

Belarus' FOREIGN POLICY INDEX

№ 28 September–October 2015

Dear readers,

We proudly present the twenty-eighth issue of Belarus Foreign Policy Index, in which we examine Belarus's foreign policy in the five key dimensions in the months of September and October 2015.

Tensions remained in Belarus's relations with Russia, stemming from the differences over the establishment of a **Russian** airbase in Belarus. However, the spat did not affect the current working relationship between the two countries, and bilateral contacts became even more frequent. Furthermore, Belarusian officials stepped up their efforts to promote the country's interests within the institutions of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

Following the release of the political prisoners and amid the presidential campaign in Belarus, the **European Union** member states were harmonizing their positions to provide mid- and long-term responses to the moves by official Minsk to normalize the bilateral relationship. Active diplomatic contacts continued. Further, the economic component of the European dimension of Belarusian diplomacy grew stronger.

The outcomes of President Lukashenka's visit to **China** proved to be rather modest, although Belarusian senior officials managed to have their Chinese counterparts promise that the bilateral cooperation framework could be reviewed so that Belarus could generate more benefits. China started paying more attention to Belarus, mostly against the backdrop of the Silk Road Economic Belt project, which had gained momentum, as well as the deterioration in Belarus's economic situation and discussions about the possible reform of the Belarusian economic model. In case of such a reform, the Chinese side wishes to be certain that all of its positions in Belarus will remain strong.

A slump in Belarus's contacts with nearly all of the regions of the **"developing world"** was observed during the two months in question, with the exception of Latin America and South Asia. The most probable reason for this was the fact that the country's Foreign Ministry was busy mending Belarus's relationships with the West and the countries of the region and making sure the results of the presidential election were recognized. The intensification of Minsk's relations with Latin America is an attempt to overcome the setback and standstill observed during the previous periods.

The political relationship with **Ukraine** remained favorable and constructive. The most significant step by the Belarusian side was the refusal to set up a Russian airbase in its territory, a move that was hailed by Ukraine. At the same time, there were certain frictions in mutual trade in the wake of Belarus's introducing new import rules for goods.

Dzianis Melyantsou
Editor
Belarus Foreign Policy Index

3 Russia

6 EU

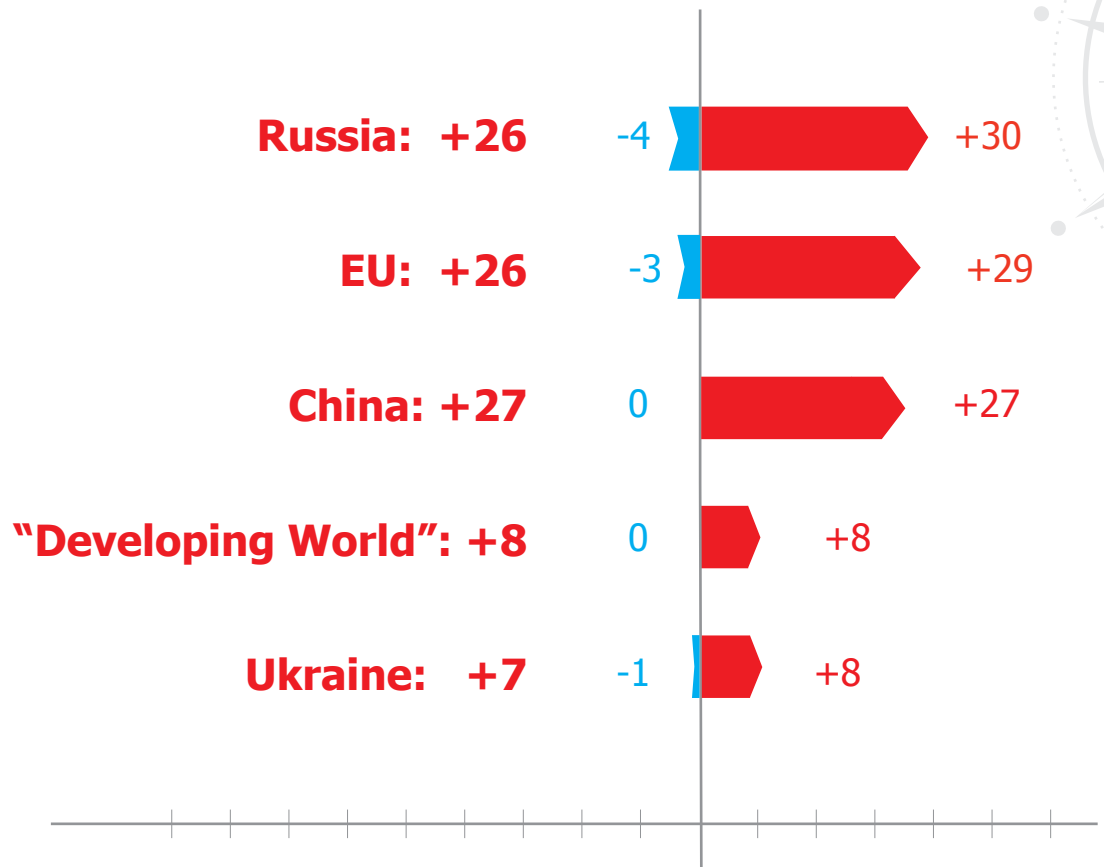
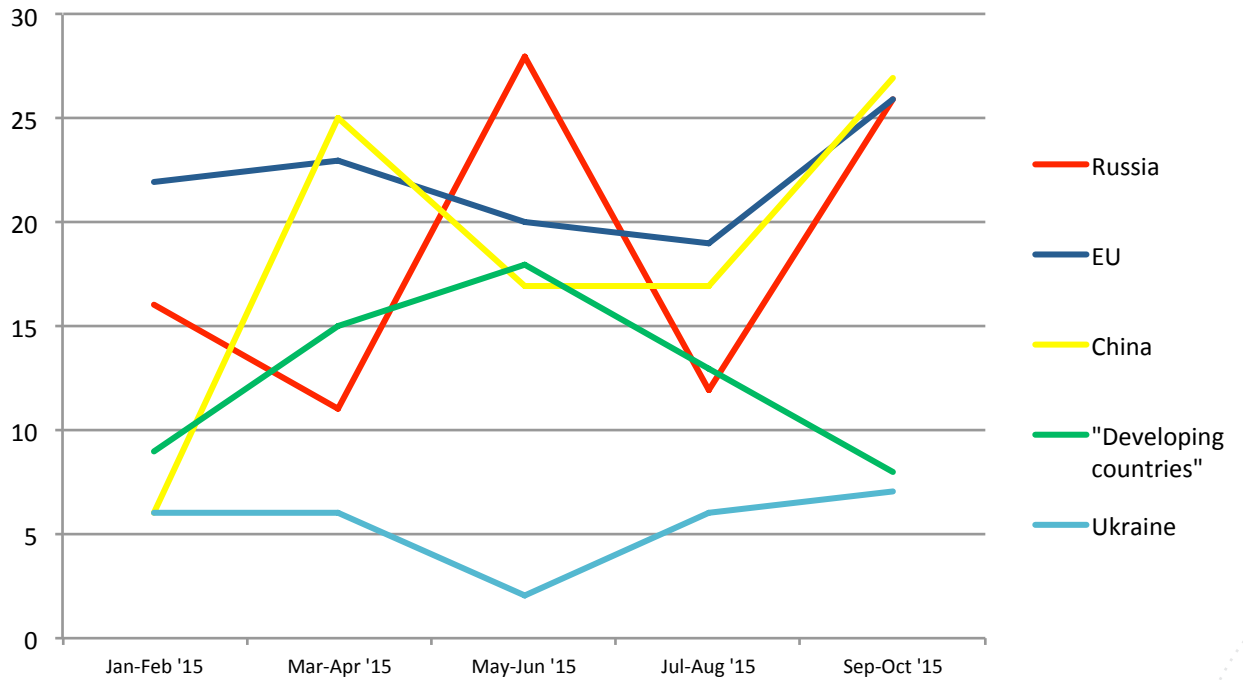
9 China

