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**TENDENCIES AND PROBLEMS OF COLLABORATION IN
ECONOMIC SPHERE BETWEEN UKRAINE AND THE
REPUBLIC OF BELARUS IN CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS
(2010–2014)**

In the article the author considers the economic collaboration between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus during 2010–2014, pays attention to the contractual and legal foundation of such contacts, and investigates the main tendencies and problems of bilateral economic relations.

Keywords: Ukraine, the Republic of Belarus, commercial and economic collaboration, pact, relations.

Economic direction of collaboration in Ukrainian-Belarusian relations is very important for both states. It is very essential for Ukraine in the conditions of economic war with Russia, because the Republic of Belarus is near the only state from all of Eurasian Economic Union which is interested in development of bilateral commercial and economic relations, and leaves its market open for Ukrainian goods. For Belarus the priority of economic vector of collaboration with Ukraine is caused by the following circumstances. First, it is a good possibility to save traditional sales market for its production. Also there are close economic contacts, which historically turned out between enterprises of both countries. Now Ukrainian-Belarusian economic relations mostly depend on geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe. This tendency has a direct influence on dynamics of commercial and economic collaboration between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus because of essential restrictions on potential possibilities of extension of interstate economic contribution. In these conditions the priority aim for the authorities of both republics is a necessity of organization of constant dialogue concerning the main points of economic collaboration. Also this aim includes the extension of institutional contribution in economic sphere and competence in choosing the optimal external economic partners.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the main tendencies of collaboration between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus in economic sphere during 2010–2014 years and also to determine the basic problems which have being prevented the development of bilateral economic development during the period mentioned.

Historiographic base of the subject mostly includes the works of Belarusian and Ukrainian scientists. Bilateral economic relations were investigated in researches of H. Maksak [1], H. Maksak and D. Yurchak [2], B. Zaliesskii [3], O. Valion [4], V. Zasadko [5], T. Polovyi [6] and others.

Speaking about the resources of our paper, we should point out that during the process of investigation we have analyzed the documents from official web sites of higher authorities of Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus.

Breaking for further development of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic relations was the beginning of 2010 year. Importance of this period was determined by a few factors. First of all, from January, 1, 2010 appeared the positive tendency of increase of amount of interstate commercial and economic operations. Second, the new politic management of Ukraine paid the priority attention to economic aspect of bilateral contribution.

In these conditions on April, 29, 2010 during the negotiations of both Presidents in Minsk the subject of further interstate economic collaboration became of a great importance. On this meeting O. Lukashenko and V. Yanukovych expressed their satisfaction by a new tendency of increase of mutual amount goods turnover. Also they

pointed out the strategic partnership between two countries in commercial and economic sphere. As a result of negotiations, the leaders of both republics achieved principal agreement concerned making deeper the contribution in the following spheres: power, transit, transport, industrial cooperation, interregional contribution and boundary commerce [7].

The major result of the visit was the agreement between both sides included the following: the governments of Ukraine and of Belarus were entrusted with working out the “travelling card” (Plan of mutual operations) from realization of the priority directions of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic collaboration by the middle of June, 2010. While preparing this document, the Presidents of Ukraine and Belarus entrusted its authors to include in the text a lot of concrete projects in different economic sectors. Special attention should be paid to such aspects: extension of bilateral industrial, scientific and technical cooperation; supply of Belarusian agricultural machine building to Ukraine; development of transport infrastructure; liquidation of existing commercial barriers; intensification of role of mutual settlement in national currencies; creation of business contribution council from the management of enterprises and business representatives from both countries [7].

In the context of realization of the Agreement mentioned, the “travelling card” was draw up and signed on May, 29, 2010 in Homel by First Vice-Prime Ministers of Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus A. Kliuiev and V. Semashko [1]. Drawing-up of the Plan of mutual operations can be considered as a quite logical and effective step from Ukrainian and Belarusian political management because of the following circumstances. First of all, in 2008 the term of validity of Interstate program for long-dated economic collaboration between the both states ended. Second, the signed in 2009 Memorandum about groundwork of system of measures concerning intensification of bilateral economic collaboration in conditions of world crisis showed its insufficient effectiveness. According to the aforesaid, the document mentioned became the only normative act being regulated the practical realization of priority directions of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic collaboration for short- and medium-dated periods.

