

A. Pisarchyk Belarusian State University, Minsk, Republic of Belarus
e-mail: alesya.p.325@gmail.com**POLITICAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA COOPERATION
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TRANSFORMATION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SYSTEM**

The article is dedicated to the analysis of the political and legal aspects of the bilateral relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China in the context of the transformation of the international relations system and global governance.

Unipolar liberal world order is degrading with the rise of new geopolitical leaders. As a small to middle power with no global interests, the Republic of Belarus' fundamental national interests mainly focus on predictable development of the international system, global and regional security. Cooperation with a rising great power like China which is also adhered to means of multilateralism for global development and security, assures these interests including independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the country, its political and social stability. This geopolitical choice was confirmed in the newest The Concept of National Security of the Republic of Belarus, which confirms the relevance of study of this foreign policy direction.

Key words: Republic of Belarus, People's Republic of China, national interests, bilateral relations, cooperation, strategic political goals.

А.С. Писарчик

Беларусь мемлекеттік университеті, Минск, Беларусь Республикасы
e-mail: alesya.p.325@gmail.com**Халықаралық қатынастар жүйесінің трансформациясы мәнінде
Беларусь Республикасы мен Қытай Халық Республикасының
ынтымақтастығының саяси-құқықтақ аспектісі**

Бұл мақала халықаралық қатынастар жүйесі мен жаһандық басқарудың трансформациясы мәнінде Беларусь Республикасы мен Қытай Халық Республикасының екіжақты қатынастарының саяси-құқықтық аспектілерін талдауға арналған. Жаңа геосаяси көшбасшылардың күшеюіне байланысты бірполярлы либералдық әлемдік тәртіп біртіндеп ыдырауда. Беларусь Республикасы шағын немесе орташа держава ретінде жаһандық деңгейде ықпалды болуға ұмтылмайды. Алайда оның ұлттық мүдделері халықаралық жүйенің тұрақты және болжамды дамуын, сондай-ақ жаһандық және өңірлік қауіпсіздікті қамтамасыз ету мәселелерін қамтиды. Осы мақсатта Қытаймен ынтымақтастық ерекше маңызға ие, себебі ол көпжақтылық қағидаттарын ұстана отырып, жаһандық даму мен қауіпсіздікті нығайтуға ықпал етеді. Бұл әріптестік Беларусь Республикасының тәуелсіздігін, егемендігін, аумақтық тұтастығын, саяси және әлеуметтік тұрақтылығын қамтамасыз етудің маңызды факторы болып табылады. Беларусь Республикасының Ұлттық қауіпсіздік тұжырымдамасында бұл геосаяси бағдар ресми түрде бекітіліп, оның сыртқы саясаттағы басым бағыттарының бірі ретінде айқындалған. Осыған байланысты Беларусь-Қытай ынтымақтастығының саяси-құқықтық негіздерін ғылыми зерттеу өзекті болып табылады.

Түйін сөздер. Беларусь Республикасы, Қытай Халық Республикасы, ұлттық мүдделер, екіжақты қатынастар, ынтымақтастық, стратегиялық саяси мақсаттар.

А.С. Писарчик

Белорусский государственный университет, Республика Минск, Беларусь
e-mail: alesya.p.325@gmail.com

**Политико-правовые аспекты сотрудничества Республики Беларусь
и Китайской Народной Республики в контексте трансформации системы
международных отношений**

Статья посвящена анализу политико-правовых аспектов двусторонних отношений между Республикой Беларусь и Китайской Народной Республики в контексте трансформации системы международных отношений и глобального управления. Однополярный либеральный мировой порядок постепенно распадается с подъемом новых геополитических лидеров. Республика Беларусь как малая или средняя держава, не имеющая глобальных интересов, в первую очередь заинтересована в предсказуемом развитии международной системы, обеспечении глобальной и региональной безопасности. Сотрудничество с Китаем, который также придерживается принципов многосторонности, глобального развития и безопасности, обеспечивает белорусские национальные интересы, включая независимость, суверенитет, территориальную целостность страны, ее политическую и социальную стабильность. Данный геополитический выбор нашел отражение в новейшей Концепции национальной безопасности Республики Беларусь, что подтверждает актуальность изучения данного направления внешней политики.

Ключевые слова: Республика Беларусь, Китайская Народная Республика, национальные интересы, двусторонние отношения, сотрудничество, стратегические политические цели.