12 "Developing
World"

16 Ukraine

19 Annex

Relations development indices:



Development of the Belarus–Russia relationship

+30



-4

Summary index: +26

Total positive points: +30

Total negative points: -4

Main trends

In September and October 2015, tensions remained over the possibility to set up a Russian airbase in Belarus, voiced in the context of the presidential campaign. However, it did not affect the current working relationship between the two countries. Contrary to our forecast, bilateral contacts intensified during the period under review. Further, Belarusian officials became more active in asserting Belarus's interests within the institutions of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Efforts to lobby the treatment of Belarusian-made products as "domestic" in the Russian market continued, and so did the campaign to promote Belarusian products directly into Russian regions.

At the same time, those activities did not have a tangible positive effect — the forecast we made in the previous Index issue proved accurate with regard to the drop in two-way trade, negative impact on Belarusian exporters to Russia of the late depreciation of the Belarusian ruble compared with the depreciation of the Russian ruble, and low likelihood of the final approval of the loan by the Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development (EFSD) prior to the presidential election.

Description of the key events

In January–August 2015, two-way trade came to USD 18.2 billion, which represents a decrease by 27.5% from the same period last year. Export from Belarus amounted to USD 7 billion, down by 33% year-on-year, and import from Russia dropped by 23% to USD 11.3 billion. As usual, Belarus reported a deficit in its trade with Russia, at USD 4.45 billion in the first eight months of the year, same as in January–August 2014. The trend for the faster recovery of sales in the Russian market in volume terms compared to sales in value terms remains. For the sake of clarity, below is a table with the main exports from Belarus to Russia:

	January–August 2015, % of January–August 2014	
	Volume	Value
Trucks	29,5	60,6
Tractors	60,0	48,3
Farm machines	73,5	34,5
Oil products	58,3	39,3
Furniture	91,2	67,8
Meat	102,4	74,0
Milk	127,5	71,0
Cheese	118,4	86,7

The Belarusian authorities attempted to make use of the EEU and Union State mechanisms to help the recovery of Belarusian-made products in the Russian market during the period under review, fostered direct contacts with Russian regions, and held publicity campaigns.

For example, Belarusian worsted cloth producers sought to get the Russian government to cancel its instructions allowing public procurement agencies to buy exclusively products made by Bryansk worsted cloth factory and instead offer companies from the EEU equal conditions to access state procurement in Russia. Regulations are being drafted for the EEU pharmaceuticals market. The Eurasian Intergovernmental Council adopted the draft document "Main areas for industrial cooperation" at its session in Hrodna on 8 September, which envisages an increase in the share of products manufactured by the EEU member states in the common market of the bloc. On 17 September, the premiers of the member states signed an action plan to conduct a concerted industrial policy within the Union State. On 28 October, Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej reported that Belarus and Russia could introduce the notion "Made in the Union State."

On 17 September, a package of agreements on cooperation in trade, economic, and other areas was signed between the Hrodna Region and the Komi Republic, between the Hrodna Region and the Vologda Region, between the Viciebsk Region and the Ivanovo Region, between the Homiel Region and the Orenburg Region, and between the Mahilioŭ Region and the Ivanovo Region at the Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia in Sochi. Also in Sochi, the draft contract with Tyumen Agroindustrial Leasing Company was signed to promote Belarusian-made machinery. Having the same purpose in mind, Belarus continued negotiations with Russian leasing companies (OOO Promagroleasing-center, PAO TransFin-M, and OOO Amkodor-Leasing).

However, as experience of Belarus's trade in April–August 2015 shows, the restoration of the demand for Belarusian-made goods in volume terms is not enough. Either a harmonized foreign exchange policy needs to be put in place, or Belarus should stop accepting payments in Russian rubles. Prime Minister Andrej Kabiakoŭ raised the issue of a harmonized financial policy at a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council on 8 September. It was decided to hold regular consultations between the heads of the financial authorities of the EEU member states.

The talks over the possible loan from the Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development continued, in the words of Russia's Ambassador to Belarus Alexander Surikov, "in an amiable atmosphere." Against this backdrop, the mini-conflict around the publication of Russia's decision about the respite for Belarus's payments under the current credit lines and subsequent denial of the statement by the Belarusian Finance Ministry looks quite curious. Possibly, the respite was offered to the Belarusian side as a possibility to either postpone the new loan or slash the amount of the loan to be extended. By all appearances, the Belarusian side still hopes to take the loan within the amount it originally requested and soon enough — by the end of the year or at the very start of 2016.

In September and October, Belarus actively represented the EEU in the international scene. During its presidency of the Eurasian Economic Union, Belarus began talks with the United Nations for the EEU to be granted the observer status. Siarhiej Sidorski spoke about the openness of the EEU for collaboration with BRICS at a meeting of the BRICS industry ministers. Belarus offered itself as an economic bridge between the EU and the EEU in the course of talks with European political and economic communities (at a meeting of the German economic group and during the Austria–Belarus–Russia business forum). On 27 October, a lot was said about the approximation of the EU and the EEU at a meeting of the foreign ministers of Belarus and Russia. That meeting was marked by special amiability and mutual recognition, in addition to common approaches to the cooperation with the EU. Makiej and Sergey Lavrov also compiled a new program of concerted foreign policy activities. In his interview with Kommersant daily Makiej spoke against the establishment of a Russian air base in Belarus.

The issue of a Russian airbase topped the media and political agenda throughout the entire period under analysis. The unacceptability of foreign military bases in Belarus

was originally part of the program of one of the presidential candidates — Tacciana Karatkievič, and that was a cross cutting theme of her entire campaign.

The Russian president refreshed the issue as he signed an instruction to conduct talks with Belarus over the establishment of a Russian airbase in Belarus at the height of the Belarusian election campaign, when the draft document became publicly available. The former presidential candidate (back at the 2010 election) Mikalaj Statkievič staged a rally in Minsk to protest against the establishment of a Russian airbase in Belarus. The Belarusian media featured dozens of discussions and comments on the issue. Finally, President Lukashenka made a statement on the matter, voicing his strong opposition to the possibility for Belarus to host a Russian airbase. Meanwhile, the issue still remains more of a media thing, and talks can go on as long as it takes. Russia is not ready and, possibly, is incapable of making any serious steps in this direction. We cannot rule out that the issue of an airbase is important to Russia as an internal political factor designed to demonstrate the presence of a loyal military ally represented by Belarus.

