrainian meat and dairy products to the Customs Union.

On 2 October, Belarusian KGB Chief V. Vakulčyk said that KGB would treat the Belarusian citizens involved in combat operations in Ukraine as mercenaries, and criminal charges would be brought against them (punishable by up to seven years in prison). Apparently, this measure aims at preventing the recruitment of Belarusians by separatists (foreigners are not allowed to serve in the Ukrainian security agencies).

On 9 October, the Ukrainian Cabinet decided to suspend the export of electricity to Belarus citing shortages caused by the stoppage of coal mines in Donbass. Throughout the last three years, electricity was the main Ukrainian export to Belarus. On 15 October, First Deputy Energy Minister of Belarus L. Šeniec said that Ukraine might resume electricity supplies in 2015. He said talks over the resumption of electricity deliveries were underway, and Belarus was ready to import 2.5 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity in 2015.

In October, several dozen Ukrainian fans were detained by the Belarusian police on charges of hooliganism following a Euro-2016 qualifying match. After a series of political consultations, all of them were released and sent back to Ukraine, despite the court verdicts of administrative arrests. In this issue that official Kyiv obviously finds "sensitive" the Belarusian authorities demonstrated their ability to resolve the problem fast and in a positive way.

Belarus continued to receive migrants from the Ukrainian conflict zone. Head of the department for citizenship and migration of the Belarusian Interior Ministry Aliaksiej Biahun said that *"as of 28 October, Belarus had received approximately 30,000 Ukrainian citizens"*.

On 28 October, the Belarusian Foreign Ministry recognized the early parliamentary election in Ukraine as valid. The press service of the Foreign Ministry said: *"We respect the choice made by the Ukrainian electorate. Belarus is ready to continue comprehensive constructive cooperation with its neighbor and contribute to the successful continuation of the peace process in Ukraine"*.

In September and October, Belarus met its obligation to Ukraine concerning supplies of oil products pursuant to the agreement between Lukashenka and Poroshenko reached in August 2014. According to Deputy CEO of Belarusian Oil Company (BNK) V. Krasnianski, because of the routine maintenance at the Belarusian oil refineries, BNK-Ukraina together

with BNK substituted some of the contracted fuel volumes for Ukraine using resources from Lithuania and Poland.

New challenges emerged in this sector following the introduction by the National Bank of Ukraine of an unreasonable exchange rate of the hryvna to the dollar in September, which prevents Ukrainian traders from buying foreign exchange in time in order to pay for delivered oil products. The director of Mozyr NPZ oil refinery warned that even a slight deviation from the payment schedule would result in a termination of contracts with Ukraine, and supplies would halt.

In this context, the Ukrainian government is planning to use fuel oil at TETs co-generation plants instead of natural gas, where appropriate. Belarus may become the main supplier of fuel oil and thus gain an even firmer foothold in the Ukrainian market for oil products.

On 30 October, Russian Defense Minister S. Shoygu said Moscow was planning to have an airbase in Belarus. In the context of the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia, experts have voiced their concerns that Belarus may ultimately be involved in the confrontation as a result of the move.

Forecast for the near term

Kyiv and Minsk will seek to further strengthen the bilateral relations. The Ukrainian crisis has not only political, but also economic benefits in store for official Minsk.

Political instability in Ukraine and strained relations with Russia objectively take the most serious challenge to bilateral trade with Belarus — oil products supplies — off the table. Ukraine is becoming increasingly dependent on Belarusian export supplies in this sector.

Further, the transit significance of Belarus is growing, as many freight forwarders prefer avoiding the territory of Ukraine under the circumstances. The arrangements of the Russian authorities to limit export supplies from Ukraine, specifically food supplies, enable Belarus to fill the vacant market niches.