Introduction

The article is dedicated to the analysis of the political and legal aspects of the bilateral relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China in the context of the transformation of the international relations system and global governance.

As a small to middle power with no global interests, the Republic of Belarus is mostly under the geopolitical and discursive influence of three external powers: the EU, Russian Federation and People's Republic of China. All three are global leaders in international relations, centers of geopolitical gravity and transmitters of various national strategies. Thus, Belarus' fundamental national interests mainly focus on its own national security, independence and autonomy, thus attempting to gradually reject the historical limitrophe model in interaction with various geopolitical centers of power. This is expressed in increased participation in global development on the side of those countries and international projects that advocate for predictable development of the international system, global and regional security, reducing hegemony and practices of interference in internal affairs of smaller developing countries.

The **purpose** of the article is to identify the main political goals and priorities of Belarus-China cooperation based on the analysis of institutional and discursive aspects of bilateral relations.

Research **objectives** include:

- Defining the stages of gaining of the international subjectivity by the Republic of Belarus and

the establishment of bilateral relations with China.

- Identification of institutional and legal framework for the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China cooperation

- Determination of the main directions of political cooperation between two countries.

Methods and methodology

The methodological basis of the research consists of general scientific methods (analysis and synthesis, classification and typology, comparison and analogy, deduction and induction, observation); research approaches (structural functionalism, institutional and communicational approaches); methods of applied political analysis (discourse analysis, content analysis, non-standardized text polling).

The author of the article proceeds from the approach developed in her own dissertation research, which is that there is a dialectical connection between the position of an national state or another subject of international relations in the global / regional socio-political space (*structural factor*) and narratives that it produces about the perception of its position (*discursive factor*) (Писарчик, 2018, p. 21).

The structural factor of the configuration of the global socio-political space is determined by global inequality among subjects of international relations, which is caused by the unequal access to the possibilities of social design (Sen, 2000). In this case social design means the ability to determine the direction of one's own national development and have

sufficient influence on the international arena to protect national interests and values.

The discursive factor arises from the competition of various projects of regional and global development for the establishment of hegemony / power in the global communication space in the form of fixing a certain social representation in the public eye as an objective reality.

Therefore, in order to identify the main priorities of bilateral relations, it is necessary to turn not only to define already institutionalized aspects of cooperation, but also to analyze the discourses of the political elites of both countries. In this study discourse is defined as a communication practice aimed at organizing and orienting society, which is stated in a specific social trace (transformation of mental and social organization) and informational trace (coded messages) (Писарчик, 2018, p. 22).

The analysis of the structural factor in this research comes from the study of functioning of various institutions that underlie building of bilateral relations between Belarus and China, including legal acts, governmental and non-governmental institutes.

Materials for the analysis of the discursive factor include strategic political documents of both countries, official speeches by senior officials and data from governmental portals and news outlets as the main sources accessible for studying narratives of the political establishment. Discourse analysis were based on the works of the classics of critical discourse analysis: R. Wodak (2011), T. van Dijk (2013), N. Fairclough (1989, 2006). In addition to discourse analysis, the method of non-standardized text survey by D.G. Rotman (2007) was used.

Main part

The fundamental geopolitical goals and interests of the Belarusian lands had already been determined at the early stages of Belarusian statehood, during the existence of medieval states-principalities (9th – mid-13th centuries). The essence of those are the aspiration to form a geopolitical and civilizational balance, an independent and sovereign Belarusian state, and subsequently – to ensure regional and global security.

In 20th century the first attempt to attain a status of an independent actor of international relations was taken by the Belarusian People's Republic (1918-1925). On January 19, 1918, the Executive Council of the All-Belarusian Congress published the "Declaration of the Belarusian Peace Delegation", which was sent to negotiations in Brest-Litovsk between the states of the Central Powers and Soviet Russia.

The document set out the foreign policy principles and goals of the future BPR. But the efforts undertaken didn't lead to recognition by the international community.

The next entry of the Belarusian state into the international arena occurred during the existence of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. The BSSR obtained the status of a founding member state of the UN. On May 8, 1945, the Belarusian delegation began its work at the conference in San Francisco and made a constructive contribution to the development of the UN Charter.