Despite the rather tense background around the issue of a Russian airbase in Belarus, the military cooperation between Belarus and Russia continued throughout September and October in the normal way. On 10 September, the two countries held a joint air defense exercise, and further air defense maneuvers were planned.

Forecast for the near future

Two-way trade will keep contracting, partially because of previous trends and partially because of the next (starting 1 September) phase of the reduction in the import duties on the goods that Belarus considers sensitive (foods, textiles, automotive equipment) for Russia to comply with its commitments to the World Trade Organization. The effect of the progress that Belarusian officials managed to make when removing obstacles to Belarusian-made products in the Russian market will show later. A major weakness that still remains is the dependence of currency receipts by Belarusian exporters from the fluctuations of the Russian ruble.

One can assume that the partial reanimation of the Union State that has been observed over the past few months will continue, especially if the Belarusian authorities manage to make headway in their endeavor to have Belarusian goods recognized as “domestic” in Russia.

It is highly unlikely that Belarus will receive the next EFSD loan by the end of the year; however, the decision to extend the loan to Belarus will probably be taken during the next two months.

Development of the Belarus–EU relationship

+29



-3

Summary index: +26

Total positive points: +29

Total negative points: -3

Main trends

During the two months under review, the relationship between Belarus and the European Union evolved in the context of two principal trends and an additional one. First, following the release of all political prisoners, EU institutions and member states were drafting a common position for mid- and long-term responses to that move by official Minsk.

Second, September and October saw the final portion of the presidential campaign in Belarus, which traditionally remains an important factor for the relationship between Minsk and Brussels. Both those processes were accompanied by active diplomatic contacts.

Furthermore, the strengthening of the economic component of the European dimension of Belarusian diplomacy can be identified as an additional trend.

Description of the key events

September and October brought heightened diplomatic activity back to the Belarus–EU relationship. Over that period, there were no significant visits or high-level contacts; however, the large number of working contacts alone attests to the intensity of the relationship.

Rotations of the heads of several European diplomatic missions notably took place during the same time frame. For example, new Ambassador of Germany Peter Dettmar and new Head of the European Union's Delegation to Belarus Andrea Wiktorin began their work in Minsk, which contributed to increasingly intensive contacts of the newly arrived diplomats with senior officials at the Belarusian Foreign Ministry.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aliena Kupčyna, who supervises the European dimension of Belarus's diplomacy, made numerous foreign visits during the two months under review. Specifically, she headed a Belarusian delegation in the course of the sixth round of consultations on modernisation with the EU. According to the press service of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, Belarus and the EU summarized the results of the previous rounds of consultations and discussed prospects of closer cooperation in the agreed priority dimensions based upon the agreements reached in 2014 and 2015. That move quite symbolically coincided with the main trend observed during the period — the formulation of the common vision of the future of the bilateral relationship after the presidential election.

Following the release of the Belarusian political prisoners, the presidential election took the lead in the spotlight. Even if some relative progress was reported in the election process by international observers — representing the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) — new opportunities would emerge for further improvements in the Belarus–EU relationship. Specifically, the

diplomatic community debated possibilities for the EU to suspend its sanctions against Belarus.

The Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions by monitors representing the OSCE ODIHR, OSCE PA, and PACE published the day after the election was held (12 October), appeared to contain certain formulas that made it possible to draw conclusions about improvements, albeit minor. The following paragraph will give the general idea of the Statement:

*"The 11 October election once again indicated that Belarus still has a considerable way to go in meeting its OSCE commitments for democratic elections. This underscores the need for the political will to engage in a comprehensive reform process. Some specific improvements and a welcoming attitude were noted. Significant problems, particularly during the counting and tabulation, undermined the integrity of the election. The campaign and election day were peaceful."*¹

These findings enabled the Council of the European Union to make a political decision to suspend sanctions against Belarus. On 29 October, it was adopted by written procedure². However, the Council appeared to have made a middle-of-the-road decision: it prolonged those measures for four months, until 29 February 2016, and at the same time suspended them for the same period. Sanctions thus appear to have been frozen for 170 persons and for three entities. Individual sanctions still remain for the four persons that the EU believes are involved in unresolved disappearances for political motives. Interestingly, after a similar decision was made in 2008, measures continued to apply to the same four persons plus Central Election Commission Chair Lidzija Jarmošyna. This time the Council of the European Union must have considered the election progress more substantial than back in 2008.

Although such a compromise decision by the EU had been expected and turned out to be quite important for Minsk (the yield on Belarusian Eurobond notably plummeted immediately following the decision by the EU to suspend its measures against Belarus, which opens up new opportunities for relatively cheap borrowing), the response by official Minsk was somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, the Belarusian Foreign Ministry welcomed the decision, but on the other hand, it issued a resolute statement that all of the sanctions must be completely removed. Media reports and statements by the country's senior leaders also reflect the official position on the sanctions-related decision.

The position of the Belarusian authorities on the renewal of Minsk Forum — the Germany–Belarus conference that had been organized in Minsk on an annual basis prior to 2011 and brought together representatives of the government and the opposition — should be attributed primarily to the decision by the Council of the EU. Following the four-year pause, the conference was supposed to have been held in late November; however, a month before the event was scheduled to start, the organizers announced that the forum would be postponed *"because of short-term planning problems on the Belarusian side."*

Economic bilateral contacts played an important role throughout September and October. Meetings of intergovernmental commission for economic cooperation with Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Bulgaria were held. Berlin played host to a meeting of the Belarusian–German working group for trade and investment, as well as Days of Belarusian Economy, attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ, Deputy Economy Minister Anton Kudasaŭ, and First Deputy Energy Minister Leanid Šeniec. The meeting between Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej and the Latvian Minister for Transport was also in line with the trend.

1. Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions - <http://www.osce.org/ru/odihr/elections/belarus/192001?download=true>

2. Belarus: EU suspends restrictive measures against most persons and all entities currently targeted - http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/press_corner/all_news/news/2015/2015_10_29_en.htm

Two-way trade between Belarus and the EU member states amounted to USD 10.98 billion in January–September 2015, down by 29% year-on-year. Belarusian export reached USD 6.74 billion, which represents a reduction by 20% from the first nine months of 2014, whereas import from Belarus totaled USD 4.24 billion, down by 39.8% year-on-year. Belarus reported a USD 2.5 billion surplus in its trade with the EU.

Forecast for the near future

By all appearances, the relationship between Minsk and Brussels will be marked by intensive bilateral contacts at least until the end of February, when the EU will have to get back to the issue of sanctions. The degree of engagement will remain at the previous level; however, there will be no new political topics or formats in the relationship. Meanwhile, in the economic dimension, collaboration is likely to further expand.



Development of the Belarus–China relationship

+27



0

Summary index: +27

Total positive points: +27

Total negative points: 0

Main trends

In September and October, the substance of the Belarus–China relationship was determined by the outcomes of Aliaksandr Lukashenka's official visit to China on 1–3 September. Although the actual results of the visit proved to be quite modest, just as those of President Xi Jinping's visit to Belarus in May 2015, the Belarusian administration managed to have Chinese senior leaders promise that the framework for the bilateral cooperation could be revised so that Belarus could gain additional benefits.