As pointed out in his investigation H. Maksak, from the full value realization of “travelling card” both sides waited for an increase of goods turnover between two countries to the record target of 7–8 milliard dollars per year [1]. The governments of both states linked the extension of bilateral commerce with realization of projects concerning creation of mutual enterprises for export of production in the third countries, and also with the development of contribution in industrial sphere, especially in machine industry, transport and metallurgy. A separate point of the signed Plan of mutual operations was devoted to collaboration between both republics in sphere of oil transit across the territory of Ukrainian state and organization of Belarusian petrochemical supply to Ukraine. As it suitably underlined contemporary native investigator of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations H. Maksak, the realization of the last point of the document based on geopolitical situation in 2010 in the region could be the most important step on the way of providing power security for Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus [1].

During 2010 the active institutional contribution was being continued. For example, on June, 16–17, in the context of “travelling card” realization on the base of Ukrainian-Belarusian business council was created Advisory council. The main purposes of this institution were to widen the interstate commercial and economic collaboration, deepen the contacts between representatives of business circles, increase of bilateral goods turnover [2].

Commercial restrictions became a serious problem in the structure of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic collaboration. We would like to point out, that restrictive measures in bilateral commerce had negative influence for bilateral goods turnover.

That is why the mutual activity of the both countries concerned the liquidation of all existing trade barriers was provided for as a separate point in “travelling card”. Trying to solve this problem, on September, 28–29, in Minsk were being held Ukrainian-Belarusian negotiations concerning the application of restrictive measures in mutual commerce. During the discussion both sides marked the progress in sphere of liberalization antidumping and special protective actions. Also sides confirmed their intension to continue the work devoted to creation of optimal conditions for unimpeded access of Ukrainian and Belarusian goods for the markets of both states. The results of negotiations included the following agreements: the Ukrainian side liquidated special measures concerning import of stockinet linen, cotton fabric and luminescent gas lamps made in Belarus; was finished the process of signing the Agreement between concern “Belbiofarm” and Ukrainian Ministry of economy which provided the supply of Ukrainian starch syrup; was constantly made a decision concerning the supply of Ukrainian caramel to Belarusian market and import of Belarusian tires to Ukraine [8].

The results of work of Intergovernmental joint committee concerning the questions of commercial and economic collaboration greatly influenced on the dynamics of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic contribution. On September, 30, 2010 in Minsk was carried out the first session of Committee, headed by First Vice-Prime Ministers of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine V. Semashko and A. Kliuiev. During the session of Committee the sides discussed the status of interstate commercial and economic collaboration, and also outlined the perspective directions concerning the increase of mutual goods turnover. Except that, the participants of the session discussed few questions including extension of contribution in the following sectors of economy: transport, building and architecture, science and technologies, agro-industrial complex, fuel and energetic sphere. Also there were a lot of debates about the problems of interregional and boundary contribution, widening contractual and legal base of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic relations. As a result of the session there were signed a few documents concerning bilateral economic collaboration: Agreement between Government of the Republic of Belarus and Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers about the conditions of supplying to Ukraine new pneumatic rubber tires for cars; Protocol between Government of the Republic of Belarus and Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers concerning changes and additions to the Agreement about work activity and social protection of the citizens working abroad from July, 17, 1995; Pact about long-dated productive cooperation between OJSC¹ “Belkomunmash” and CJSC² “Chernihivskiy avtozavod” [9].

Because of the activation of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic collaboration the political management of both states got a problem of changing the format of bilateral economic relations. On May, 19, 2011, during the meeting of Belarusian President O. Lukashenko with Prime Minister of Ukraine M. Azarov this problem was being discussed. Also Ukrainian Prime Minister outlined the increase of mutual goods turnover during the last time. Mykola Azarov told O. Lukashenko that it was time to change simple commercial and economic collaboration into contribution in widest meaning – organization of mutual factories in such spheres as agricultural machine building, mastering of space [10].

Also O. Lukashenko and M. Azarov paid attention to the discussion of the future summit of CIS³ states planned for the second part of 2011. To the mind of Ukrainian Prime Minister, the most important question of the summit should be devoted for the debates concerning free trade zone agreement. Mykola Azarov used to think that signing of this document would cause the increase of goods turnover and would

¹ Open Joint-Stock Company.

