

Belarus' FOREIGN POLICY INDEX

№ 27 July–August 2015

Dear readers,

We are pleased to present the twenty-seventh issue of Belarus Foreign Policy Index, in which we analyze Belarus's foreign policy in the five key dimensions in July and August 2015.

In July and August, the relationship between Belarus and **Russia** evolved mostly within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Nevertheless, the key issues on the bilateral agenda were effectively resolved: Moscow extended a loan for Belarus to repay previous debts, and an increase in crude oil deliveries to Belarus was approved. Slump continued in two-way trade; however, the negative trend somewhat slowed.

The normalization of Belarus's relationship with the **European Union** continued: dialogue on human rights resumed, and Brussels lifted sanctions from some Belarusian individuals and companies. In late August, the Belarusian president pardoned all political prisoners — this decision by the Belarusian administration removes one of the key obstacles to further promotion of its relations with the EU and may become a breakthrough paving the way for a new quality trend.

The essence of the Belarus–**China** relationship lay in the intensification of collaboration between Belarusian and Chinese regions. In the meantime, the two countries were preparing for Aliaksandr Lukashenka's visit to China, where the two heads of state are planning to address some of the outstanding problems.

In the **"Developing World"** Belarusian diplomats focused on South Asia. This was mostly due to the trend for the promotion of relations with Pakistan, which first emerged two years ago. Belarus's relationships with the Middle East are still going through a hard phase: they narrowed and continued only at a low official level. Contacts in the military and technical sector with the developing countries that are allies of the West continued.

The country's relations with **Ukraine** gained momentum. President Lukashenka spoke about the need to involve the United States in the efforts to resolve the crisis in the east of Ukraine. Uladzimir Makiej's multi-day visit to Ukraine showed that Minsk was interested in pursuing broader regional cooperation with the involvement of the Baltic States.

In terms of figures, foreign policy dynamics indicate that during the two months under review, the level of Belarus's relations with Russia was lower than that with the EU, China and developing countries. Further, negative points were registered only in Belarus's contacts with Russia (see the graph on page 2).

Dzianis Melyantsou
Editor
Belarus Foreign Policy Index

3 Russia

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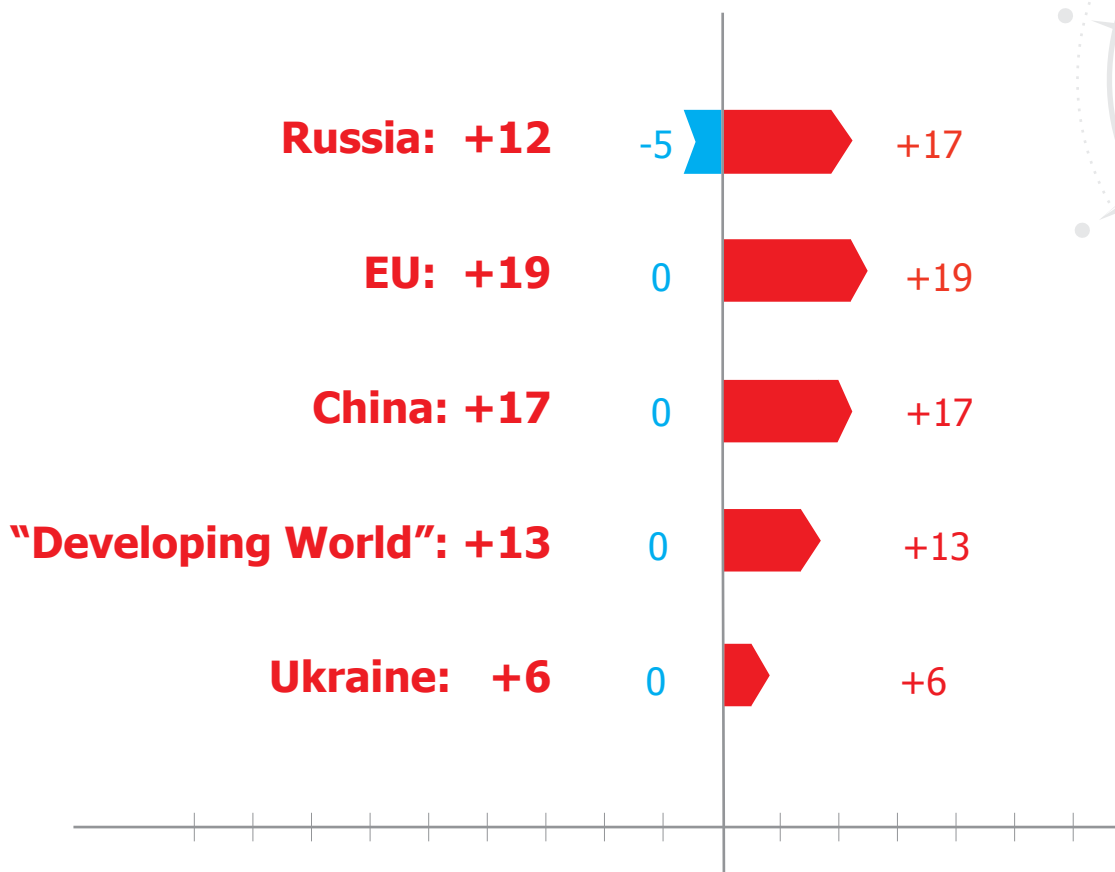
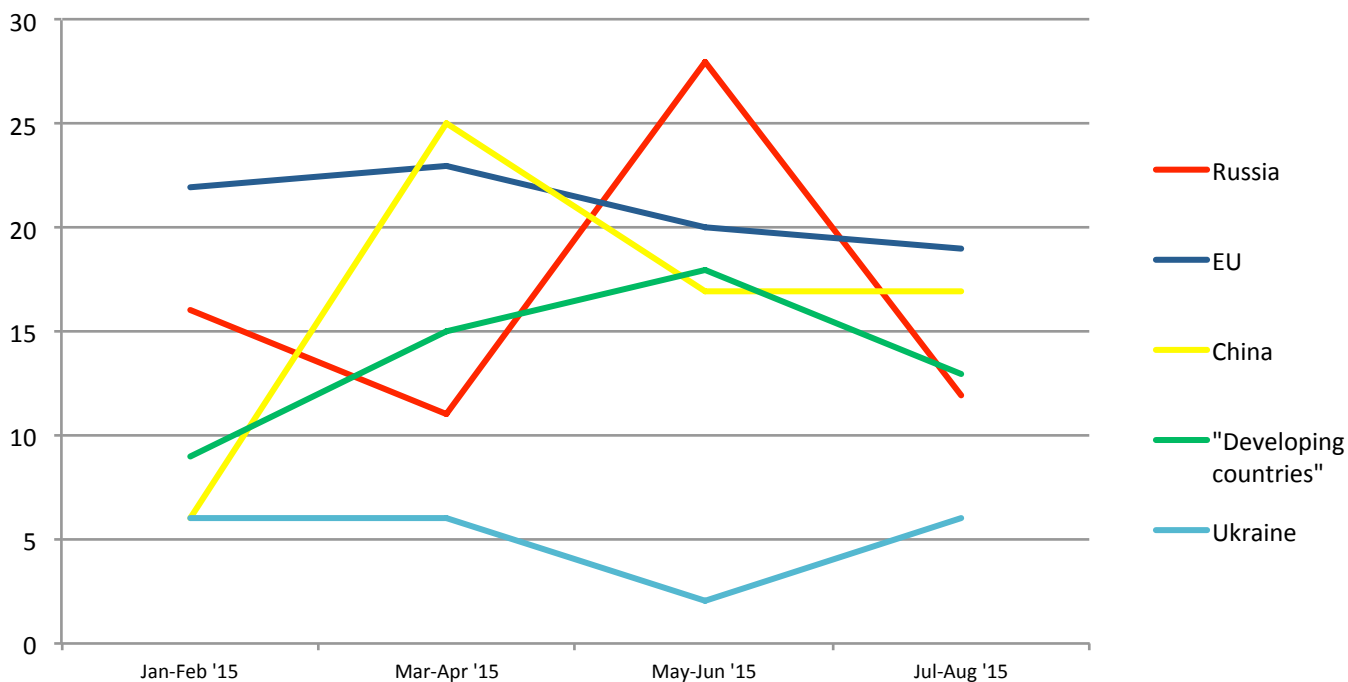
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World"