Also during the two months under review, the trend for official Beijing to pay more attention to Belarus was growing stronger. That was mostly due to the fact that the Chinese Silk Road Economic Belt project had gained momentum, as well as the deterioration in Belarus's economic situation and debate about the possible reform of the Belarusian economic model. In case such a reform is put in place, the Chinese side wishes to be certain that all of its positions in Belarus will remain strong and even grow stronger through potential privatization of some enterprises or revision of economic relations.

Description of the key events

The pivotal event during the two months under review was President Lukashenka's visit to China on 1–3 September. Although the declared purpose of the visit was Lukashenka's participation in the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, the main cause of that visit was the incompleteness of the talks with President Xi Jinping during his stay in Minsk in May 2015.

The agenda that the Belarusian delegation had for that meeting was quite obvious. The Belarusian officials wished to continue negotiating possible preferential loans from China (although official Minsk is a lot less optimistic about that possibility than it was a few years ago), restructuring of the existing loans, sale of certain Belarusian enterprises (or stakes in those companies) to Chinese investors, intensification of military and technical cooperation with China, and support by official Beijing in the international scene.

Belarusian state media and officials described the results of the visit in bright colors. President Lukashenka met with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping and Zhang Gaoli, member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Deputy Secretary of the State Council. Official reports mentioned a USD 7 billion loan³, although what was really meant was the old credit line totaling USD 15 billion. The Chinese side was traditionally markedly more reserved when it came to promises and limited itself to general words⁴. Nevertheless, Lukashenka twice made spe-

3. <http://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-schitaet-cto-chastnyj-bciznes-belarusi-dolzhen-shire-uchastvovat-v-osvoenii-kitajskih-161848-2015/>

4. See, for example, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015victoryanniv/2015-09/02/content_21780820.htm; http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gj_676203/oz_678770/1206_678892/xgxw_678898/t1293284.shtml

cific statements that Chinese partners were ready to revise the tied nature of its loans to Belarus: on 8 September, as he received a report from Governor of the National Bank of Belarus Paviel Kallaur, and on 11 October when talking to media in the course of the presidential election. The idea to engage private business looks exciting, but it largely reflects the certain dissatisfaction of the Chinese side with the drop in the use of tied loans, as well as more cautious policy exercised by the Belarusian administration, which markedly revisited its approach to borrowing from China.

The Silk Road Economic Belt project was stepped up during the two months in question (a roundtable conference dedicated to the project in Belarus, participation of Belarusian media in the One Belt, One Road Forum in Beijing, presentation of the capacity of the Kaliadzičy transport and logistics center⁵ to Chinese companies, intention to establish a Belarus–China trade cooperation center, and corresponding statements by officials, etc.).

However, the actual results and efforts within the framework of that Chinese project remain minute with regard to Belarus. The main reason is the sheer scope of the gargantuan initiative. In order for the project to succeed, China needs to establish effective cooperation ties with almost 40 countries, and investment requirement by 2020 is estimated at USD 8 trillion.

The Chinese government has set up a USD 40 billion Silk Road infrastructure fund (targeting mostly Central Asia), the USD 50 billion Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the USD 40 billion BRICS New Development Bank (NDB). Other financial instruments are used as well; however, the overall amount that official Beijing is ready to allocate to support the project is estimated between USD 160 billion and USD 300 billion⁶. Although the new Silk Road is already in use to transport goods, the Chinese authorities are mostly focused on the development of the least developed districts in the west of China, as well as the protection of its interests in Central Asia. In the context of the implementation of that major project, Belarus can only interest official Beijing as a possible (albeit very likely) way of transit to the EU, as well as within the framework of Eurasian integration, envisaging barrierless (customs-free) transportation of Chinese goods from its border to the borders of the European Union. Therefore, the availability of its transport infrastructure and reliability as a customs partner are the two requirements that Belarus needs to meet in order to be included in the new Silk Road project in the medium term. It should be noted that Belarus is not the only country in the CEE region, where China seeks to ensure its strong positions when implementing the Silk Road Economic Belt project⁷. At least, if Belarus adopts an adequate competent policy on the initiative, it can succeed in having China invest in its transport and logistics infrastructure. However, no one can rule out the possibility that those investments will be provided as tied loans.

Efforts continued throughout the two months under review to further develop the China–Belarus Industrial Park (CBIP) Great Stone. Sensing that the economic situation in the country is deteriorating and having concerns that the state will be paying more attention to their activities, Chinese companies operating in Belarus seek to use the CBIP framework as a guarantee of their privileged position in the Belarusian market. During the reviewed period, the Association of Chinese Companies in Belarus was established (so far, 12 Chinese companies, including Huawei, ZTE, and CITIC have joined the Association), and new residents have been registered in the Park, even though it has neither requisite infrastructure nor operating production facilities.

5. The press release about the presentation of the Kaliadzičy center makes a special mention that “the location of the Kaliadzičy station at the crossing of Pan-European Corridor II and Pan-European Corridor IX makes it possible to rapidly redirect transport flows towards North–South–North and East–West–East. In the near future, this will enable the freight terminal to become a full-scale international transshipment hub, whereas Belarusian Railway will turn into the logistics platform for Silk Road Economic Belt.”

6. <http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2015/09/17/hurdles-ahead-along-the-new-silk-road/>

7. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/06/chinas-silk-road-in-europe-not-just-hungary/>

For example, in September 2015, a new CBIP resident was registered — LLC Juxin Malt Technology. It was stated that the anticipated annual capacity of the new plant would reach 300,000 tons of malt barley. Some experts suggested that the new Chinese producer would directly compete with JSC Belsolod, the more so because the absence of high-quality malt remains a chronic problem of the domestic brewing sector. Although the CBIP administration immediately issued a statement insisting that such conclusions were erroneous, that was not the first incident when concerns were voiced⁸ that Chinese companies were going to use the CBIP signboard to compete with local Belarusian manufacturers.

In late September, five more Chinese companies were reported to be interested in becoming CBIP residents.

The period under review saw political engagement between the two countries grow increasingly relevant. China recognized the outcomes of the 11 October presidential election in Belarus, and the Chinese administration sent congratulations to President Lukashenka. In the meantime, both chambers of the Belarusian parliament ratified the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between Belarus and China. Interestingly, Belarus reiterated its commitment to the One-China policy; whereas the Chinese side said it supported Belarus's efforts aimed at protecting its independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and ensuring political and social stability, and spoke against the interference of any forces under any pretext into Belarus's home affairs. Therefore, China became another, albeit indirect, foothold, for Belarus to make use of when maneuvering between Russia and the West.

Forecast for the near future

Both the Belarusian and Chinese sides are approaching the relatively balanced engagement pattern, while neither party has hopes that the existing objective challenges can be effectively addressed by signing one or two agreements or implementing one or two projects. Official Minsk will continue trying to revise the conditions of the tied loans that China already extended, although progress in this area is quite unlikely. At the same time, the Belarusian authorities seek to increasingly involve China in the construction and development of the transport and logistics infrastructure in Belarus within the framework of the implementation of the Silk Road Economic Belt project.