² Closed Joint-Stock Company.

³ This abbreviation means “Commonwealth of Independent States” (*the author's foot-note*).

seriously consolidate contribution between both countries (Free Trade Pact within the framework of CIS was signed on October, 18, 2011 in Saint-Petersburg) [10]. It should be pointed out that Ukrainian political management of that time considered the post-soviet spaciousness as a key direction of its external economic activity. That is why Ukrainian leaders considered the question of free trade agreement within the framework of CIS as a priority and of strategic importance, which would allow to save and even to widen an economic potential of Ukrainian state.

On December, 15, 2011 in Kyiv the Twentieth (jubilee) session of Intergovernmental joint committee concerning the questions of commercial and economic collaboration was taken place. During the work of Committee were being discussed the ways for widening the bilateral economic collaboration in such spheres as engineering, power, transport and agriculture. There were also debated the questions of production, scientific and technical cooperation; creation of mutual enterprises including pharmaceutical sector; deepen of the interregional and boundary contribution. All those questions of interstate commercial and economic collaboration were included to the final Protocol of session, which underlined the main directions of Ukrainian-Belarusian contribution for 2012 year [11].

Special attention from both sides was paid to widening of contractual and legal base of bilateral economic relations. During the work of Committee were signed the following important documents: intergovernmental Agreement about the status of objects of Biloozero' water supply system included to Dnieper and Bug Channel; Plan for cooperation between the both Ministries of Foreign Affairs in economic sphere for 2012–2013 years; Program for industrial, scientific and technical cooperation between organizations of Ukraine and Belarus with entrance to the markets of the third countries; documents concerning realization of infrastructure projects in transport sphere [11]. So, the results of Twentieth session of Intergovernmental joint committee concerning the questions of commercial and economic collaboration confirmed the readiness of both states to develop bilateral economic relations based on the principles of mutually advantageous partnership with taking into account the national interests of both republics.

In 2011 the Customs Union, a new integration organ in the region, caused a bad influence on mostly positive tendency of widening of Ukrainian-Belarusian collaboration in economic sphere. The CU¹ consisted of Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and the Republic of Belarus. We would like to mention that from this time Russian Federation began to force upon other countries its own politics using economic instruments of Customs Union. This tactics of Russian external policy sometimes caused “commercial wars” on the post-soviet spaciousness especially between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus.

In the middle of 2011 Ukrainian exporters of rustproof pipes had troubles with supplying of their products to Belarusian market. The Belarusian side commented the situation during the press-conference of the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs O. Hurianov. Being answered the questions of independent Ukrainian journalist, he said: “Speaking about this situation, I would like to mention that this blockade it is not a Belarusian step. In this case there is no Belarusian position, because there is a position of states which are Customs Union' members. This restriction was an idea of Russian Federation which did this concerning to all providers of such production on the territory of Customs Union. In these conditions the applications of Ukrainian side about our blockade is not correct. We quite the reverse worked about the level of quotas which would satisfy the Ukrainian side and are waiting for the decision of Eurasian Economic Committee. This question was being decided by three states and

¹ We mean “Customs Union”.

Belarusian position was not of a key importance. We tell this to Ukrainian side and are waiting for their understanding...” [12].

As we have seen, the perspectives of increasing of bilateral economic collaboration between Ukraine and Belarus began to depend on the political position of Russia. This tendency became a long-dated and influenced badly on the dynamics of bilateral economic collaboration in future because of commercial restrictions created by both states concerning one another.

On February, 2012 after putting by Ukraine into operation some commercial restrictions concerning export of dairy products to Russia, the Belarusian side declared the same measures concerning Kyiv. Despite of the Belarusian explanation about their agreements with Russian in Customs Union, as a reply from March, 1, 2012 Ukraine put into operation the embargo on import of meat and milk products from Belarus [2]. So, in spring of 2012 a commercial war between both states began.

The problem was solved only in two months, during the meeting of Belarusian First Vice-Prime Minister V. Semashko with Minister of Economic Development and Commerce of Ukraine P. Poroshenko in Minsk. As a result, all restrictions concerning Ukrainian export of Belarusian meat and milk were liquidated. Belarus cancelled all commercial restrictions concerning the import of Ukrainian beer, which were put into action in 2010 [2].