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Relations development indices:



Development of the Belarus–Russia relationship

+17



-5

Summary index: +12

Total positive points: +17

Total negative points: -5

Main trends

In July and August 2015, the agenda for the relationship between Belarus and Russia was for the most part limited to the framework of the EEU, and bilateral contacts were not very active. However, some of the key issues on the bilateral agenda — energy supplies and emergency credit support — were successfully resolved. Moscow extended a loan for Belarus to repay previous debts to Russia without any additional conditionality. Russia also approved an increase in crude oil supplies to Belarus without demanding that Belarus should comply with its commitments to supply gasoline back to Russia. Two-way trade suffered a setback; however, the negative trend slowed during the period under review.

Description of the key events

The fall in two-way trade between Belarus and Russia slowed: in January–July 2015, it came to USD 16 billion, which represents a decrease by 26.9% from the same period last year and compares to the reduction by 34.7% in the first quarter of 2015, 32.8% in January–April and 27% in January–June. Export from Belarus amounted to USD 6.3 billion, down by 33% year-on-year, and import from Russia dropped by 23% to USD 10 billion. As usual, Belarus reported a deficit in its trade with Russia, at USD 4 billion in the first seven months of the year, the same as in January–July 2014. The gradual devaluation of the Russian ruble resulted in a situation when none of Belarus's exports to Russia exceeded previous year's deliveries in value terms, although supplies of some commodity groups, including dairy products, increased year-on-year in volume terms.

It is not impossible that two-way trade was influenced not only by the gap between the depreciation of the Belarusian ruble and the Russian ruble, but also non-payments by Russian importers. Anyway, ahead of the meeting of the joint board of the Prosecutor-General's Offices of Belarus and Russia, Prosecutor-General of Belarus Aliaksandr Koniuk told reporters that he suspected some directors of companies at least of misuse of authority and at most of collusion with Russian partners to ship Belarusian-made products without payments.

Russian anti-sanctions caused additional difficulties in two-way trade. On the one hand, the ban on supplies of food from Europe to Russia opened a niche for Belarusian foods. On the other hand, Russia imposed pinpoint bans on deliveries of pork from Belarus, and Belarus has recently imposed pinpoint sanctions against Russian pork suppliers. Under the circumstances, even the direct agreements between senior officials appear to be ineffective: following the visit of Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Michail Rusy to Moscow on 10 July, when an agreement was reached to lift the Russian ban on Belarusian pork, Belarus applied sanctions to companies from the Vladimir Region.

According to Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ, Belarus increased gasoline supplies to Russia in July and August. Russian crude oil deliveries to Belarus (23 million tons in 2015) are conditional on counter deliveries of gasoline to Russia (1.8 million tons). However, Belarus failed to meet its obligations associated with counter deliveries, because supplies to the European Union proved to be more lucrative. The official said: "we are working while drawing on the market situation — when the economy

allows us to supply additional volumes, we take this opportunity.” Russia’s showing good will in the matter of gasoline supplies despite certain fuel deficit in the Russian market proved to be fruitful. On 31 July, Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Siamaška said he had signed a protocol to the fuel and energy balance together with his Russian counterpart Arkady Dvorkovich, where oil deliveries to Belarus for the year 2016 were fixed at 24 million tons. The growth by 1 million tons from the 2015 level was due to the increase in anticipated counter deliveries of gasoline to Russia by 300,000 tons to 3.1 million tons.

In the previous Index issues, we made a prediction that Moscow would soon provide a more substantial loan than the USD 100 million extended in late April without any additional conditions. The forecast was accurate: on 24 July, the Russian government signed an agreement envisaging a loan to Belarus equivalent to USD 760 million. The loan was provided for 10 years to service and repay the Russian loans previously extended to Belarus by Russia and the Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development (EFSD, formerly the Anti-Crisis Fund of the Eurasian Economic Community), with the first payment due on 15 February 2019. On 28 July, the loan was credited to the account of the Ministry of Finance of Belarus — the transfer date was identified by the Belarusian Finance Ministry with a view to preserving smoothness in the dynamics of gold and foreign exchange reserves.

Belarus also applied to Russia for a new loan amounting to USD 3 billion. The application was filed with the EFSD. It is quite likely that the loan application would be approved by the end of the year either in the volume requested by Belarus or subject to a slight reduction.

August was marked for Russia by the campaign to eliminate foods subject to import sanctions. Minister of Agriculture and Food of Belarus Leanid Zajac said that the decision did not change anything for the concerned Belarusian services: “We never made use of any opportunity to supply Polish vegetables or caviar from Norway or the United States to the Russian market under the Belarusian flag. We worked in a civilized way, the way we had agreed with Russia. We will see to it that our products are supplied to the Russian market without any obstacles, so that there are no doubts about the quality or origin of our products.” However, problems are not unlikely if the campaign to demonstratively eliminate foreign foods should continue in Russia. The Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (Rosselkhozadzor) banned supplies of Belarusian fish products processed from raw stuff of 14 Norwegian companies by having the Eurasian Economic Commission issue a respective decision. The decision is quite alarming, because it sets a precedent when a state service of one of the EEU member states imposes its will using the mechanisms of the economic union.