In the first post-war years the foreign activity and contribution of the BSSR was especially significant. The BSSR delegation participated in Preparatory Commission of the United Nations in London, the 1st and subsequent sessions of the UN General Assembly, and in 1946 was elected as a member of the Economic and Social Council. And in 1946-1948 the state obtained membership in four specialized agencies of the UN: International Telecommunication Union, Universal Postal Union, World Health Organization and World Meteorological Organization. In 1950 BSSR boycotted the work of the General Assembly and other UN bodies and committees in protest against the Kuomintang party holding China's seat in the UN Security Council.

And finally, on August 25, 1991, the Supreme Council of the BSSR (a legislative body) proclaimed the independence of Belarus, adopting "Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Byelorussian SSR" of July 27, 1990, No. 193-XII (О государственном суверенитете Республики Беларусь, 1990) as a constitutional law and a resolution "On Ensuring Political and Economic Independence of the Byelorussian SSR". On September 19, 1991, the Supreme Council decided to change the name of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic to the Republic of Belarus (Belarus) (О названии Белорусской Советской Социалистической Республики и внесении изменений в Декларацию Верховного Совета Белорусской Советской Социалистической Республики о государственном суверенитете Белорусской Советской Социалистической Республики и Конституцию (Основной Закон) Белорусской ССР, 1991). That became a milestone in a modern period of the the Belarusian people and statehood history.

At present, the Republic of Belarus has established diplomatic relations with 183 countries of the world. As of September 2024, the Republic of Belarus has 74 foreign diplomatic missions.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China were es-

tablished on January 20th, 1992. Since 1992 the Embassy of the People's Republic of China has been active in Minsk. The next year the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus was opened in Beijing.

Since then, during 32-year timeline of the bilateral relations Minsk and Beijing reached the level of "further development of all-weather and comprehensive relations of strategic partnership between the two states in a new era".

Nevertheless, the history of Belarusian-Chinese relations goes back much further.

It is believed that the first orientalist of Belarusian origin who visited China was Osip M. Kowalewsky (1800-1878), a native of the Grodno region, Ostrovets town. In 1830-1831 he was sent to Beijing as a clerical official of the Orthodox missionaries group. His main scientific contribution was the first in-depth work on Buddhism in Europe – "Buddhist Cosmology" (1837).

Another famous native of the Belarusian lands, gifted linguist and diplomat Iosif A. Goshkevich (1814-1875), also by decision of the Most Holy Synod became a member of the 12th Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing in 1839 (Обухова, 2019). As a linguist and interpreter, he completed a Russian-Manchurian dictionary. As a naturalist, he compiled an insect and butterfly collection that later replenished the collections of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Belarus. He also collected various written monuments on geography, ethnography, history and languages issues of China and other East Asian countries. For the fundamental results of his service he received the Order of Saint Stanislaus 3rd Class. The order of St. Stanislaus is a Russian dynastic order of knighthood (К 200-летию со дня рождения И. А. Гошкевича, 2014).

Copies of archival materials on the service of I.A. Goshkevich previously stored in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire, were transferred in 2001 by the Russian side to the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus. Both in Minsk and Ostrovets, the homeland of Goshkevich, there are streets named after him.

During World War II Belarusian and Chinese peoples gave mutual assistance in endeavour for liberation from the occupation of both countries by invaders: Belarus by Nazi Germany (1941-1945) and a significant part of China by militaristic Japan (1937-1945). As part of a group of Soviet volunteers Belarusian pilots participated in the war of resistance of the Chinese people to the Japanese militarism, and as a result 200 Soviet pilots gave their lives in the struggle for the freedom of China (Вергейчик, 2022).

During the modern period, the legal basis of relations began to form with the establishment of diplomatic relations. The first legal documents between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China were Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation and the Treaty on Establishment of Diplomatic Relations of January 20, 1992 (Contractual and legal basis of bilateral relations, 2023).

Now the legal framework of bilateral cooperation between Belarus and China is well developed. The existing bilateral agreements with China cover a wide range of issues comprising establishment of diplomatic relations, trade and economic cooperation, double taxation avoidance, investment protection, cooperation in science and technology, art and culture, education, tourism, air traffic, public health, military and technical cooperation, legal assistance in civil and criminal cases, intellectual property rights protection, visa-free travel, and others. Apart from this there are also agreements on granting Chinese loans to Belarus, as well as free aid agreements.