8. <http://news.tut.by/economics/464673.html>

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

(Asia, Africa and Latin America)

Summary index: +8

Total positive points: +8

Total negative points: 0

+8

0

Main trends

Contacts with virtually all of the "developing world" countries became markedly less active during the two months under review, except for Latin America and South Asia. The most probable reason for this was the fact that the country's Foreign Ministry was busy working on Belarus's relationships with the West and the countries of the region and making sure the results of the presidential election were recognized.

The setback in Belarus's relations with the Middle East was for the most part due to the need to gain insight into the very tense situation in the region associated with the Russian operation in Syria and attempts to overcome the crisis connected with Iran's nuclear program. Minsk is currently mostly inclined to work with the countries of the region that are allies of the West.

At the same time, Belarus seeks to take into account Russia's plans concerning the Middle East and maintain relationships with the countries that are opponents of the conservative Arab bloc as well.

The intensification of Belarus's relationships with Latin America is an attempt to overcome the setback and standstill observed during the previous months. At the same time, Minsk is forced to change partners yet again, and facing slackness in its relations with Venezuela and Bolivia it seeks to build more serious contacts with Nicaragua and Argentina.

Description of the key events

South Asia

On 6–7 September, Nirmala Sitharaman, India's Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, visited Belarus. She met with President Lukashenka. The visit became a continuation of the increasingly active engagement between Minsk and Delhi, which reached its peak in June, when the Indian president came to Belarus.

The Belarusian administration does not deny that it considers its relationships with India and Pakistan to be interrelated and seeks to find a balance between the two. The official press release issued during the visit reads: "*The head of state remarked that during his recent visit to China he met with the President of Pakistan. 'We have spoken a lot about India, about the efforts of India to normalize relations with this country in all areas,' he said [as he spoke to the Indian minister].*"

In 2014, two-way trade between Belarus and India was a bit more than USD 400 million, whereas in January–July 2015, it exceeded USD 300 million. During her visit to Belarus Sitharaman explored possibilities for cooperation in the manufacturing sector, mechanical engineering, pharmaceutical industry, potash industry, IT, as well as education. The Indian official said India was ready to not only buy potash fertilizers, but also invest in the Belarusian potash sector⁹. Indeed, India has been showing interest in the Belarusian

potash industry for a few years now, and the recent statement should be considered a response to the recent signing of a long-term contract between Belarus and China for potash supplies, which might limit India's access to Belarusian potash.

On 8–9 October, Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Valiancin Rybakoŭ paid a working visit to Pakistan. Rybakoŭ took part in the second round of political consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Pakistan, met with Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and held talks at the Ministry of Commerce of Pakistan, the Board of Investment of Pakistan, and the Economic Affairs Division of the Government of Pakistan¹⁰.

Middle East

Lebanon. On 1 September, Minister of Foreign Affairs Uladzimir Makiej met with Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Fransabank Group (Lebanon) Adnan Kassar. In the course of the meeting Makiej and Kassar addressed the status and prospects of cooperation of Belarus with Lebanon and other Arab countries¹¹. Kassar, a very influential Lebanese businessman and politician, promoted the development of relations between Minsk and some of the conservative Arab regimes of the Persian Gulf back in the late 2000s.

Egypt. On 28 September, President Lukashenka met with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi in New York. In the course of their first meeting the two presidents agreed to develop a roadmap of bilateral trade and economic cooperation and discussed the idea of implementing multilateral economic projects involving Belarus, Egypt and third countries (the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf are probably implied here).

In 2014, two-way trade between Egypt and Belarus almost tripled year-on-year to USD 156.4 million, Belarusian export amounted to USD 134.1 million. In January–July 2015, Belarusian export to Egypt reached USD 79.93 million, and Belarus recorded a surplus. An important positive development is that Belarusian export supplies to Egypt include not only potash fertilizers, but also, to a considerable extent, mechanical engineering products and machine tools, tires, steel products, and petrochemical products. The relationship between official Minsk and Cairo has seriously intensified over the past 12 to 18 months. Specifically, following a decade-long pause, the second meeting of the Joint Trade Commission under the chairmanship of the ministers of trade of Belarus and Egypt was held in September 2014.

Kurdistan. On 27–29 October, a delegation of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of Iraqi Kurdistan led by its President Dara Jalil Al-Khayat visited Belarus. The delegation met with Head of Africa and Middle East Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ihar Liaščenia, visited the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange, Ministry of Health and the China–Belarus Industrial Park¹². The visit became a continuation of contacts between Belarus and Kurdistan, which became a stable part of Belarus's foreign policy over the past few years.

Latin America

El Salvador, Nicaragua, Argentina. On 15–23 September, Deputy Foreign Minister Aliaksandr Hurjanaŭ paid a working visit to El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Argentina. The del-

9. Meeting with India's Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to Belarus Manoj Kumar Bharti. 7 September 2015 http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-ministrom-torgovli-i-promyshlennosti-indii-nirmalaj-sitxaraman-i-chrezvychajnym-i-polnomochnym-12069/

10. On the visit of Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Valiancin Rybakoŭ to Pakistan 09-10-2015 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/dfd8d67806e439d1.html

11. On the meeting between Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej and Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Fransabank Group Adnan Kassar 01-09-2015 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/cef8b4899ef5129c.html

12. On the meeting between Head of Africa and Middle East Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ihar Liaščenia with a delegation of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of Iraqi Kurdistan 28-10-2015 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/a725f657bb3ccbff.htm

egation included First Deputy Agriculture Minister Leanid Marynič, representatives of MAZ, Belorusneft, Beleximgarant, and the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus. In the course of the visit the first ever political consultations were held between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and El Salvador, alongside the first meeting of the Belarus–Argentina intergovernmental commission for trade and economic cooperation and second meeting of the Belarus–Nicaragua intergovernmental commission for trade and economic cooperation. Agreements were signed with Nicaragua on the abolition of visas for holders of diplomatic and service passports, and a memorandum of cooperation in agribusiness was inked by the Ministries of Agriculture of Belarus and Argentina.

Prospects of further development of relations with those three countries remain vague, one reason being their remoteness from Belarus. Furthermore, they are quite small economies (except for Argentina). Spokesman for the Belarusian Foreign Ministry Zmicier Mirončyk admitted that Belarus's relationship with El Salvador is only "at the active starting phase" and noted: "notably, we emphasize the promotion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation from the very start."¹³ Meanwhile, trade with El Salvador and Nicaragua, even if Belarus succeeds in promoting it, will be limited. As for Argentina, despite the operation of a Belarusian embassy in that country, the balance of mutual relations looked rather negative for Belarus due to the trade deficit and lack of any significant engagement in other areas.

Ecuador. Belarusian President Lukashenka on 28 September had a meeting with President of Ecuador Rafael Correa Delgado in New York. The two heads of state addressed the status of the Belarus–Ecuador relationship¹⁴. Ecuador is currently the most promising partner of Belarus in the region.

Cuba. While in New York, President Lukashenka met with President of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of Cuba Raul Castro. They discussed the status and prospects of bilateral ties, focusing on trade and economic relations¹⁵. On 23–26 October, Director General for Bilateral Relations of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs Gerardo Peñalver Portal visited Belarus. He met with Foreign Minister Uladzimir Makiej, Deputy Foreign Minister Valiancin Rybakoŭ, senior officials at the Department for Foreign Political Activity, the America Department and the Department for Foreign Political Analysis. Gerardo Portal also visited the Belarusian parliament and the Management Academy¹⁶.