Annex

Catalogue of events underlying the relations development index

Belarus–Russia relations

Date	Event	Point
1 September	A meeting between Rosselkhoznadzor chief Sergey Dankvert and Belarus's Agriculture Minister Leonid Zajac; an agreement is reached to set up a working group to improve the system of mutual supplies of plant and animal products	+2
2 September	The Belarusian prosecutor general says that Belarus is going to sue the former CEO of the Russian potash company Uralkali at least USD100 million over the "potash case"	-1
2 September	The Russian Cabinet approves the draft research and technology program of the Union State of Belarus and Russia for the development of new high-performance technologies to explore and utilize hydrocarbons	+2
2 September	Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka gives an interview to the Russian journalist Sergey Brilyov, an anchor of Vesti on Saturday news program on Rossiya-1 television channel	+1
4 September	Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka suggests that Russia's Vnesheconombank should pursue a deeper involvement in the implementation of joint projects as he meets with the bank's CEO	+1
4 September	Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka signs Decree No.433 to establish border areas within the limits of the administrative-territorial unit adjacent to the state border between Belarus and Russia	-2
5 September	Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka confers the Order of Honor to the Governor of Russia's Kemerovo Region	+1
24 September	A Russian business newspaper reports that Belarus demands that Russia compensate for its losses caused by the tax maneuver in the oil sector	-3
26 September	Moscow plays host to the 63rd meeting of the CIS Economic Council. Belarus is represented by member of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers Siarhiej Rumas and Belarusian Ambassador to Russia Ihar Pietryšenka	+1
29 September	The Ministry of Finance of Belarus receives USD1.55 billion of the Russian state finance loan	+1
1 October	Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka refuses to recognize the DPR and LPR in an interview to Euronews and notes Russia's mistakes in the Ukrainian conflict	-2
2 October	Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka criticizes Russia's tax maneuver in a statement, saying that the move may cause Belarus to lose more than USD1 billion	-1

Date	Event	Point
3 October	The Russian government instructs the Ministry of Finance to sign a protocol to extend to the Republic of Belarus a state loan amounting up to USD10 billion to finance 90% of the cost of contracts between the Russian general contractor and Belarusian customer within the framework of the construction of the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant in Astraviec	+1
3 October	First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Siamaška meets with Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Arkady Dvorkovich to discuss a mechanism for Russia to make up for the losses that Belarus will suffer as a result of Russia's tax maneuver	+1
3 October	Speaker of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus Uladzimir Andrejčanka says that the ratification of the EEU Treaty by the Belarusian parliament may encounter difficulties because of the Russian tax maneuver	+3
7 October	A telephone conversation between President Aliaksandr Lukashenka and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin; the two presidents discuss the impact of the tax maneuver on Belarus, and the summits of the CIS and the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Minsk	+1
7 October	Successful talks in Sochi between Prime Minister of Belarus Michail Miasnikovič and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev; the premiers reach an agreement on the procedure for the transfer of customs duties on oil products refined in Belarus given previous agreements and calculated losses of Belarus caused by the Russian tax maneuver in the oil sector	+3
7 October	Belarus's Agriculture Minister Leanid Zajac says that Rosselkhozadzor lifts its claims concerning Belarus's fish-processing companies, which increased in mid-September purchases of fish in Norway	+1
9 October	The House of Representatives ratifies the Treaty on the Establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union; a statement is made about Belarus's fully complying with its obligations within the EEU framework as long as "special arrangements are put in place to remove barriers, limitations and exceptions in the trade in some commodities and rendering of some services"	+4 -1
9 October	A meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CIS attended by the foreign ministers of Belarus and Russia	+1
9 October	Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka signs into law the bill to ratify the EEU Treaty	+2
10 October	Russian President Vladimir Putin attends meetings of the Council of the Heads of State of the CIS in Minsk together with Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka	+2
13 October	Russia's Sverdlovsk Region Governor visits Belarus; he meets with Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka	+1
13 October	Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka says Belarus does not see itself in isolation from Russia at a meeting with Sverdlovsk Region Governor Yevgeny Kuyvashev	+1
14 October	Deputy Prime Minister Uladzimir Siamaška says Belarus has disagreements with Russian partners over integration projects	-1
15 October	Commander of the Russian Air Force Viktor Bondarev says that a Russian airbase with the deployment of Su-27 fighters would be created in Babrujsk in 2016	+2

№ 22 September–October 2014

Date	Event	Point
17 October	Belarusian President holds a press conference for the Russian regional media, where he makes several anti-Russian statements, including the announcement that Belarus might have territorial claims to Russia and the statement about Russia's "imperial ambitions"	-3
21 October	A meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Union State attended by Prime Ministers of Belarus and Russia Michail Miasnikovič and Dmitry Medvedev; Miasnikovič speaks about the need to extend the use of the Russian ruble in mutual trade; the premiers approve the indicative balances of fuel and energy resources for 2015 (Belarus will receive 23 million tons of Russian crude oil)	+2
21 October	A telephone conversation between the presidents of Belarus and Russia; they discuss the operation of the Customs Union	+1
21 October	Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka meets with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev in Minsk	+3
27 October	A Belarusian delegation led by Belarusian Ambassador to Russia Ihar Pietryšenka visits the Belgorod Region	+1
29 October	A meeting of the joint board of the Defense Ministries of Belarus and Russia; the Russian Defense Minister says Russia has supplied to Belarus four S-300 air defense systems; decision is made to expand the joint exercise Union Shield 2015	+2
31 October	Deputy Prime Minister Uladzimir Siamaška says Belarus plans to sign an agreement with Russia by the end of the year to sell a 25% shareholding in OAO Grodno Azot	+2
1 September – 31 October	Numerous cases of return by Rosselkhoznadzor of Belarusian-made products or suppression of attempted re-export of the products banned in Russia; Russia considers imposing a ban on supplies of Belarusian pork and pork products	-3
Total		+22