The traditional areas of cooperation between states include political, economic, and humanitarian, the latter includes a wide range of connections in the fields of science, education, and culture. Bilateral relations between two states are also supplemented with another important component – inter-regional relations.

The political component plays one of the most significant roles in the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus. Mutual visits at high level are of great importance for activation of Belarus-China relations.

President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander G. Lukashenko visited China 13 times since 1995. Presidents of the People's Republic of China paid official visits 2 times: Jiang Zemin in 2001 and Xi Jinping in 2015.

On January 20, 2022, two states solemnly celebrated the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations. On September 15th of the same year in Samarkand (Uzbekistan) during the 22nd meeting of the heads of state of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, A.G. Lukashenko and Xi Jinping signed a Joint Declaration on "forming all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership relations" (Совместное заявление Беларуси и Китая о дальнейшем развитии отношений всепогодного и всестороннего стратегического партнерства в новую эпоху, 2023).

On February 28 – March 2, 2023, at the invitation of the President of the People's Republic of China the latest state visit of the President of the Republic of Belarus took place in China (Завершился

государственный визит Александра Лукашенко в КНР, 2023). The heads of state held four-hour talks, during which an in-depth exchange of views took place on the entire spectrum of Belarusian-Chinese cooperation, as well as on issues of the international and regional agenda.

There were signed 27 intergovernmental, inter-departmental and interregional agreements and more than 10 commercial agreements in various fields, including such documents as the Memorandum of Understanding on strengthening cooperation for development and promoting the implementation of the Global Development Initiative; Scientific and technical cooperation program for 2023-2024; Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of cooperation projects using concessional loans from the Chinese government; and other documents on cooperation in the field of banking, state control, healthcare, agriculture and food, construction and architecture, sports, tourism, radio broadcasting, television, and publishing houses of two countries.

Besides mutual visits, participation in international conferences, summits and etc. there was created a special tool for coordinating high-level bilateral contacts between two countries – The Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation. It was established according to the agreements reached by Heads of the States and Governments of Belarus and China in 2013-1. ***Developing polycentric system of international relations and more equitable world order.***

Both states are advocates for the development of a global polycentric system of international relations and are making efforts to promote various multilateral institutes, starting from the United Nations as the main site for implementing mutual international actions.

Beijing considers this course as an integral part of the concept of a “Human Community with a Shared Future”, as well as achieving the Chinese dream of the great revival of the Chinese nation.

The concept of a “Human Community with a Shared Future” was first spoken internationally by the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping at the UN headquarters in Geneva on January 18, 2017 (Xi Jinping, 2021, p.512). In February 2017 the concept was included in the UN resolution, and in March of the same year it was included in the UN Security Council resolution 2344 “The situation in Afghanistan” (2017).

October 16, 2022, at the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party Xi Jinping in his speech made several significant statements regarding transformation of the international relations sys-

tem. The President of the People's Republic of China stated that in today's world “the deficit in peace, development, security, and governance is growing”. And in such conditions “China stands firmly against all forms of hegemonism and power politics, the Cold War mentality, interference in other countries' internal affairs, and double standards”. “China is firm in safeguarding the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It opposes all forms of unilateralism and the forming of blocs and exclusive groups targeted against particular countries” (Xi Jinping, 2022).

As for Belarus, according to Article 18 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus of March 15, 1994, with changes and additions adopted at the republican referenda of November 24, 1996, October 17, 2004 and February 27, 2022, “In its foreign policy the Republic of Belarus shall proceed from the principles of equality of states, non-use of force or threat of force, inviolability of frontiers, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs and other generally recognised principles and norms of the international law” (Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, 1994).

The Concept of National Security of the Republic of Belarus, approved by the decision of the The Belarusian People's Congress of April 25, 2024, No. 5, mostly repeats the constitutional thesis. According to the Article 6 “The Republic of Belarus is an independent, sovereign and peace-loving state, which in its foreign policy shall proceed shall proceed from the principles of equality of states, non-use of force or threat of force, inviolability of frontiers, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs and other generally recognised principles and norms of the international law, and in every possible way shall strengthen the system of collective security” (Об утверждении Концепции национальной безопасности Республики Беларусь, 2024).

In this regard, from the rostrum of the 2005 UN Summit, the President of the Republic of Belarus A. Lukashenko proposed recognizing the diversity of progressive development ways as a value of human civilization. This initiative harmoniously complements the efforts of the Republic of Belarus and most UN member states to build a more equitable world order and strengthen international law.