Brazil. On 1–6 October, Alieh Kraučanka, Head of the America Department of the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited Brazil and Cuba. The visit featured bilateral political consultations at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and Cuba. Kraučanka held a series of working meetings at the Foreign Ministry, addressed the status and prospects of bilateral cooperation, as well as the implementation of the agreements reached during the meeting between the two heads of state at the BRICS Summit in Ufa.

Simultaneously with Kraučanka's visit to Brazil, a delegation of the Brazilian parliament led by Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of the National Congress of Brazil Fernando Lucio Giacobbo visited Belarus on 30 September–1 October. That was the first contact of that kind between the two countries. The Brazilian delegation visited BelAZ, MTZ, Snoŭ agricultural cooperative, and Belmedpreparaty and explored possibilities for organizing the assembly of Belarusian-made agricultural machinery in Brazil¹⁷. Although two-way

13. Answers to questions from media at a news briefing by spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of Belarus Zmicier Mirončyk on 17 September 2015 17-09-2015 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/d8375d9493fbe818.html

14. Meeting with Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa Delgado 28 September 2015 http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-prezidentom-ekvadora-rafaelem-korra-delgado-12208/

15. Meeting with President of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of Cuba Raul Castro 27 September 2015 http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-predsedatelem-gosudarstvennogo-soveta-i-soveta-ministrov-kuby-raulem-kastro-12189/

16. On meetings between senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus with Director General for Bilateral Relations of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs Gerardo Peñalver Portal 26-10-2015 http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/f9959fa7326f459d.html

17. Nadzieja Juškiewič, South American Interest 01.10.2015 <http://zviazda.by/2015/10/103421.html>

trade with Brazil used to reach USD 1 billion, and Belarus enjoyed a huge surplus, it was formed almost exclusively by potash fertilizers; therefore, the relationship with Brazil looks quite limited. Nevertheless, judging by the above-mentioned contacts, Minsk seeks diversification of its ties with that country.

Asia

Vietnam. On 26–27 October, a Vietnamese delegation led by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Hoang Quoc Vuong visited Belarus. The delegation participated in the 12th session of the Belarus–Vietnam intergovernmental commission for trade, economic, scientific, and technical cooperation to draw the results of the collaboration between the two countries in 2015, implementation of the program for cooperation between Belarus and Vietnam for 2013–2015, and discuss objectives for the near future. A business matchmaking session attended by the Vietnamese representatives was held in conjunction with the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry¹⁸.

Other

Consultations with Russia. On 15–17 September, Moscow hosted consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Russia on the situation in the Middle East and North Africa. The consultations were centered on the current situation in the region and coordination of approaches of the two countries to relevant issues in the international scene. The Belarusian delegation was led by Head of Africa and Middle East Department of the Foreign Ministry Ihar Liaščenia.

On 21 October, Moscow hosted consultations between the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Russia on the issues of Sub-Saharan Africa. The Belarusian delegation was led by Ihar Liaščenia. The meeting focused on the coordination of efforts to promote the interests of the two countries in Africa (specifically, contacts with the African Union) and the situation in the continent.

Forecast for the near future

Contacts with the developing world will inevitably be intensified during the next few months. On the one hand, the Foreign Ministry and other government authorities will be less busy now that the presidential election is over; on the other hand, they will attempt to make up for the time and opportunities they lost during the last couple of months. The deterioration of the economic situation in Belarus also encourages them to search for new markets in the developing world.

Belarus's relations with the Middle East will remain vague because of the objectively challenging situation in the region. Minsk is more inclined to further its contacts with the conservative Arab regimes, Turkey, and Iraqi Kurdistan, which are the allies of the West in the region; however, it will also have to maintain relation with their opponents. Egypt probably has the most benefits in store for Belarus (possibly with Russia's support), along with some of the most stable Maghreb countries.

In the near future, Minsk will continue to step up its efforts in South Asia, maneuvering between Pakistan and India (and possibly drawing on China's assistance in its relations with Pakistan) and seek closer ties with Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka. In Latin America, Ecuador will remain in the focus, and, to a lesser extent, Cuba. When it comes to Africa, the most promising dimensions for cooperation are the countries of East Africa (primarily Ethiopia) and South Africa (Mozambique, Angola).

18. On the 12th meeting of the Belarus–Vietnam intergovernmental commission for trade, economic, scientific, and technical cooperation http://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/db38ce00a9a69c06.html

Development of the Belarus–Ukraine relationship

Summary index: +7

Total positive points: +8

Total negative points: -1

+8

-1

Main trends

The bilateral political relations remained friendly and constructive.

The most significant move by the Belarusian side in the context of the bilateral relationship during the two months under review was Belarus's refusal to establish a Russian airbase in Belarus. On 30 October, President Lukashenka said at a meeting of the command staff of the country's armed forces that neither Minsk nor Moscow needed a Russian airbase in Belarus from the military point of view.

At the same time, there were some tensions in mutual trade associated with the new rules of import that Belarus had introduced previously.

Description of the key events

In September and October, the issue of Ukraine remained one of the key points in the public rhetoric of the Belarusian administration and personally President Lukashenka.

On 26 September, the Belarusian president congratulated his Ukrainian counterpart on his 50th anniversary. Lukashenka called the Belarus–Ukraine relationship "rapidly expanding", "confidential" and "friendly" and outlined the benefits of direct dialogues with Petro Poroshenko. Lukashenka went on to say that the partnership with Ukraine was based upon good-neighborly relations and expressed his interest in continuous promotion of engagement. He called Poroshenko a strong-willed man with vast experience and noted that his qualities would enable the Ukrainian president to restore peace and solace that millions of Ukrainians are dreaming of now.

On 28 September, Aliaksandr Lukashenka dedicated a large portion of his speech at the United Nations General Assembly to the Ukrainian issue. He said that the conflict in Donbas must be resolved and that the Belarusian administration was willing to provide maximum support to facilitate the peace process.

On the election day, President Lukashenka once again focused on Ukraine when speaking to reporters. Specifically, he said he was certain that peace would soon settle in Ukraine: "*Petro Poroshenko has recently admitted that the peace in Donbas that had been achieved and enshrined here, in Belarus, has brought about ceasefire. This means that peace will soon come. I am sure it will.*" When commenting on the pro-European policy of Ukraine, he said: "*You chose your own way, and we respect it. We will adapt to your policy and the course that you will choose to follow.*"

On 13 October, Petro Poroshenko congratulated Aliaksandr Lukashenka on his victory in the presidential election during a telephone conversation. They also discussed the engagement between Belarus and Ukraine and agreed to "*maintain contacts concerning the issues of mutual interest.*"

On 30 October, when making a speech at a meeting with the command staff of the armed forces of Belarus, President Lukashenka said: "*for us it is extremely important to maintain*

the balance of our relationships with Moscow and Kyiv originally achieved at the political and diplomatic level. Under no circumstances can we be involved in their confrontation."