It is noteworthy that the relatively low number of contacts between Belarus and Russia during the period under analysis was made up for by the boisterous activity of the EEU institutions. Importantly, some of the issues on the bilateral agenda that are crucial for Belarus will for some time be taken to the supranational level. The Eurasian Economic Commission started working on a single list of conditions required for the recognition of the requisite level of product processing, prepared a draft agreement on the procedure for controlling the distribution of import customs duties, and began preparations for the introduction of the uniform system for the identification of foreign traders, developed rules for the registration and review of pharmaceuticals, etc. Judging by the Norwegian salmon incident, Belarusian officials are not ready yet to effectively lobby Belarus’s interests when negotiating operational standards for the EEU or in the course of the operation of its institutions. The Belarusian authorities need to understand that the predominant use of the competencies and working time of Russian officials during the adoption of the EEU standards may result in the “Belarusian Potash Company effect.”

Amid the drop in export deliveries within the framework of the EEU and growing dependence on the situation in the financial markets of the partner states, Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej stated that Belarus was not completely satisfied with the status of that organization and insufficient dynamics of its evolution.

On 21 August, President Lukashenka assured Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller when commenting on the commencement of the construction of Gazprom-Center in Minsk: *“We will always be doing what is beneficial for Russian companies and, consequently, for Russia.”*

Forecast for the near future

During the two months to come, the presidential election campaign will prevail in the media dimension. Therefore, the density of business contacts will likely remain quite low; however, every election season is normally highlighted by “ceremonial” statements by officials and flagrant reports in non-governmental media.

The final outcomes of the three summer months will probably show the revenues of Belarusian exporters further decrease, although in late spring and early summer, many Belarusian producers managed to restore and even increase the volume of their deliveries to Russia in year-on-year terms. However, the serious fluctuations of the Russian ruble may produce a negative impact on export revenues. This effect will be short-lived, though — unless the National Bank of Belarus resumes its policy of keeping the exchange rate stable prior to the election.

We believe the approval of a new loan facility of the EFSD for Belarus to be highly improbable before the presidential election.

Development of the Belarus–EU relationship

+19



0

Summary index: +19

Total positive points: +19

Total negative points: 0

Main trends

For the relationship between Belarus and the European Union, the period under review coincided with summer vacations, which is why it turned out to be quite uneventful. The few diplomatic contacts remained within the track of the gradual normalization of the relations up until late August, which was reflected by the first round of the dialogue on human rights and removal of the EU restrictive measures from some Belarusian individuals and companies.

However, at the end of the period under review, all of Belarus's political prisoners were released, which probably became the most important development for the Belarus–EU relationship in the past five years. This decision by the Belarusian authorities removes one of the main obstacles on the way to further promotion of Belarus's relations with the European Union and may indicate the beginning of a breakthrough paving the way for a new quality trend.

Description of the key events

The months of July and August are the two months traditionally reserved for vacations in both Belarus and the EU countries and institutions. The degree of diplomatic activity normally falls.

In July, Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna made a single EU visit, to Slovenia. Several meetings were held between senior officials at the Belarusian Foreign Ministry and heads of the diplomatic missions of the EU member states to Belarus from Malta, Germany, Poland, and Latvia.

The most remarkable event of the months under review was the first round of the Belarus–EU dialogue on human rights that was held in Brussels on 28 July. The event turned out to be quite peculiar, as it addressed many of the problematic issues for the relationship between Belarus and the EU, including the freedom of speech, expression and assembly, death penalty and fight against inhuman and degrading treatment. Furthermore, the meeting explored possibilities for the establishment of the National Human Rights Institution and discussed children's rights. Following the meeting, the Belarusian Foreign Ministry notably reported: *"the talks allowed for a frank and respectful preliminary exchange on issues of the substance with a view to strengthening mutual trust and developing cooperation."*

Further, on 13 and 31 July, the European Union issued the decision to cut the list of Belarusian individuals and companies subject to restrictive measures (entry ban and frozen assets in the European Union). Twenty-six individuals and four companies were crossed out from the list. The decision by the Council of the European Union was welcomed by the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, which nevertheless emphasized the need for a complete removal of all of the existing sanctions and limitations.

In August, amid the low number of contacts, some truly important and remarkable events took place.

On 12–16 August, Minister Makiej was on a visit to Ukraine. As part of his visit, a tripartite meeting of the foreign ministers of Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine was held in Odessa on 14 August. Uladzimir Makiej, Linas Linkevičius, and Pavlo Klimkin discussed the situation in the southeast of Ukraine and work of the OSCE Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine, outlook for Eastern Partnership, and opportunities for intensifying the trilateral cooperation between Belarus, Lithuania, and Ukraine. Multilateral cooperation in the form of regional infrastructure, logistics, and research projects has vast untapped potential, which is why the Odessa meeting is truly significant.

The day of 22 August saw what probably was the most important event for the relations between Belarus and the EU since the day they dramatically deteriorated following the dispersal of a rally in Minsk on 19 December 2010. Aliaksandr Lukashenka issued the decision to release six persons, some of whom were considered by the European Union to be political prisoners, including the 2010 presidential candidate Mikalaj Statkievič.

The issue of political prisoners was one of the main obstacles on the way towards further improvement in the relations between Minsk and Brussels and the West as a whole. The potential for normalization, ongoing since late 2012, had been virtually exhausted, and to move forward the issue of political prisoners needed to be removed from the agenda. By all appearances, the decision could have been taken earlier; however, there must have been a good reason why the move was made so late. Currently the general logic of the improvement in Belarus's relations with the West is enhanced by the factor of the upcoming presidential election (11 October) in Belarus: it is important as never before for official Minsk to avoid a new conflict with Brussels and Washington as a result of the election.

The decision by the Belarusian head of state triggered a positive response in EU member states and institutions. However, in their statement on the release of political prisoners in Belarus High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, said that the EU now expected the authorities of Belarus to remove all restrictions on the enjoyment of full civil and political rights of the released. Anyway, under the circumstances, the problem of the rehabilitation of the prisoners objectively takes backseat.

Therefore, the release of the political prisoners has potential for opening a new chapter in the relations between Belarus and Europe. There is one condition, though: this year's presidential campaign should have no unpleasant surprises in store.

A few days after the pardon of the political prisoners, Head of EU Delegation to Belarus Maira Mora met with President Lukashenka and Foreign Minister Makiej. The European diplomat will soon conclude her mission to Minsk, and the meeting with the Belarusian foreign minister is normal diplomatic practice in this context. However, the Belarusian head of state rarely meets with ambassadors who will soon leave the country, which Lukashenka made clear in the course of his meeting with Mora. The meeting was held in a friendly atmosphere and was broadly covered by the state media. Incidentally, this reflects the overall positive media background concerning the relations between Belarus and the EU in the state-controlled media.

Two-way trade between Belarus and the EU member states amounted to USD 8.817 billion in January–July 2015, down by 28.9% year-on-year. Belarusian export reached USD 5.499 billion, which represents a reduction by 21% from the first seven months of 2014, whereas import from Belarus totaled USD 3.318 billion, down by 39.1% year-on-year. Belarus reported a USD2.182 billion surplus in its trade with the EU.