Belarus is interested in participating in the BRICS mechanism, which became a driving force in reforming global governance and fostering world peace and development. On July 6, 2023, a Be-

larusian Ambassador to Brazil Sergei Lukashevich handed over a note to the Brazilian side confirming Belarus' intentions to become a full member of BRICS (Овстрече Посла Беларусі С. Лукашевіча з заместіцелем Міністра іностранных дел Бразіліі, 2023).

For the first time on June 11th, 2024, the former Belarusian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Aleinik took part in an expanded session of the BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting in Nizhniy Novgorod, Russia. Subsequently, at BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, on 22-24 October, 2024, President of the Republic of Belarus A. Lukashenko (2024) in interview with China's CGTN declared that Belarus's place is "... in this team... Because our views on the global agenda coincide, our views on the world coincide, our goals are practically the same. We strive for a multipolar world, we are against dictate in the world".

Giving an interview to BBC journalist Steve Rosenberg on the sidelines of the BRICS, A. Lukashenko also stated that BRICS can be viewed as an counterweight to the existing model of the unipolar world and balance out world order (Lukashenko, 2024).

There should be added that UN Secretary-General António Guterres also visited BRICS Summit in Kazan. He stated that BRICS can play a greater role in strengthening multilateralism for global development and security and approved of BRICS' countries "valuable commitment and support for international problem-solving". But at the same time he underlined the role of UN as the central body in today's world order: "But no single group and no single country can act alone or in isolation. It takes a community of nations, working as one global family, to address global challenges" (Guterres, 2024).

Finally, on November 5, 2024, the President of the Republic of Belarus A. Lukashenko signed a letter to the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin on Belarus' receiving the status of a BRICS partner country (О статусе страны-партнера БРИКС для Беларусі, 2024).

2. Formation of the Eurasian security space as an integral component of global security.

In the process of establishing national independence, steps to strengthen Belarus as an international actor were taken as early as October, 1990, when Belarus' delegation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the BSSR P. Kravchenko at the 45th session of the UN General Assembly announced an initiative to create a nuclear-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe. During 1996-1998 this initiative was widely discussed at many international forums

– the UN General Assembly, the OSCE, the Conference on Disarmament. Despite the fact that the proposal was not approved, it showed an example of the active promotion of Belarus' own position.

The Republic of Belarus has contributed to the development of international security, especially in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, disarmament and arms control. Belarus has played a special role in combating international crime and human trafficking. The Republic of Belarus is a party to all major international agreements related to this topic, including The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; Protocol to the same Convention to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children of 15th November 2000. At the 2005 UN Summit, the President of the Republic of Belarus proposed to intensify international efforts to combat human trafficking. Since 2006, the international community has taken decisive actions to strengthen joint anti-trafficking efforts, many of which were initiated by Belarus. In 2023, at the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice 32nd session, the resolution "Taking action against trafficking in persons in business operations, public procurement and supply chains for goods and services" initiated by the delegation of Belarus was adopted by consensus.

The Republic of Belarus also seeks to strengthen Eurasian security through participation in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Previously, Belarus received the status of a dialogue partner back in 2010, and in 2015 it became an observer state in the SCO. In June, 2022, Belarus sent an appeal to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, who, as the state chairman of the SCO at that time, sent an appeal to all member states. International legal procedure for admitting Belarus to SCO membership requires obtaining the consent of all member-states. During the summit held on September 15–16, 2022, in Samarkand, an announcement was made that Organization launches the procedure to grant Belarus the status of a full member state. On July 4, 2023, Belarus signed a Memorandum of Obligations (Меморандум аб абавязальствах Рэспублікі Беларусь у цэлях атрымання статусу дзяржавы – члена ШОС, 2023), and at the end of 2023, Belarus acceded to all 49 documents necessary to join the organization. Belarus officially joined the SCO at the Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan, on July 3-4, 2024.

Regarding Eurasian security space Belarus is also a full member state of The Collective Security Treaty Organization. According to the Article 3 of

the Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, dated October 07, 2002, "The goals of the Organization shall be strengthening of peace, international and regional security and stability, protection of independence on a collective basis, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Member States, in achievement of which the Member States prefer political means" (Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, 2002).

