

**DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT AND TRADE RELATIONS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS**

P.I. Lapkovskaya, Candidate of Economic Sciences, associate professor

D.A. Greyner, student

K.M. Kravchenko, student

Belarusian National Technical University, Minsk

Belarus' integration into the global economy is an important factor contributing to the country's economic development. In the context of shrinking freight turnover and changing transport flows, Belarus faces the need to adapt to new realities. Modernization of transport infrastructure and development of logistics centers are becoming priority areas that open new horizons for cooperation with eastern countries. A strategic approach to integration based on active participation in international projects and attraction of investments can not only contribute to economic recovery, but also ensure sustainable growth. In addition, the importance of innovative technologies and sustainable business practices should be taken into account, which will improve the country's competitiveness in the global arena and improve the quality of life of the population.

Keywords: *integration, world economy, Belarus, trade agreements, freight turnover, transport infrastructure, logistics, modernization, geopolitics, international cooperation.*

Integration into the world economy has proven to be a powerful means of promoting development for many countries. Over the past 20 years, world trade has grown at an average annual rate of 6%, twice the rate of growth in world output. Global trade agreements are the basis on which relationships between countries are built to help regulate and promote international trade. Among the international organizations that play a key role in the development of such agreements are the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and others.

The Republic of Belarus, being part of the global economic context, has bilateral free trade area agreements with a number of countries, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia. As a member of the Eurasian Economic Union, Belarus is also developing cooperation with Serbia, China, Vietnam and Iran. This cooperation offers many advantages, such as access to global markets, reduction of tariffs and trade barriers, and access to technological assistance and training.

In order to create conditions for the development of international road transport of goods, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 102 of 19 March 2020 "On Measures to Develop International Road Transport of Goods" was adopted.

Nevertheless, the country has faced serious challenges in recent years. In 2022, freight turnover in Belarus decreased by 25.4% due to the disruption of transportation and logistics chains, the closure of the southern part of Russia's airspace, and the cessation of transportation with Ukraine. Analysts of the Eurasian Development Bank emphasize that this required the reorientation of transport flows to the east and the introduction of support measures, as well as the removal of barriers to freight traffic and the development of transport infrastructure [1].

Since the beginning of the current five-year period, the transport sector in Belarus has shown significant growth: gross value added of transport services increased by 9.3% and freight turnover of various modes of transport by 17.4%. At the same time, there has been a redistribution of population

mobility in favor of air transport, which indicates changing preferences. However, the current operating conditions of carriers have changed dramatically under the influence of Western sanctions, which affected the volumes of imported and exported goods.

The deputy head of the Main Department of Customs Control Organization of the State Customs Committee noted that in 2023, imports from the European Union decreased by more than 56%, while imports from the eastern direction increased by 2.3 times. These changes show how international relations and the geopolitical situation affect the economy and transportation flows [2].

The international road transport sector is undergoing a complex transformation, reorienting towards Eastern European and Asian routes. By 2030, freight traffic along the North-South international transport corridor is projected to increase by almost 60% compared to 2023. This will be possible due to the interest of countries such as Russia, China and Iran in developing new transportation arteries, which, in turn, creates new opportunities for Belarusian carriers.

An important aspect of the transport industry development is its modernization and automation. In 2019, the Republic of Belarus joined the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road, which facilitates the introduction of electronic consignment notes and improvement of technological processes. Infrastructure projects aimed at improving the quality and safety of transportation services, such as reconstruction of highways and construction of new logistics complexes, are being implemented.

In recent years, Belarus has been actively implementing major infrastructure projects aimed at modernizing its transport infrastructure. In particular, over 2021-2022, key highways were reconstructed, such as:

- highway R-23 Minsk-Mikashевичi - an important route that improves communication between regions;
- R-53 highway - reconstruction continues towards Borisov, which also increases the throughput capacity;
- the bridge over the Zapadnaya Dvina River - a strategically important facility for cargo transportation.

In addition, construction of a new logistics complex has been completed, which includes a container terminal and loading and unloading areas. This will create additional opportunities for increasing the volume of cargo transportation through Belarus

Modern technologies are being actively introduced in the transportation industry to improve efficiency and safety. The State Program “Transport Complex” for 2021-2025 provides for measures to automate and digitalize processes. This includes the use of electronic systems for transportation management and vehicle condition monitoring.

In addition, Belarus is actively developing its logistics hubs, which is an important step towards increasing its competitiveness in the international arena. There are about 60 logistics centers in the country, which provide comprehensive cargo transportation services and help attract foreign investment. The transition to multimodal transportation is gradually taking place, which makes it possible to optimize transport flows and reduce the time of cargo delivery.

The importance of cooperation with international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) should not be overlooked, which gives Belarus an opportunity to influence the formation of global trade standards and increase its role in the international arena. Participation in multilateral negotiations and initiatives also opens new horizons for trade development and investment attraction.

Participation in multilateral negotiations allows not only to influence the formation of global standards, but also to improve the conditions for foreign economic activity. This can lead to increased trade, attract foreign investment and create new jobs. In addition, interaction with international partners facilitates the exchange of experience and technology, which is also important for sustainable economic growth.

The current situation emphasizes the need for a strategic approach to the development of transport infrastructure and logistics system. Belarus, with its favorable geographical location, can become an important transit hub between Europe and Asia. However, this requires not only modernization of the existing infrastructure, but also active participation in international projects, which could be the key to the country's economic recovery and development.

In conclusion, Belarus' integration into the global economy presents a number of challenges, but at the same time opens up new opportunities for development. The reorientation of trade flows, modernization of the transport infrastructure and active participation in international projects may become the basis for sustainable growth and economic stability in the future. In addition, active cooperation with international organisations and neighbouring countries can contribute to a more effective exchange of technology and experience. Thus, despite the existing challenges, Belarus has the potential to achieve sustainable economic growth and improve the quality of life of its citizens through integration into the global economic system. Despite all the changes in the economic and political field, the Republic of Belarus continues to develop its logistics sector, participate in various international organisations and carry out innovative activities.

References

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РАЗВИТИЕ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ТРАНСПОРТНЫХ И ТОРГОВЫХ СВЯЗЕЙ В РЕСПУБЛИКЕ БЕЛАРУСЬ

Интеграция Беларуси в мировую экономику представляет собой важный фактор, способствующий экономическому развитию страны. В условиях сокращения грузооборота и изменяющихся транспортных потоков Беларусь сталкивается с необходимостью адаптации к новым реалиям. Модернизация транспортной инфраструктуры и развитие логистических центров становятся приоритетными направлениями, открывающими новые горизонты для сотрудничества с восточными странами. Стратегический подход к интеграции, основанный на активном участии в международных проектах и привлечении инвестиций, может не только способствовать экономическому восстановлению, но и обеспечить устойчивый рост. Кроме того, необходимо учитывать значение инновационных технологий и устойчивых практик в бизнесе, что позволит повысить конкурентоспособность страны на глобальной арене и улучшить качество жизни населения.

Ключевые слова: интеграция, мировая экономика, Беларусь, торговые соглашения, грузооборот, транспортная инфраструктура, логистика, модернизация, геополитика, международное сотрудничество.