Forecast for the near future

The release of the political prisoners opens up all new opportunities for the promotion of the engagement between Belarus and the EU. However, swift dramatic progress is unlikely, for Brussels will take a pause to review the outcomes of the presidential election before undertaking a systemic improvement in the bilateral relations. Nevertheless, prior to the election, the European Union will likely make a few steps towards Belarus (possibly, purely symbolic) in order to preserve the positive momentum for the normalization of the relationship. If the election should be recognized as more free and democratic than earlier, the EU may suspend its sanctions in late October (except those imposed on the individuals implicated in the disappearances of politicians), the way it happened back in 2008.

Despite the overall peaceful nature of the election campaign and absence of any doubts about the outcomes, no one can completely rule out provocative acts that may be incited by both internal and external actors. Amid the unfolding economic crisis and the fragile trust in the West the country's senior leaders remain quite vulnerable to such provocations. In tricky situations, when presented with a dilemma: to choose between the need to ensure stability inside the country and recognition (event partial) of the outcomes of the election internationally, the administration of the country will inevitably opt for the former.

At the same time, the Belarusian authorities obviously seek to avoid any surprises and conduct the election campaign as peacefully as possible. Amid the economic crisis and growing tensions in the region they are interested as never before in continuing the normalization of the country's relations with the European Union.



Development of the Belarus–China relationship

+17



0

Summary index: +17
Total positive points: +17
Total negative points: 0

Main trends

In July and August 2015, the relationship between Belarus and China came down to attempts to implement the new framework for cooperation outlined in the course of the state visit of President of China Xi Jinping to Belarus in May 2015, especially through the intensification of collaboration between Belarusian and Chinese regions. However, the main question mark was the issues, on which the two heads of state had been unable to agree. These include, by all appearances, the increase in the volume and significant simplification in the terms of the provision of Chinese loans, as well as potential Chinese investments in certain Belarusian industries, especially the potash sector.

Meanwhile, efforts were underway by Belarusian and Chinese officials to prepare the state visit of President Aliaksandr Lukashenka to China, where the two presidents were planning to get back to some of the unresolved issues. Apparently, both countries sense that the May talks in Minsk call for a closure.

Description of the key events

In July and August, Chinese regions began playing a more prominent role in the Belarus–China relations. On 6–11 July, a Belarusian delegation participated in the 21st China Lanzhou Investment and Trade Fair in Gansu. In mid-July, Minsk played host to a Qinghai trade and investment cooperation forum. A Belarusian delegation participated in the One Belt, One Road international forum, which was held on 17 August in the long-standing partner of Belarus, the Chinese province of Heilongjiang. On 19 August, the working group for interregional trade and economic cooperation said in a statement that a road-map should be developed for deepening trade and economic ties between the regions of Belarus and China.

Forums and fairs of this kind are for the most part designed to promote the major Chinese project Silk Road Economic Belt. Despite the outward attractiveness and viability of the initiative for Belarus, its thorough analysis proves that it is not as unambiguous as it seems. In our previous Index issues we repeatedly noted that the project is a long-term endeavor that will take decades to effectively complete. It is not clear whether serious investments in the development of the Belarusian infrastructure for the Silk Road, which will run through the country in some distant future, are feasible. The project notably became a result of fierce competition within the Chinese political elite during the transition of power from Hu Jintao to incumbent leader Xi Jinping¹. The initiative became possible due to the extensive support of less developed Chinese regions, which hope to have benefits from the center in exchange for their efforts. Moreover, heated debate is underway in China over possible ways to shore up continued economic expansion while avoiding

1. A notable episode of this rivalry is the expulsion from the Communist Party, arrest and imprisonment of Bo Xilai, a functionary who competed with Xi Jinping.

financial bubbles, housing market crisis, and stock market crash. In other words, the Silk Road Economic Belt project is largely oriented towards the resolution of China's internal problems, and such a distant partner as Belarus should hardly expect any appreciable dividends even if the project is implemented in the foreseeable future.

Another aspect in the development of Belarus's relationship with Chinese provinces is that this sort of engagement is prone to higher corruption risks. Some experts on China have been making it clear that it is the administration of Chinese regions, rather than the central government of the country, that has remained the locomotive of Chinese investments over the last few years². Irrespective of the nature of these investments, their primary objective was to provide internal growth and meet the key socioeconomic development targets in the respective provinces. In their international activities provinces as a rule prioritize short-term immediate results, because they need to present relevant reports to Beijing. Moreover, foreign investments are normally tackled by privately owned companies that have strong connections in the administration of provinces. It is not clear (and the Belarusian authorities seem to be equally unaware) how Belarus — and not some Chinese company or province — can reap benefits.

For example, focus was shifted towards the China–Belarus Industrial Park (CBIP) within the framework of Belarus's collaboration with Chinese regions. During the two months under review, concerned agencies announced that China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) would become the general contractor providing electrification at the CBIP, whereas the Chinese side assigned the engineering company Energostroy-Zhongnan (Powerchina Zhongnan Engineering Corporation Limited) to act as the management company. Those were two symptomatic decisions that characterize the entire CBIP endeavor. It is not clear why the quite unsophisticated electrification operations could not be performed by a Belarusian company. The answer is clear, though: it is one of the conditions for China to be engaged in the project. As a result, Chinese loans get back to China encouraging internal growth in that market.

Belarus de facto transfers its investments in the project to Chinese contractors, remains indebted, and we are not always aware of the security that Chinese lenders enjoy when they extend loans to Belarus. At the end of the day, our country will receive some site with vague functions and return. The amount involved is more than USD 200 million (USD 90 million has already been channeled into the project, USD 120 million will be invested at later phases). No production facilities are discussed yet, and the money has so far been invested only in "field work."

In the meantime, China seeks to expand its presence in Belarus. During the two months in question, consultations were held between OAO ASB Belarusbank and the China Development Bank over the Silk Road Economic Belt project. Judging by available reports, the Chinese bank is looking to extend tied loans; however, it remains unknown what sort of guarantees the Belarusian side will be providing to receive these funds. In Tajikistan, land is used as collateral for virtually all Chinese loans. China has already become the owner of at least 1,500 square kilometers of land in Tajikistan as payment for outstanding debts.

In the political context, the last two months of summer were marked by the completion of Belarus's many-year endeavor (since 2005) to have its status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization upgraded to observer from dialogue partner. This will have been impossible without the support of China, which was successfully negotiated by Belarus, Russia, and China during Xi Jinping's tour in May. However, even the Foreign Ministry of Belarus acknowledges that it is more of a reputational achievement of the country, which will not bring any tangible bonuses to official Minsk.

2. See, for example, DeWeaver, M. *Animal Spirits with Chinese Characteristics*. – 2012.

Belarus simplified visa procedures for Chinese citizens as a sort of payment for the moderate financial aid that China offered Belarus following the visit of its president to Minsk in May.