Moreover, the Republic of Belarus for the second time hosted Minsk International Conference on Eurasian Security on October 31 – November 1, 2024. The first conference on Eurasian security was held in Minsk in 2023. According to the President A. Lukashenko Minsk Conference can be considered as one of a few platforms for an open dialog on issues of global and regional security. "Unfortunately, the platforms hosting open, constructive expert discussions on the topic of international security are few and far between today. We badly need an honest conversation and impartial assessment of the current events," A. Lukashenko (2024) said during his speech at the Conference.

Therefore, Belarus, with its historical legacy of an object of great power politics and arena of numerous wars, tries to adapt to increasing instability of modern regional and global processes through the means of collective security.

3. Assistance in the implementation of strategic foreign policy goals and political support on the international arena.

Main principles, goals and objectives of Belarus' foreign policy are defined in the Law "On Approval of the Basic Directions of Domestic and Foreign Policy of the Republic of Belarus" No. 60-Z of November 14, 2005. In particular, the strategic goals are the following:

- to protect state sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Belarus;
- to protect the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens, public and (Об утверждении Основных направлений внутренней и внешней политики Республики Беларусь, 2005, Article 24).

In bilateral relations Minsk supports Beijing's critical position on the issues of the Western sanctions and international cooperation, human rights and freedoms, and position regarding Taiwan.

Aspirations of both states were legalized in the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China of 22 October, 2015.

According to the Article 5 of the treaty:

"The Belarusian side adheres to the "one China" policy and recognizes that The Government of the

People's Republic of China is the only legitimate government representing all of China, Taiwan is an integral part of the territory of China. The Belarusian side confirms that it will not establish official relations with Taiwan in any form, opposes "independence of Taiwan" in any form, Taiwan's entry into any international and regional organizations, membership in which is limited to sovereign states only, supports the peaceful development of relations between the two shores of the Taiwan Strait and reunification of China, as well as all efforts undertaken by the Chinese Government to implement the unification of the country.

The Chinese side supports the efforts of the Belarusian side aimed at protecting the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the country and ensuring political and social stability, opposes external interference under any pretext into the internal affairs of Belarus" (Договор о дружбе и сотрудничестве между Республикой Беларусь и Китайской Народной Республикой, 2015).

4. Participation in the most important geopolitical projects, including investment and infrastructure initiative "Belt and Road".

Participation of Belarus in the "Belt and Road Initiative" became a strategic link in trade relations between China, Eurasian market, and the European Union. The key element of this link is "Great Stone" Industrial Park.

The legal basis of establishment of the "Great Stone" Industrial Park was an Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the China-Belarus Industrial Park signed in Minsk on September 18, 2011. The agreement was ratified by both states on January 30, 2012 (Соглашение между Правительством Республики Беларусь и Правительством Китайской Народной Республики о Китайско-Белорусском индустриальном парке, 2011).

Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus "On the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park" No. 253 of 5 June, 2012, adopted a status of a special economic zone with a special legal regime to create preferential conditions for Park's residents and its investors (О Китайско-Белорусском индустриальном парке, 2012).

According to the official information "Great Stone" Industrial Park is a manufacturing hub providing tariff free entry to the Eurasian market within close proximity to the European Union. The park is located near Belarus' capital, Minsk and on the Northern Corridor of the New Silk Road trade route of the "Belt and Road Initiative". The park

prioritizes high-tech, innovative, science-intensive, export-oriented and environmentally friendly production. For these purposes it offers benefits of a free economic zone with unique tax and legislative advantages, ready-to-use manufacturing facilities, simplified trading environment and administrative support.

In October 2014 the 1st resident was registered, and in November 2024 136 residents from 15 countries operate in the Park (Great Stone China-Belarus industrial park, 2024).

5. Providing economic and technological needs of both sides.

Belarus explores and implements China's experience in building and developing an innovative economy. According to a team of authors from the Institute of Economics of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, China's experience in improving the quality of life in several spheres can be implemented in Belarus. For example, the development of a circular economy which means technological reorganization of the economy to produce energy- and resource-efficient export-oriented products to stimulate economic growth, environmental safety and social stability by creating new jobs. Especially interesting is the coordinating role that governmental institutes play in creating such an economy, including closer cooperation between government agencies of various profiles and joint development planning (Китайский опыт повышения качества жизни населения, 2022, pp. 202-204 224).