We would like to mention that all those bilateral economic restrictions were being put into operation not only because of the external factors (influence of Russia), but depending on the desires of both sides to protect the national commodity producers from domination on the markets of both states an import production.

For example, in January, 2013 Ukraine restricted the access of the milk production of three great Belarusian producers to its market. As investigated H. Maksak and D. Yurchak, the official version of these measures was a few problems with quality of production. But in fact it was caused by the commercial expansion of Belarusian enterprises which in 2012 increased its presence nearly in a half in the milk production of Ukrainian market. As a reply for Ukrainian measures, from April, 2013 Belarus closed its market for Ukrainian confectionary production [2]. Also the both scientist highlighted that Ukrainian politics of protectionism depended on the change of official “supervisor” of bilateral relations. There were two examples of this tendency: on the beginning of 2012, when A. Kliuiev left the government; in the beginning of 2013, when Minister of Economic Development and Commerce P. Poroshenko left the Cabinet [2].

Despite of these problems, the bilateral relations were saving positive dynamics and developed in a good way of increasing of economic collaboration. Sessions of Intergovernmental joint committee concerning the questions of commercial and economic collaboration, and meetings between the leadership of both countries were organized to solve the existing problems in bilateral relations.

On May, 22, 2013 the Twenty-Second session of Intergovernmental joint committee concerning the questions of commercial and economic collaboration was organized in Kyiv. The Ukrainian and Belarusian delegations were headed by First Vice-Prime Ministers of both Republics S. Arbusov and V. Semashko. During the work of Committee both sides underlined the high level of bilateral partnership. Also a key attention was paid to collaboration in different sectors of economy, such as transport, agro-industrial complex, fuel and power and chemical spheres. At the end of the session between the Ukrainian and Belarusian governments was signed the final Protocol about interregional and boundary contribution [13].

The perspectives of the further deepen of Ukrainian-Belarusian commercial and economic collaboration was a major topic during the negotiations on June, 17–18, 2013 between the President of Ukraine V. Yanukovich and Belarusian President O. Lukashenko. Victor Yanukovich pointed out, that both states had a great potential,

which was not realized in the whole measure. Also the Ukrainian President outlined the ability of widen of transport and logistic coordination [14].

During the negotiations the Presidents also discussed the questions of economic collaboration in oil transporting, agro-industrial complex, agricultural machine building, military and technical, interregional and boundary contribution. Victor Yanukovich stressed the ability of widening of bilateral collaboration in those spheres [14].

Oleksandr Lukashenko pointed out, that both states evolved from simple commerce to the creation of mutual cooperatives, and Belarus would work hardly in this direction. Also he said that both countries should cancel all the restrictions in mutual commerce [14].

As a result of the negotiations the leaders of both countries decided to activate bilateral commercial and economic relations in sector of industrial cooperation [14].

Except the questions of direct economic collaboration, the sides discussed the abilities of economic coordination in integration associations. For example, on May, 31, 2013 in Minsk was signed Memorandum about the deepening of collaboration between Ukraine and Eurasian economic committee. This event was commented by V. Yanukovich in such way: “This decision is accepted only by economic interests of Ukrainian state and traditional relations between Ukraine and the states of Customs Union. I am convinced that our efforts made for cooperation between Ukraine and Customs Union, and further – between Eurasian Economic Union will increase the progress in economic sphere and the well-being of nations”. The Ukrainian leader also told his Belarusian colleague that Ukraine was interested in entering the World Trade Organization [14].

Bilateral economic relations were the subject of discussion during the visit of Ukrainian Prime Minister M. Azarov to the Republic of Belarus. The major attention was paid to development of industrial cooperation in designing of agricultural machine building, deepening of cooperation in the sphere of veterinary and phyto-sanitary control and so on. After negotiations was signed a “travelling card” from bilateral cooperation development for 2013–2015 years [15].

The Ukrainian internal policy actions of 2013–2014 had a serious influence on the entire structure of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations, even on bilateral economic collaboration. The new tendency of bilateral economic relations was a great limitation of mutual economic operations. This situation was caused by a few factors: economic recession in Ukraine; annexation of the Crimea; the beginning of Russian invasion against Ukrainian state; “economic war”, started by Russian Federation against Ukraine with using the instruments of Customs Union and its members, including Belarus.