The main “question mark” of the period was the preparation of Aliaksandr Lukashenka’s visit to China, which began almost immediately after Xi Jinping completed his visit to Minsk. The main objective of the Belarusian authorities remains unchanged — to find more money. There are indirect indications suggesting that in May, the Belarusian state leader and his Chinese counterpart explored possibilities for China to invest in the Belarusian potash sector. Belarus raised this issue in the course of negotiations with India and Pakistan in the summer of 2015. Lukashenka admittedly is very well prepared for his visit to China: before leaving for Beijing he signed Directive No.5 “Concerning the promotion of the bilateral relationship between the Republic of Belarus and the People’s Republic of China” — an unprecedented document for Belarus, as it regulates bilateral relations with a foreign state rather than internal issues. The sheer scale of the document reflects the hopes that official Minsk pins on China. The Directive is essentially a list of items that the administration of Belarus will seek to “sell” in exchange for China’s concessions.

Forecast for the near future

Lukashenka’s visit to China (just as Xi Jinping’s visit to Minsk in May) will likely bring about no quality changes in the relations between Belarus and China. The text of the Directive does not indicate any new avenues for cooperation; moreover, it mostly uses general phrasing that requires specific negotiations to be fleshed out as a result of discussions. The Chinese authorities have already made it clear that their position on loans (tied loans and rigid guarantees) will remain unchanged. The potash issue is complicated by Russia’s powerful interests (including those of oligarch Mikhail Gutseriyev) and Belarus’s unwillingness to offer any potash-related guarantees (such as the preservation of the previous export duty imposed on foreign potash deliveries).

3. Currently Pakistan is not a major consumer of potash fertilizers; nevertheless, the agricultural authorities of the country insist that this sort of fertilizers should be applied on a broader scale, and additional efforts should be made to ensure the country’s food safety.

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

(Asia, Africa and Latin America)

Summary index: +13

Total positive points: +13

Total negative points: 0

+13

0

Main trends

Belarusian diplomacy focused on South Asia during the two months under review. The tendency was encouraged by the increasingly active relationship with Pakistan, a trend observed over the past two years. The relationships with the Middle East remain uneasy — they narrowed and evolved mostly at a low official level.

Minsk is working on new mechanisms and scenarios for financing foreign trade operations, specifically with the use of credit and lease schemes. In July and August, the Belarusian side took more risks in using such instruments.

Belarus is openly promoting military and technical cooperation with developing countries that are not in opposition to the West, but on the contrary, maintain allied relations with the West. Examples include more active contacts with Pakistan and relatively regular ties with Qatar.

Description of the key events

Middle East

Qatar. On 2–3 July, Qatar Minister of State for Defense Affairs Hamad bin Ali Al Attiyah visited Belarus. He inspected the progress of the investment project to build a multiuse hotel and sports facility Sokal in Minsk, which is financed by the Qatar Armed Forces Investment Portfolio (QAFIP). Some USD 160 million have already been invested in the facility, which has almost been completed. The Qatari minister met with President Aliaksandr Lukashenka, who traditionally said: "*There are no forbidden topics. We are ready to cooperate in education, military and technical field if your country is interested in it.*"⁴ The relationship with Qatar is important mostly for political reasons — Qatar can be used as a springboard for Belarus to promote cooperation with third countries. From the economic perspective, the relations are limited, with annual two-way trade not exceeding USD 20 million.

On 30 June–3 July, Belarusian Ambassador to Turkey and **Iraq** (non-resident) Andrej Savinych paid a working visit to Baghdad. He met with the ministers of foreign affairs and finance of Iraq. An important result of the meeting is that further steps to implement the agreements reached during the visit of the Iraqi foreign minister to Belarus in April were discussed.

4. Meeting with Qatar Minister of State for Defense Affairs Hamad bin Ali Al Attiyah, 2 July 2015 http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-gosudarstvennym-ministrom-po-voprosam-oborony-katara-xamadom-ben-ali-al-attyja-11694/

On 5 August, Minsk played host to the 2nd round of political consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and **Sudan**. State Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sudan Kamal Ismael Saeed led the Sudanese delegation⁵.

On 24–27 August, an Omani business delegation led by a member of the Economic Committee of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry visited Minsk to participate in the first meeting of the Belarusian-Omani Business Council. The delegation had meetings at the Foreign Ministry (with Deputy Foreign Minister Valiancin Rybakoŭ), Minsk City Executive Committee, Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and visited Amkodor and MAZ.

On 24–25 August, a delegation of the Iranian Parliamentary Friendship Group for cooperation with the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus led by Chairman of the Group Ali Kaidi visited Belarus. The delegation met with Deputy Foreign Minister Rybakoŭ. The officials discussed a wide range of bilateral issues and addressed joint high level activities⁶.

South and Southeast Asia

Pakistan. On 10–12 August, Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif paid an official visit to Belarus, which became a logical continuation of the increasingly active mutual relationship between Belarus and Pakistan. In May, June and July, representatives of the National Academy of Sciences, BelAZ, MAZ, Belarusian Forestry Company and Belorusneft visited Pakistan in the wake of Aliaksandr Lukashenka's visit to that country.

In the course of Sharif's visit Minsk played host to the 1st meeting of the Joint Belarus–Pakistan Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation. Over the last decade, Belarus's annual trade with Pakistan ranged from USD 50 million to USD 120 million. Export supplies included tractors (Pakistan is one of the main markets for Belarusian-made tractors outside the former Soviet Union), potash fertilizers, synthetic fibers, tires, etc. In 2014, two-way trade totaled USD 58.2 million, which included USD 42.6 million worth of export supplies from Belarus.

Commenting on promising areas for cooperation Prime Minister Andrej Kabiakoŭ mentioned the establishment of assembly factories for Belarusian machinery and joint ventures manufacturing dairy products. Specifically, he said Belarus was ready to supply tractor kits to Pakistan instead of complete machines. Kabiakoŭ also suggested setting up joint ventures in Belarus (specifically in Baranavičy) to make textile products from Pakistani materials. Belarus and Pakistan are expected to approve a roadmap for the promotion of mutual relations in October⁷.

Following his talks with the Pakistani premier President Lukashenka said he believed the Minsk–Beijing–Islamabad Triangle was a potentially effective engagement pattern. He went on to say that Belarus was ready to facilitate the creation of the Pakistan–China economic corridor through its participation in projects in Pakistan⁸.