One of the Chinese priorities is to ensure regular supplies of Belarusian potassium. Belarus is one of the world's largest suppliers of potassium, a mineral essential in agriculture, especially for such large countries like China and India.

Lately Belarus also has increased supplies of agricultural products, especially meat and dairy products to China.

6. Stimulating progress in bilateral relations on the local level (interregional relations).

Interregional relations aim at developing direct trade and economic, social and cultural ties and cohesion between administrative-territorial units of both states.

The first document between Minsk and Beijing – Protocol of Intent – was signed on August 31, 1997.

During the visit of the delegation of Beijing Popular Government to Minsk in July 2002 the Agreement on Cooperation in Trade and Economic, Scientific and Technical, and Humanitarian Field was adopted between the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Popular Government of Beijing (July 31, 2002).

Directive of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 5 “On the development of bilateral relations of the Republic of Belarus with the People's Republic of China” of August 31, 2015, established a model of cooperation in which each region and Minsk have three or more sister-regions in China (О развитии двусторонних отношений Республики Беларусь с Китайской Народной Республикой, 2015).

In order to intensify Interregional cooperation further the Heads of State, during a telephone conversation on January 26, 2021, reached an agreement to hold a thematic year of interregional cooperation, designed for a two-year period. On August 26, 2021, the opening ceremony of the Regions Year of Belarus and China took its place.

Another form of interregional relations are twin or sister-cities.

A sister city or a twin town relationship is a form of legal or social agreement between two geographically and politically distinct localities for the purpose of promoting cultural and commercial ties.

The modern concept of sister-cities was first established and adopted worldwide during World War II, when in response to the Battle of Stalingrad 830 women of British Coventry made a gift to the residents of Stalingrad: along with money, they sent a tablecloth with the embroidered words “Little help is better than a lot of pity”. The gift was a symbolic gesture of support and solidarity from the city, which also suffered widespread destruction during the war. The tablecloth can now be seen at the Panorama Museum of the Battle of Stalingrad. The twinning between Coventry and Stalingrad was later formalized in 1944.

At present the twinning relations are established between Minsk and:

- Changchun, agreement of May 18, 1992;
- Shenzhen, agreement of January 22, 2014;
- Beijing, agreement of April 28, 2016;
- Shanghai, agreement of August 11, 2019 (Города-побратимы на карте мира, 2024).

7. Strengthening the international image of both states by means of cultural ties.

Image relations intend to form basic ideas and constructive representation about the state on the international arena and regulate public opinion on its foreign policy.

In the Concept of National Security of the Republic of Belarus it is stated that strategic national interests include “comprehensive protection of the people of Belarus as a unique historical community...” and “preservation of identity, strengthening of the spiritual and moral values of the Belar-

usian people, development of the modern cultural space of the country, protection of historical memory” (Об утверждении Основных направлений внутренней и внешней политики Республики Беларусь, 2005, Article 8).

As for China, at the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party Xi Jinping announced “extending the reach and appeal of Chinese civilization” as a strategic goal for the state’s future development. “We will deepen exchanges and mutual learning with other civilizations and better present Chinese culture to the world” the Chinese President said (Xi Jinping, 2022).

The development of the image relations between Belarus and China can be seen in the example of the cooperation in the field of education.

The first legal act in this sphere was an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Republic of Belarus and the People’s Republic of China on the mutual recognition of educational documents and documents on academic degrees dated October 28, 1998 (О заключении Соглашения между Правительством Республики Беларусь и Правительством Китайской Народной Республики о взаимном признании документов об образовании, 1998).

Nowadays, more than 560 direct cooperation agreements have been signed between educational institutions of Belarus and China. Currently, 10 joint educational and scientific structures, which are 3 laboratories, 5 centers and 2 institutes, operate on the basis of educational institutions of the two countries (В сфере образования Беларуси и Китая сформирован колоссальный потенциал для развития двустороннего взаимовыгодного сотрудничества, 2023).

In Belarusian educational institutions were opened 6 Institutes and 8 classes of Chinese studies named after Confucius. In 2006-2007 academic year the learning of the Chinese language was started by schoolchildren of Minsk high schools No. 12, 23 and secondary school No. 10. And in 2017 the first students who studied Chinese as the main foreign language graduated from their schools and gymnasiums (Китайский язык в образовательном пространстве Республики Беларусь, 2022, p. 43).