Belarus–EU relations

Date	Event	Point
2-4 September	A Belarusian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ participates in the XXIV International Economic Forum in Krynica-Zdrój (Poland); meetings with a Polish vice-premier and deputy minister of economy	+1
4-5 September	Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna visits Sweden to participate in an informal meeting of foreign ministers of the Eastern Partnership member states, Germany, Poland, and Sweden	+1
4 September	Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej meets with Ambassador of Estonia to Belarus Mait Martinson	+1
4 September	Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej meets with Executive Director of Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations of Germany Rainer Lindner and Charge d'Affaires ad interim of Germany in Belarus Holger Rapior	+1
8 September	The governments of Belarus and Hungary sign a program of cooperation in education for 2014–2016	+1
8 September	Commerzbank HQ in Frankfurt am Main plays host to the Day of Belarusian Economy	+1
9 September	Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna participates in a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Eastern Partnership member states in Baku	+1
13 September	Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna meets with President of the Italian Society for International Organizations (SIOI) Franco Frattini and Italian Ambassador to Belarus Stefano Bianchi	+1
18 September	Deputy Foreign Minister Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ meets with Dagmar Repceková, Director General for Foreign Economic Activities of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic	+1
29 September–1 October	A Belarusian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna visits Brussels to participate in the third round of consultations on modernization between Belarus and the European Union	+1
3 October	Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna meets with French Ambassador to Belarus Dominique Gazuy	+1
8 October	Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej meets with State Secretary of the MFA of Hungary László Szabó	+1
8 October	Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej meets with Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Deputies of the Czech Parliament Karel Schwarzenberg and Czech Ambassador to Belarus Milan Eckert	+1
9 October	Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej meets with Latvian Transport Minister Anrijs Matiss	+1
16-17 October	A Belarusian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna visits France	+1
20-21 October	A Belarusian delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna visits Slovenia to participate in the fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian–Slovenian Commission for Economic Cooperation	+1

№ 22 September–October 2014

23 October	Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna meets with Belgian Ambassador to Belarus Alex Van Meeuwen	+1
24 October	Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej meets with Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland Tomasz Orłowski	+1
30 October	A negative statement by the Belarusian Foreign Ministry about the decision by the Council of the European Union to extend sanctions against Belarus	-1
31 October	Deputy Foreign Minister Aliaksandr Michnievič meets with Deputy State Secretary – Political Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia Eduards Stiprais	+1
31 October	Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej meets with Director of the Department for Continental Europe of the French Foreign Ministry Eric Fournier and participants in the regional conference of the French Ambassadors to Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine	+2
	Consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Austria in Minsk (15 September), between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Latvia on the Eastern Partnership in Riga (18 September), between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Poland on consular issues in Warsaw (19 September), between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Croatia on consular issues in Minsk (23 September), between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Romania in Bucharest (2 October), fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Hungarian Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Minsk (9 October), consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and France in Minsk (30 October)	+2
Total		+22