5. Consultations between Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Sudan 05-08-2015 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/fce821f857eb71cd.html

6. Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Valiancin Rybakoŭ meets Iranian parliamentary delegation 25-08-2015 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/f3c99f9107fae849.html

7. 11.08.2015 Andrej Kabiakoŭ meets with Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif. <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5984>

8. In spring, China and Pakistan signed an agreement to implement a major investment project — Beijing pledged to invest USD46 billion in the development of the Pakistani energy sector and infrastructure. It is planned to create the China–Pakistan economic corridor, which will provide a land connection between the Pakistani seaport of Gwadar near the Iranian border with the city of Kashgar in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. The corridor will go from Kashgar to the West, where the Silk Road Economic Belt transport route will run through Central Asia, Russia, and Belarus connecting China with the EU. Pakistan and Belarus will therefore eventually have a possibility to make use of transport routes via China, Kazakhstan, and Russia as a result of the large-scale Chinese infrastructure and geopolitical project.

In early August, Minsk hosted the first ever meeting of the joint commission for military and technical cooperation. Lukashenka particularly noted: *"we have a lot to offer and a lot to jointly work on in such an important area."* Sharif also noted that *"Pakistan is pleased to have a possibility to further develop relations with Belarus, including in such areas as economics, defense, and culture"*⁹.

Bangladesh. On 22–23 July, Minister of Industry of Bangladesh Amir Hossain paid a visit to Belarus. He had a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Uladzimir Siamaška, who suggested that Bangladesh should start assembling Belarusian machinery with a certain localization level, begin importing Belarusian-made tires, and pursue joint projects in energy and the light industry.

Previously, in mid-July, Promagroleasing was reported to have signed a contract for supplying machinery and equipment to Bangladesh (1,395 units) manufactured by Amkodor worth USD50 million. *"The buyer will pay in installments over a period of 11 years starting from the day the final consignment is delivered,"* the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus, which was involved in the transaction, reported. It is planned that the deal will facilitate the coming of other Belarusian manufacturers to the market of Bangladesh¹⁰. The visit of the industry minister of Bangladesh was probably associated with the contract.

On 3 August, Minsk hosted a new round of political consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Laos attended by Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Laos Saleumxay Kommasith¹¹.

On 25–26 August, Belarusian Ambassador to Vietnam and Cambodia Valier Sadocha visited Phnom Penh, where he met with Hor Namhong, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister of Cambodia. They addressed topical issues of the bilateral relations and implementation of the agreements reached in the course of the visit of Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej to Cambodia in 2014.

Africa

In early July, reports were released that Zimbabwe considered placing a large order for Belarusian-made trucks and road machinery. The real reason why that African country has been paying attention to Belarusian equipment may be the scheme to finance the purchase. Given the current challenges in Zimbabwe's relations with the West, that country is only capable of buying such machines in the West on very tough terms. In Belarus, trucks and road-building machines can be acquired on much easier terms, Harare believes. According to BelTA, *"it is planned that the purchases will be financed with the use of resources of African banks and, possibly, the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus."* In any case, such a deal seems too risky for Minsk from the perspective of Harare's capacity to pay and possibilities for making sure that the contractual terms are met¹².

Minsk remains undecided on its collaboration with Zimbabwe, which is why on 19–20 July, Zimbabwean Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa paid a visit to Belarus. He met with President Lukashenka and Prime Minister Andrej Kabiakoŭ; however, there were no official reports about specific projects apart from machinery supplies. The visit turned out to be quite successful, and a memorandum of understanding on supplies of Belarusian ma-

9. Lukashenka offers Pakistan to cooperate in the military sector 10 August 2015
<http://news.tut.by/politics/459775.html>

10. USD50 million worth of Amkodor machines to be supplied to Bangladesh, which will pay in installments, 14 July 2015 TUT.BY <http://news.tut.by/economics/456105.html>

11. On political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and Laos 03-08-2015
http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/a668104a0ab6b20e.html

12. Zimbabwe considers buying large amounts of Belarusian machinery, 4 July 2015 BelTA
<http://news.tut.by/economics/454701.html>

chinery to Zimbabwe and provision of credit resources was signed between Belarus and Zimbabwe following Mnangagwa's meeting with Kabiakoŭ¹³.

On 10–11 August, Deputy Foreign Minister Valiancin Rybakoŭ visited Angola. He met with Minister of External Relations of Angola Georges Rebelo Pinto Chicoti and participated in consultations between the Foreign Ministries, where the Angolan side was represented by Maria Angela Bragança, Secretary of State for Cooperation at the Ministry of External Relations. Rybakoŭ also had meetings with the ministers of economy, geology, and agriculture.

Forecast for the near future

During the next few months, Belarus's relationships with the developing world will likely become more active, partly for seasonal reasons, and partly on the back of the plans developed in previous months. Now that the tense situation remains in the Middle East, Minsk looks to promote its relations with the regimes that are associated with the West (the Arab monarchies of the Persona Gulf, and Kurdistan). However, Belarus may also step up its contacts with Iran and Egypt. When it comes to Egypt, Belarus may build on its growing export to that country (in 2014, an increase in supplies by 250% year-on-year was registered) and rely on Russia's support, which has recently been developing successful ties with Cairo.

In Asia, Minsk is seeking to benefit from the inevitable Indian response to the closer ties between Belarus and Pakistan, therefore, contacts between Minsk and New Delhi will likely take place. At the same time, the Belarusian government puts high hopes on its relations with Pakistan, which have been successfully diversified, although military and technical collaboration remains an important component. Minsk praises its relations with Pakistan in the context of their role for the relationship with China, a most important partner (or even an ally) of both Belarus and Pakistan.

Belarus's relationships with Latin American countries are expected to intensify; however, Minsk is obviously faced with certain problems in that region — the unfavorable internal political situation in Venezuela, reorientation of Cuba's foreign policy, and modest results of the search for new partners elsewhere on that continent (except, possibly, Ecuador). Minsk's relations with Africa will remain at the same level, although more active contacts should be expected primarily with the countries in the south of Africa (Angola, Mozambique), Ethiopia and Nigeria.

13. 20.07.2015 Andrej Kabiakoŭ meets with Zimbabwean Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa <http://www.government.by/ru/content/5959>

Development of the Belarus–Ukraine relationship

Summary index: +6

Total positive points: +6

Total negative points: 0

+6

0

Main trends

The relations between Belarus and Ukraine gained a new momentum during the two months under review. Aliaksandr Lukashenka voiced an opinion that the United States should be involved in the resolution of the armed conflict in the east of Ukraine, which not only contradicts the position of the Kremlin, but also is treated by official Kyiv with extreme caution. Apparently, that was a move to please Washington rather than help Kyiv.

The interest in new scenarios for the transit of Belarusian export supplies that was made clear during the visit of Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej to Ukraine this August opens up new possibilities for cooperation between the two countries. The visit also showed that Minsk is interested in having closer regional ties with the involvement of the Baltic States.

Description of the key events

Ukraine remains an important issue in the official rhetoric of the Belarusian administration.