All these problems were discussed during the first meeting of O. Lukashenko with Executor the Functions of Ukrainian President O. Turchynov. The sides discussed the transport corridor from Black Sea to Baltic Region, functioning of mutual enterprises and further collaboration in this sphere. After the negotiations the leaders of both states declared few decisions in the sphere of commercial and economic collaboration, and about the necessity increasing of economic operations between two countries [16].

Unfortunately, we should underline, that the tendency of mutual limitation of commercial and economic collaboration was not changed. It was determined by a few factors. First, the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas caused the limitation of economic operations between Crimea and Donetsk Region [17, p. 25].

The bilateral commercial restrictions which were put into operation during 2014 by both states, also negatively influenced on the dynamics of mutual economic collaboration. For example, on May, 1 the Government of Belarus decided to put into operation a certain licensing of beer and confectionary goods for those states, which are not members of Customs Union. Belarusian state power did not give an official

comment to these restrictions, so the experts discussed them in different ways: as a protective measure for national producer or as a result of Russian political influence [2].

As a reply for those steps of Belarusian state power, from July, 26, 2014 Ukraine put into operation the import tax for Belarusian confectionary, milk products, electric lamps and refrigerators in 55,29 per cent of its customs value. Belarusian tires, beer and details for refrigerators also were taxed by 60,05 per cent of customs value. The problem of the restrictions was solved on July, 18, 2014 after the visit of Ukrainian delegation to Minsk. From August, 19, all mutual restrictions were cancelled [2].

On July, 10, 2014 the Ministry of agriculture and foodstuffs of Belarus put into operation to restrict a potato import from Ukraine [2].

To our mind, the new model of economic collaboration of Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus in contemporary conditions should be firstly based on the principles of good-neighbour relations, equal rights, mutually beneficial and strategic partnership. Reaching of this purpose depends on the following steps both states should do:

- 1) make their decisions in independent way, avoiding the influence of the “third sides”;
- 2) activate bilateral economic relations and avoid the practice of discrimination protective measures concerning the country which is a trade partner;
- 3) change relations from simple commercial to innovation economic collaboration based on the deep cooperation with high additional value and its mutual export in the third courtiers;
- 4) take part in contemporary globalization processes and use their potential possibilities;
- 5) take into account the peculiarities of national economics.

So, the long period of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations confirmed the importance and priority of economic component in the state relations structure, and corroborated the rightness of basic principles on which the model of bilateral economic collaboration was being formed.

The period of 2010–2014 can be characterized by few clear tendencies in bilateral economic collaboration linked with a great attention of the leadership of both states to this sphere, realization of economic programs, cooperation in institutional organizations. Also during the period analyzed the dynamics of interstate economic relations was being influenced by a few problems, but in general Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus could be named as a strategic partners in economic sphere, which were very interested in widening of this partnership.

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Степан Васишин

**ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ ТА ПРОБЛЕМИ СПІВПРАЦІ УКРАЇНИ І РЕСПУБЛІКИ БІЛОРУСЬ
В ЕКОНОМІЧНІЙ СФЕРІ У СУЧАСНИХ УМОВАХ (2010–2014)**

У статті автор розглядає економічну співпрацю між Україною та Республікою Білорусь упродовж 2010–2014 рр., акцентує увагу на договірно-правовій базі цих зв'язків, досліджує основні тенденції та проблеми двосторонніх економічних відносин.

Ключові слова: Україна, Республіка Білорусь, торговельно-економічна співпраця, договір, відносини.

Степан Васишин

**ТЕНДЕНЦИИ И ПРОБЛЕМЫ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА МЕЖДУ УКРАИНОЙ И
РЕСПУБЛИКОЙ БЕЛАРУСЬ В ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЙ СФЕРЕ В СОВРЕМЕННЫХ
УСЛОВИЯХ (2010–2014)**

В статье автор рассматривает экономическое сотрудничество между Украиной и Республикой Беларусь в течение 2010–2014 гг., акцентирует внимание на договорно-правовой базе этих связей, исследует основные тенденции и проблемы двусторонних экономических отношений.

Ключевые слова: Украина, Республика Беларусь, торгово-экономическое сотрудничество, договор, отношения.