In September and October, one of the characteristic topics in the rhetoric of the Belarusian president was the strengthening of border control between Belarus and Ukraine. On 4 September, Chairman of the State Border Troops Committee Leanid Malcaŭ said that measures were being taken to strengthen the Belarusian–Ukrainian state border. Previously, Chairman of the State Customs Committee Jury Sienko attributed those measures to the fact that *"there is virtually unlimited circulation of weapons in Ukraine, which poses certain threat to our country."* On 25 September, the president commented on the border issue during his trip to Žlobin. He said that Belarus was capable of building a solid barrier on the Belarusian–Ukrainian border in order to prevent any attempts of intrusion of bandits in its territory. As an illustration of his words, the day before the election Belarus-1 Television Channel reported an attempt by about 200 Ukrainian citizens armed with baseball bats and traumatic weapons to cross the state border.

On 23 September, the press service of the State Border Troops Committee said that the demarcation of the Belarusian–Ukrainian border at the junction of Belarus, Ukraine, and Poland had started in the Brest District. It was also announced that further border demarcation operations would be conducted in the Malaryta, Kobryn, and Ivanava Districts. It is expected that work to mark the state border in the Brest and Malaryta Districts would be completed in 2015, and in the Kobryn and Ivanava Districts, in 2016.

Throughout the period under review, Minsk remained a crucial negotiating venue for holding current consultations by the Contact Group of Ukraine, Russia, and the OSCE to settle the conflict in Donbas.

An escalation of "trade wars" occurred during the last two months. In September, the Ukrkondprom association called for the Ukrainian government to take effective measures in response to the imposition by the Belarusian side of mandatory sanitary and hygienic examination of imported products, because the move considerably limited the access of Ukrainian products to the Belarusian market. The losses of the Ukrainian confectionery sector have amounted to approximately UAH 40 million and keep growing.

On 30 October, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine Natalia Mykolskaya said during a meeting of the Ukraine–Belarus High-Level Group that it was "necessary to promptly remove all limitations on supplies of Ukrainian products to the Belarusian market associated with the need to pass sanitary and hygienic examination introduced by Resolution No. 666 of the Council of Ministers of Belarus on 6 August 2015." The Group also addressed the introduction by Belarus of the recycling fee for vehicles, which causes Ukrainian manufacturers to work in unequal competitive conditions. The Belarusian side voiced its concerns over the customs declaration of Belarusian products, specifically oil products.

On 1 October, Lviv hosted a meeting of the Ukraine–Belarus Working Group on Transport with the participation of acting CEO of Ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian railways) Oleksandr Zavorodny. The Group explored possibilities for increasing freight traffic, competitive tariffs for transit freights in 2016, as well as electrification of railway tracks. Ukrainian officials also requested their Belarusian counterparts to consider possibilities for Belarusian Railway to offer tariffs on a par with the Baltic seaports to enable exports of Belarusian oil products via Ukrainian ports.

On 2 October, the press service of the Belarusian Embassy in Ukraine reported that the central banks of Belarus and Ukraine had reached an agreement on the intensification of their collaboration with a view to deepening trade and economic ties between the two countries.

In late October, the customs authorities of Ukraine and Belarus commissioned the electronic system for exchanging preliminary information about goods and vehicles. The project is implemented jointly by the State Customs Committee of Belarus and the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine. The new system will make it possible to substantially reduce time required for customs procedures, increase the level of customs value control, and

reduce possibilities for smuggling and corruption.

Forecast for the near future

Despite his reluctance to annoy Moscow, President Lukashenka continues to deepen constructive relations with Kyiv, one reason being his willingness to have not only Russia's support, but also normalize Belarus's relationships with the EU and the U.S. Minsk's pro-Ukrainian position has already been lauded in the western capital cities —geopolitical considerations became one of the reasons for the West to suspend sanctions against Belarus.

Before the EU made up its mind to suspend the measures against Belarus, Minister of State for European affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development of France Harlem Désir said: "The EU is seeking to bring Belarus closer to itself — not for admission to the EU, but as a partner for the stabilization of the region." In other words, official Minsk's constructive position on the Ukrainian issue played an important role.

During the period under review, the Belarusian side discovered another niche to benefit from amid the escalating confrontation between Ukraine and Russia — the mutual air blockade of Ukraine and Russia. In October, Minsk offered its services as a "transit corridor" for the renewal of the most convenient air service between Ukraine and Russia.

Annex

Catalogue of events underlying the relations development index

Belarus–Russia relationship

Date	Event	Point
4 September	National Bank of Belarus is granted access to currency trading at the Moscow Exchange	+1
8 September		+1
8 September	Agreement is signed on the main areas for industrial cooperation in the EEU	+1
8 September	Eurasian Economic Commission publishes draft Agreement on concerted approaches to the regulation of currency relations	+1
10 September	Belarus participates in the joint exercise of the united air defense system of the CIS "Combat Commonwealth 2015"	+1
11 September	Chairmen of the Investigation Committee V. Šajeŭ and A. Bastyrykin sign a cooperation program	+1
16 September	Minsk hosts a meeting of the board of customs services of the EEU	+1
16 September	Meeting of the joint board of the General Prosecutor's Offices of Belarus and Russia	+1
17 September	Package of agreements with Russian regions is signed at the 2nd Forum of Russian and Belarusian Regions in Sochi	+1
17 September	A. Lukashenka makes a speech in Sochi about the importance of interregional cooperation	+1
17 September	M. Miasnikovič comments on lack of efforts to remove customs barriers within the EEU	-1
24 September	Foreign Ministry comments on the progress of the resolution on the status of the observer at the United Nations for the EEU	+1
28 September	A. Kabiakoŭ visits Moscow, meets with Sobyanin	+2
29 September	Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Union State (Medvedev admits the right of Belarusian manufacturers to supply food to Russia)	+1
29 September	Action plan is signed to pursue concerted industrial policies within the Union State	+1
29 September	Belarusian state awards are presented to Russian officials	+1
29 September, 2 October	Reports about respites to repay loans	-1
5 October	A. Lukashenka meets with the governor of Sakhalin	+2
11 October	A. Lukashenka's statement about a Russian airbase	-2
15 October	Foreign Ministry: Belarus submits to the EU the EEU's cooperation proposals	+1
16 October	Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council	+3
19 October	Board meeting of the National Banks within the framework of the Union State	+1
21 October	A. Raŭkoŭ's statement about military cooperation	+1

Date	Event	Point
27 October	Board meeting of the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Russia, meeting between U. Makiej and S. Lavrov	+1
28 October	Ratification by the Council of Federation of Russia of the protocol on the stay of Russian and Belarusian citizens without registration	+2
28 October	Ratification by the Council of Federation of Russia of the protocol on mutual recognition of denials of entry	+2
September-October	Work with Russian leasing companies	+1
Total		+26