On 5 August, President Lukashenko reiterated in an interview to Radio Liberty, Euroradio, and TUT.BY that he believed Donbas would eventually remain a part of Ukraine. He supported the anti-terrorist operation (ATO) by the Ukrainian authorities and added that he hoped the outcomes of the ATO would meet Ukraine's state interests: *"With the passage of time, even the region of Donbas will be reintegrated with Ukraine, the way the nationally-oriented Ukrainian authorities want it. It is harder, almost impossible for Crimea, though."* He emphasized that he would act just as Kyiv if something of this kind should ever happen in Belarus: *"Just imagine what would happen if somebody wanted to cut off our Paliessie tomorrow. What would be my reaction and that of our people? We would be fighting for each piece of our land."*

Once again Lukashenka gave an assurance that no one would ever attack Ukraine from the territory of Belarus: *"When I met with Turchinov, I told him this would never happen. No one will ever attack Ukraine from our territory, unless our national interests are at stake or Ukraine attacks us first. But this will never happen. There will be no intervention from Belarus to Ukraine."*

Furthermore, Lukashenka said that the Kremlin should allow the United States to be involved in the negotiations and called on the Russian administration to add the United States to the contact group on Ukraine. He noted that without the United States the peaceful resolution of the conflict in some of the districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk Regions would be impossible: *"Russia and the United States must sit down at the negotiating table and put an end to this war."* This is a new trend in Minsk's rhetoric, and it quite sharply and openly runs counter to the stance and moods of the Kremlin.

On 18 August, Lukashenka received reports from the acting state secretary of the Security Council and the defense minister of Belarus and said that the country's southern borders should be reinforced. *"We do not hide the fact that we have to strengthen the southern*

borders. Not because we are afraid of Ukrainians or feel that someone might attack us. We would like to prevent all kinds of things that Belarus does not need and particularly weapons from reaching the country due to the Ukrainian events."

Lukashenka's position on the territorial integrity of Ukraine was repeated by Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej. He visited Ukraine on 12 August and met with his Ukrainian counterpart Pavlo Klimkin. Makiej said Belarus supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine and believed Donbas should be its integral part: *"The president of Belarus has made a definite statement on this matter: the Donetsk and Luhansk Regions have always been and will stay part of Ukraine and that sums it all up."*

Uladzimir Makiej also said that Belarus was ready to do its utmost for the success of the work of the Tripartite Contact Group on Ukraine in Minsk. *"The task is for all the parties to comply with the agreements reached in Minsk. Whoever may criticize those deals, they remain the only foundation for bringing peace and restoring stability in that region,"* Makiej said.

In July and August Minsk remained an important negotiating venue for settling the crisis in the east of Ukraine. During the two final months of the summer, a series of various meetings and conferences was organized within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine (Ukraine, Russia, OSCE, representatives of the self-proclaimed Luhansk and Donetsk people's republics).

On 24 July, Chernihiv hosted a meeting of the intergovernmental Belarusian–Ukrainian commission for trade and economic cooperation, attended by First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Siamaška and Minister of Regional Development, Construction and Housing of Ukraine Gennadiy Zubko. The Belarusian Foreign Ministry reported, following the meeting: *"The outcomes of the meeting confirmed mutual interest of the parties in the creation of conditions for further expansion of the strategic partnership in all spheres of the economy."* The main result of the meeting was the agreement on the transfer of two-way trade to the hryvnia: *"As a result of the talks we addressed a series of proposals to the National Bank of Ukraine in order to facilitate and invigorate trade between our two countries, and we have already come to a positive decision."*

Furthermore, he said that Ukraine suggested that Belarus should deploy new production facilities in its territory and set up joint ventures with Ukraine in Belarus. *"We are genuinely interested in the Baltic–Black Sea transport corridor. We also see significant potential for collaboration in the agrarian sector, processing of food products, mechanical engineering, energy, and joint logistics projects."* Zubko went on to say that the principles of cooperation and pooling of capital could be used not only in bilateral trade relations, but also in contacts with third countries. Ukraine and Belarus also agreed to consider resuming the supplies of electricity between the two countries.

On 12–16 August, Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej paid an unprecedentedly long visit to Ukraine. Makiej held negotiations with his counterpart Klimkin, where he said that the Belarusian side was planning to demarcate 580 kilometers of the joint border in 2014–2015. The two ministers also said that they hoped the EU would provide assistance in this endeavor.

Also in the course of his meeting with Klimkin, Makiej said that there were approximately 100,000 Ukrainian refugees in Belarus, and the Belarusian authorities were taking measures to provide them with housing, education, and medical services. He also said that Belarus was ready to open an OSCE technical office to facilitate the operation of the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine in Minsk.

Further, the Belarusian minister visited Odessa, where he had trilateral talks with Klimkin and Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius. The declared objective of the visit was to explore possibilities for expanding supplies of cargoes via Ukraine's seaport, specifically the ports of the southern region. *"The Belarusian president set a task to diversify export supplies. Export diversification is naturally associated with the diversification of the transport and logistics infrastructure. Therefore, our visit to Odessa is associated primarily with our intention to explore possibilities for expanding deliveries of our products via*

Ukraine's southern seaports... We discussed possibilities for expanding the volume of export supplies with Mr. Saakashvili, the head of the Odessa Region administration, and we agreed to take specific steps in this area," Makiej said following his visit.

On 24 August, Aliaksandr Lukashenka congratulated his Ukrainian counterpart Petro Poroshenko on Independence Day. He noted in his congratulation that the strategic partnership between Belarus and Ukraine was becoming more substantial owing to the deepening of the political dialogue. *"I praise our friendly constructive relationship and hope to continue joint work in addressing the issues on the bilateral agenda of Belarus and Ukraine, as well as pressing international issues."*

Belarus has reported a surplus in its trade with Ukraine for many months now. In January–May 2015, it came to USD 536.6 million. However, because of the decrease in the volume of trade (it almost halved to USD 1.2 billion in January–May 2015 from USD 2.3 billion in the same period of 2014), the surplus of trade shrank (from slightly more than USD 1 billion during the first five months of 2014). During the two months under review, Belarusian export dropped from USD 1.68 billion to USD 877 million, and import almost halved to USD 350.7 million from USD 661.7 million. Such a significant reduction resulted in Ukraine's becoming the third-largest importer of Belarusian products (after Russia and the UK) and the fifth-largest exporter (Germany and Poland rank 3rd and 4th, respectively).

Forecast for the near future

Kyiv and Minsk will continue maintaining close relations while refraining from mutual public criticism and seeking to strengthen the trade and economic component of the relationship.

Despite his dependence on Russia and reluctance to irritate the Kremlin, Lukashenka will continue his activities within the framework of the bilateral relations that are beneficial for Kyiv. This is important, among other reasons, because in addition to Kyiv's support in the context of the upcoming presidential election, Lukashenka is also interested in having the outcomes of the election favorably regarded by the West and international institutions, and the pro-Ukrainian position of official Minsk has already been appreciated in western capital cities.