Belarus–China relations

Date	Event	Point
3 September	Belarusian Minister of Economy Mikalaj Snapkoŭ visits China; a presentation of Belarus's investment opportunities at the China–Eurasia EXPO in Urumqi	+1
3 September	ZTE Corporation is getting ready to become a resident of the CBIP, says acting head of the CBIP administration Ju. Šylin; the first CBIP building is expected to be completed in August 2015	+1
3 September	Deputy Prime Minister Anatol Tozik meets with Li Ruogu, Chairman and President of Exim Bank of China, Hu Huaibang, Chairman of the China Development Bank (CDB), and Ren Hongbin, President of SINOMACH	+2
4 September	The first joint meeting of the Belarus–China Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee	+1
15 September	The sulfate bleached pulp factory in Svietlahorsk will produce the first batch by July 2015, says First Deputy Prime Minister Uladzimir Siamaška	+1
26 September	President Aliaksandr Lukashenka meets with Zhang Gaoli, First Vice Prime Minister of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China	+3
26 September	The Finance Ministry of Belarus and the China Development Bank sign a Memorandum of Understanding envisaging the agreement between the two countries for the Chinese bank to open two long-term credit lines totaling USD1 billion	+2
27 September	The Chinese government will provide the Belarusian government with gratuitous aid amounting to 150 million yuan to prepare and implement the project "Electrification of the priority development area of the China–Belarus Industrial Park", as well as other agreed projects of technical and economic aid	+1
30 сентября	The construction of the Belarusian car-making facility is of strategic importance to Geely Holding Group, says An Conghui, President of Geely Holding Group, during his meeting with Belarusian Prime Minister Michail Miasnikovič	+1
9 October	The Council of Ministers approves Resolution No.956 for the Administration of the CBIP to identify by 1 November the commercial activities to be pursued within the borders of the Park	+1
20 October	Head of the Office for Asia, Australia and Oceania of the Foreign Ministry of Belarus Andrej Hrynkievič meets with Director-General of the Department of European–Central Asian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Zhang Hanhui	+1
21 October	A Belarus–China working group is established to promote the CBIP project. The group holds its first meeting. Belarusian Minister of Economy Mikalaj Snapkoŭ visits China on 21–23 October	+1
21 October	New Confucius Institute on Science and Technology opens at the Belarusian National Technical University (BNTU)	+1
28 October	Joint Closed Joint-Stock Company BelGee plans to sell up to 3,000 vehicles in Belarus's domestic market in 2015, a spokesperson for the company says	+1
Total		+18

Belarus's relationships with the 'Developing World'

Date	Event	Point
31 August–1 September	Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Finance Khalifa Musaed Hamada visits Belarus	+1
8–9 September	Official visit of Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej to Nigeria	+2
11–12 September	Official visit of Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej to South Africa	+2
11–12 September	Deputy Foreign Minister of Nicaragua Luis Alberto Molina Cuadra visits Minsk	+1
16–18 September	Working visit of Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej to Iraqi Kurdistan	+2
17–18 September	Minister of Commerce and Industry of Egypt Munira Abdel Nura visits Minsk	+2
20–24 September	A Mongolian delegation led by Deputy Minister of Construction Baigalmaa visits Minsk	+1
24–25 September	Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ visits Argentina	+1
26–27 September	Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ visits Uruguay	+1
28–29 September	Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ visits Chile	+1
30 September–1 October	Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ visits Peru	+1
2 October	Accreditation of the first Belarusian ambassador to Pakistan	+2
4–15 October	Deputy Foreign Minister Valiancin Rybakoŭ visits Ethiopia	+1
16–17 October	Deputy Foreign Minister Valiancin Rybakoŭ visits Kenya	+1
20–21 October	Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment of Cuba Antonio Luis Carricarte Corona visits Minsk	+1
21–22 October	Working visit of Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej to the United Arab Emirates	+2
23 October	Accreditation of the first Belarusian ambassador to Ecuador	+2
23–24 October	Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran Ibrahim Rahimpour visits Minsk	+1
28–29 October	President Aliaksandr Lukashenka visits the United Arab Emirates	+3
30–31 October	Working visit of Minister of Agriculture of Iraqi Kurdistan Abdulstar Majeed to Belarus	+1
Total		+29

Belarus–Ukraine relations

Date	Event	Point
September – October	Minsk becomes the main negotiating platform to resolve the Ukrainian crisis; regular statements by President Lukashenka supporting the territorial integrity of Ukraine; refusal to recognize the annexation of Crimea and independence of the self-proclaimed Donbass republics	+4
September – October	Provision of oil products to Ukraine pursuant to the August agreements between the two heads of state	+1
September	Decree No.422 "On the demarcation of the State Border of the Republic of Belarus with Ukraine" is signed by the Belarusian president to expedite the border demarcation process	+2
September	Statement that Belarus was ready to help facilitate the lifting of the veterinary and sanitary bans on the supplies of Ukrainian meat and dairy products to the Customs Union	+1
October	Belarusian KGB's actions to prevent the recruitment of mercenaries in Belarus	+1
October	Fast resolution of the crisis with the Ukrainian football fans arrested in Belarus	+1
October	Recognition of the early parliamentary election in Ukraine as valid	+1
October	Statement about the deployment of a Russian military airbase in Belarus	-1
Total		+10

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**