Belarus–EU relationship

Date	Event	Point
2 September	U. Makiej meets with German Ambassador Peter Dettmar	+1
2 September	A. Kupčyna meets with a Slovak parliamentary delegation	+1
3 September	A. Kupčyna visits Brussels to participate in the 6th round of consultations on modernization with the EU	+1
3 September	U. Makiej meets with Coordinator of the Federal Government of Germany for social cooperation with Russia, Central Asia and the Eastern Partnership member states Gernot Erler	+1
8 September	A. Kupčyna visits Romania to participate in consultations between the Foreign Ministries	+1
9-11 September	A. Kupčyna visits Sweden	+1
15 September	A. Kupčyna meets with Head of the European Union's Delegation to Belarus Andrea Wiktorin	+1
17-18 September	A. Kupčyna visits Hungary and participates in the 6th meeting of the intergovernmental Belarus–Hungary commission for economic cooperation	+1
22 September	U. Makiej meets with Ambassador of Denmark to Belarus Thomas Winkler and representatives of the business community	+1
24-25 September	5th meeting of the Belarus–Bulgaria intergovernmental commission for trade and economic cooperation attended by A. Kupčyna and Deputy Minister of Economy of Bulgaria Daniela Vezieva	+1
25 September	A. Kupčyna meets with State Secretary at the Latvian Foreign Ministry Andrejs Pildegovics	+1
28-29 September	5th meeting of the Belarus–Slovenia intergovernmental commission for trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation attended by A. Kupčyna	+1
30 September	A. Kupčyna meets with Director General for management of Austrian Foreign Ministry Michael Zimmermann	+1
1 October	A. Kupčyna meets with Romanian Ambassador to Belarus Viorel Mosanu	+1

№ 28 September–October 2015

1-2 October	12th meeting of the Belarus–Slovakia joint commission for trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation attended by A. Hurjanaŭ	+1
5 October	A. Kupčyna meets with Ambassador of Cyprus to Belarus George Kasoulides	+1
5 October	U. Makiej meets with Austrian Ambassador Emil Brix	+1
6 October	A. Kupčyna meets with Director for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany Andreas Peschke	+1
7 October	U. Makiej meets with Minister for Transport of Latvia Anrijs Matīss	+1
7 October	First Belarus–Romania consultations on consular issues (7 October, Minsk)	+1
13 October	A. Kupčyna meets with Second President of the National Council of Austria Karlheinz Kopf and President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber Christoph Leitl	+1
21-22 October	13th meeting of the Belarus–Germany working group for trade and investments, holding of the “Day of Belarusian Economy in Berlin” attended by A. Hurjanaŭ, Deputy Economy Minister A. Kudasaŭ, and First Deputy Energy Minister L. Seniec	+1
25 October	A. Hurjanaŭ meets with General Secretary of the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria Michael Linhart	+1
26 October	A. Kupčyna meets with a parliamentary delegation of the Czech Republic led by Member of Parliament, the Head of the Inter-Parliamentary Group of the Czech Republic and the Republic of Belarus Zuzka Bebarova Rujbrova	+1
28 October	U. Makiej meets with Head of the European Union’s Delegation to Belarus Andrea Wiktorin	+1
28 October	A. Rybakoŭ meets with Head of the European Union’s Delegation to Belarus and Ambassadors of Germany, Italy, Sweden, and France to discuss preparations for a climate conference in Paris	+1
29 October	U. Makiej meets with German Ambassador Peter Dettmar	+1
30 October	Belarus–Lithuania consultations between the Foreign Ministries attended by A. Kupčyna and Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Andrius Krivas	+1
Late October	Cancellation of the Minsk Forum conference	-2
September-October	Some negative materials in official media and statements by the administration of the country regarding the EU	-1
September-October	Positive materials in official media and statements by the administration of the country regarding the EU	+1
Total		+26

Belarus–China relationship

Date	Event	Point
2 September	A. Lukashenka meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Zhang Gaoli, member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Deputy Secretary of the State Council	+3
3 September	Statement about Belarusian scientists planning to expand engagement with China in the sphere of supplies of Belarusian-made laser systems	+1
4 September	Opening of the first Belarus–China humanitarian scientific forum	+1
14 September	Gansu province center of commerce, science, technology, education and culture opens in Minsk at BNTU in the course of the visit of Deputy Head of the Gansu Commerce Department Zhang Shien. Contracts and agreements are signed between the Free Economic Zone Hrodnainvest and the Department of Commerce of Gansu, between the Hrodna City Administration and China's Wuwei Quansheng Corporation, and between that corporation and Belresursy concern	+2
16 September	New resident company — LLC Juxin Malt Technology — is registered at the CBIP	+1
17 September	Gansu province Governor Liu Weiping meets with Belarusian Trade Minister U. Cekaanŭ. Intention is voiced to establish the Belarus–China center for trade cooperation by 1 January 2016	+1
18 September	Gansu province Governor Liu Weiping meets with Belarusian Deputy Prime Minister A. Kalinin. Ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of the first production facility of LLC Juxin Malt Technology at the CBIP	+1
22 September	Memorandum of understanding and cooperation is signed between BelTA and China's Renmin Ribao during the media cooperation forum One Belt, One Road	+1
27 September	Presentation of the Association of Chinese Companies in Belarus	+1
29 September	Meeting of a Chinese delegation for construction and architecture with the administration of the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of Belarus. Belarus is reported to have plans to build 16 social apartment houses using China's technical and economic aide	+1
29 September–1 October	Positive statements by senior officials of Belarus, including A. Lukashenka, about the Belarus–China cooperation on the 66th Anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China	+1
1 October	Opening of Air China office in Belarus	+1
1 October	Statement is made about plans to set up a JV to produce excavation equipment between OAO Amkodor and Sinomach Heavy Industry	+1
2 October	Lower chamber of parliament of Belarus ratifies the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between Belarus and China. On 15 October, the document was ratified by the upper chamber	+3
6 October	A. Lukashenka says China is ready to revise the terms of provision of tied loans	+1
8 October	Presentation of the capacity of the transport and logistics center Kaliadzičy to Chinese companies	+1
11 October	A. Lukashenka's positive statements about cooperation between Belarus and China	+1
13 October	Opening of the Belarusian-Chinese scientific and technical forum	+1
12-14 October	Days of Chinese culture in Belarus	+1

19 October	Visit of a Xiaogang delegation to Brest	+1
26 October	Chairwoman of the Belarusian Notary Chamber N. Borisenko and President of the China Notary Association Ding Lu sign an agreement on cooperation	+1
27 October	Belarus and China are in talks over visa-free entry of organized groups of tourists, said Deputy Minister of Sport and Tourism M. Partnoj	+1
Total		+27

Belarus's relationships with the "Developing countries"

Date	Event	Point
6-7 September	India's Minister of State for Commerce Nirmala Sitharaman visits Belarus	+2
15-23 September	Deputy Foreign Minister A. Hurjanaŭ pays a working visit to El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Argentina	+1 +1 +1
30 September - 1 October	Brazilian delegation led by Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies of the National Congress of Brazil Lucio Giacobbo visits Belarus	+1
8-9 October	Deputy Foreign Minister V. Rybakoŭ visits Pakistan	+1
26-27 October	Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of Vietnam Hoang Quoc Vuong visits Belarus	+1
Total		+8

Belarus–Ukraine relationship

Date	Event	Point
September-October	A series of pro-Ukrainian statements by President Lukashenka	+2
September-October	Commercial disputes, which at this phase did not cause a new trade war. Mutual demonstration of the willingness to meet halfway	-1 +1
September	Demarcation of the state border continues	+1
October	New agreements on cooperation between Belarusian and Ukrainian railways	+1
October	Agreements on cooperation between the National Banks of Belarus and Ukraine	+1
October	Agreement on cooperation between the customs services of Belarus and Ukraine	+1
October	Refusal by official Minsk to set up a Russian airbase in Belarus	+1
Total		+7

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**