Annex

Catalogue of events underlying the relations development index

Belarus–Russia relationship

Date	Event	Point
2 July	Belarusian Ambassador to Russia I. Pietryšenka makes comments about unfair competition and Russian lobbyists	-1
9 July	Makiej: Belarus is not fully satisfied with the dynamics and progress within the EEU	-1
9 July	Visit of a delegation led by Chairman of the State Committee on Science and Technologies of Belarus Aliaksandr Šumilin to Moscow	+1
10 July	Rusy and Dvorkovich discuss collaboration in agribusiness	+2
13 July	Makiej: statements that “the EEU is not a toy” and that Belarus is not satisfied with integration progress	-1
14-15 July	A Russian military and technical cooperation delegation is received in Belarus	+1
17 July	Russian government approves a USD760 million loan to Belarus; transfer is made on 28 July	+3
30 July	Meeting of the joint board of the Prosecutor-General’s Offices of Belarus and Russia	+1
31 July	Belarus and Russia approve oil supplies for 2016	+2
21 August	Lukashenka: Russia must not doubt Belarus’s integrity, honesty and reliability	+1
25 August	Contract for the delivery of five Tor-M2K missile systems	+2
26 August	Agreement on the development of an ERS spacecraft	+1
27 August	A telephone conversation between Makiej and Sergey Lavrov	+1
July-August	Russian restrictions are removed from some Belarusian pork suppliers (Hrodna, Biaroza, Masty, Skidziel, Mahilioŭ, Babrujsk, Bielavežski); imposition of bans on supplies of Russian pork to Belarus from selected suppliers (Saratov, Vladimir) and removal of bans (Korochoye, Belogorye, Dmitrogorsk)	+2/-2
Total		+12

Belarus–EU relationship

Date	Event	Point
6-7 July	Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna visits Slovenia	+1
16 July	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Maltese Ambassador Clive Agius	+1
22 July	Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej meets with Charge d'Affaires ad interim of Germany in Belarus Holger Rapior	+1
22 July	Uladzimir Makiej meets with Poland's Ambassador to Belarus Leszek Szerepka	+1
28 July	Deputy Foreign Minister Aliaksandr Michnievič meets with Latvia's Ambassador to Belarus Mihails Popkovs	+1
28 July	First round of the Belarus–EU dialogue on human rights in Brussels	+2
4 August	Aliena Kupčyna meets with Hungarian Ambassador Vilmos Siklavari	+1
14 August	Trilateral meeting of Makiej, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin and Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius in Odessa	+2
22 August	Release of political prisoners, on which the EU had insisted	+3
24 August	Lukashenka meets with Head of EU Delegation to Belarus Maira Mora	+1
26 August	Makiej meets with Mora	+1
26 August	Establishment of the Belarusian–Belgian agency for the promotion of export and investment	+1
31 August	Makiej meets with Latvian Ambassador Martins Virsis	+1
July-August	Positive materials in the official Belarusian media and statements by Belarusian high-ranking officials about the EU	+1
July-August	Consultations between Belarus and Estonia on consular issues (30 June–1 July, Tallinn), consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and the Netherlands (4 August, Minsk)	+1
Total		+19

Belarus–China relationship

Date	Event	Point
4 July	China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) will become the general contractor of the electrification of the priority development area of the Belarus–China Industrial Park. The engineering company Energostroy-Zhongnan (Powerchina Zhongnan Engineering Corporation Limited) is assigned to act as the management company.	+1
8 July	More than 30 companies are interested in becoming residents of the CBIP, according to General Director of SZAO Industrial Park Development Company Li Haixin	+1
9 July	SZAO BelGee receives a USD158.7 million loan from the Export-Import Bank of China (as part of the Chinese credit line for Belarus)	+1
10 July	Belarus gains the observer status at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization	+3
06-11 July	A Belarusian delegation led by A. Kalinin participates in the 21st China Lanzhou Investment and Trade Fair in Gansu and forum focusing on the joint development of the Silk Road Economic Belt	+1
11 July	A memorandum of understanding is signed by the Ministry of Transport of Belarus and the aviation department of the Gansu Provincial People's Government. Talks are underway about the opening of a direct flight between Minsk and Gansu.	+1
14 July	China–Belarus forum on trade and economic cooperation with Qinghai. Plans to produce pharmaceuticals from Belarusian flax in the CBIP are announced. An agreement on cooperation is signed between the Administration of the CBIP, OAO Qinghai Group Sunglow and SZAO Industrial Park Development Company	+1
22 July	Belarusian president signs decree No.338 to introduce a visa-free procedure for citizens of the People's Republic of China (entry, departure, transit) and temporary stay in Belarus for up to three days	+1
5 August	Representatives of the National Centre for Marketing and Price Study meet with members of Hongbo Group	+1
12 August	Belarusbank and China Development Bank explore possibilities for engagement within the framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt	+1
12 August	Ministry of Transport of Belarus and DHL Global Forwarding (China) sign a memorandum of understanding and cooperation	+1
17 August	A Belarusian delegation participates in the One Belt, One Road international forum, learns about procedures for the operation of Chinese companies, especially in renewable energy	+1
19 August	Twin-regions of Belarus and China develop a roadmap for deepening trade and economic cooperation in the course of a meeting of the working group for interregional trade and economic cooperation in Beijing. A meeting of the commission for trade and economic cooperation	+1
31 August	Presidential Directive No.5 "Concerning the promotion of the bilateral relationship between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China"	+2
Total		+17

Belarus's relationships with the "Developing countries"

Date	Event	Point
2-3 July	Qatar Minister of State for Defense Affairs Hamad bin Ali Al Attiyah visits Belarus	+2
19-20 July	Zimbabwean Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa pays a visit to Belarus	+2
22-23 July	Minister of Industry of Bangladesh Amir Hossain visits Belarus	+2
2-3 August	Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Laos Saleumxay Kommasith visits Belarus	+1
4-5 August	State Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sudan Kamal Ismael Saeed visits Belarus	+1
10-11 August	Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Valiancin Rybakoŭ visits Angola	+1
10-12 August	Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif pays an official visit to Belarus	+3
24-25 August	Iranian Parliamentary Friendship Group led by Chairman of the Group Ali Kaidi visits Belarus	+1
Total		+13

Belarus–Ukraine relationship

Date	Event	Point
July	Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Uladzimir Siamaška visits Ukraine to participate in a session of the intergovernmental Belarus–Ukraine mixed commission for trade and economic cooperation. Agreements are reached to change two-way trade to the hryvnia	+2
August	Lukashenka makes a statement supporting the territorial integrity of Ukraine, the anti-terror operation by the Ukrainian authorities, and calls for engaging the United States in the dialogue to settle the crisis in Ukraine	+2
12-16 August	Foreign Minister Makiej visits Ukraine; he meets with P. Poroshenko, M. Saakashvili, and participates in a trilateral meeting with Klimkin and Linkevičius	+2
Total		+6

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**