In China there are 12 centers for studying Belarus at the universities. The Center for the study of Belarus is a space with country-specific materials about Belarus. On the basis of these centers conferences, round tables, and lectures are held regarding Belarusian language, culture, as well as Belarusian-Chinese relations. The Belarusian language is taught

at the Beijing, Tianjin and Xi’an Foreign Language Universities, as well as at the Second Beijing Institute of Foreign Languages.

In the field of higher education the main platform for cooperation lately became the Rectors’ Forum of the Universities of the Republic of Belarus and the People’s Republic of China. On November 21, 2023, within the framework of the Rectors’ Forum, an agreement was signed to create an Association of Universities of Belarus and China.

In 2024 the Forum was organized on June 26, jointly by the Belarusian State University and Beijing University. In the large-scale event, rectors of more than 40 universities of the two countries took their participation. The main results of the 2024-year Forum was the announcement of the opening of the Belarusian-Chinese Center for Fundamental Scientific Research which will become the part of Intergovernmental Cooperation Plan within the framework of the “Belt and Road” initiative, and establishment of “Friendship and Unity Days” that will be celebrated annually on June 25 and 26 (Новые договоренности о сотрудничестве достигнуты между БГУ и Пекинским университетом в рамках Форума ректоров вузов Беларуси и Китая, 2024; Форум ректоров ведущих университетов Республики Беларусь и Китайской Народной Республики, 2024).

Conclusion

Before independence, Belarus had quite few historical ties and a small number of people-to-people contacts. The Republic of Belarus gained its status as an independent actor of international relations with the adoption of the “Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Byelorussian SSR” in 1990. Before that moment the activity on the international arena didn’t lead to recognition by the international community.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People’s Republic of China were established in 1992. After this both sides have pursued friendly policies towards each other. In the history of the Belarus-China bilateral relations there were no border, ethnic or religious conflicts, no military interventions from any side.

Ties in different spheres are also reinforced by the personal friendship between the current leaders of the two countries. Despite massive anti-Chinese propaganda from Western world countries, and identifying China as the main threat to global security, which has been stated in US National and

Defence Security Strategies for several presidential administrations now, China's threat theory is mostly absent in post-independent Belarus.

As a small to middle power with no global interests, the Republic of Belarus' fundamental national interests mainly focus on predictable development of the international system, global and regional security. Only in such a context it is feasible to protect the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the country and ensure political and social stability. Thus, cooperation with a rising great power like China which is also adhered to means of multilateralism for global development and security, ensures these aspirations.

The main political goals that both countries pursue in their bilateral relations.

- Developing polycentric system of international relations and more equitable world order.

- Formation of the Eurasian security space as an integral component of global security.

- Assistance in the implementation of strategic foreign policy goals and political support on the international arena.

- Participation in the most important geopolitical projects, including investment and infrastructure initiative "Belt and Road".

- Providing economic and technological needs of both sides.

- Stimulating progress in bilateral relations on the local level (interregional relations).

- Strengthening the international image of both states by means of cultural ties.

Therefore, bilateral relations Between the Republic of Belarus and the the People's Republic of China cover a wide range of issues and contribute to the implementation of strategic development goals and principles of both nations as well as increasing the resilience of states in the modern context of the transformation of the international relations system and global governance.

References

Pisarchyk, A. S. (2018). *Global'nye vyzovy sovremennosti: vozdejstvie na nacional'noe gosudarstvo i ego vneshnepoliticheskie priority (na primere Respubliki Belarus') [Global challenges of modernity: Impact on the national state and its foreign policy priorities (the case of the Republic of Belarus)]* [Doctoral dissertation, Belarusian State University]. (In Russian).

Sen, A. (2000). Social justice and the distribution of income. In A. B. Atkinson & F. Bourguignon (Eds.), *Handbook of income distribution* (Vol. 1, pp. 59–85). Elsevier.

Wodak, R. (2011). Kriticheskaya lingvistika i kriticheskij analiz diskursa [Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis]. *Politicheskaya Lingvistika*, (4), 286–291. (In Russian).

van Dijk, T. A. (2013). *Diskurs i vlast': Reprezentaciya dominirovaniya v yazyke i kommunikacii [Discourse and power]* (O. A. Per. Trans.). Knizhny dom "LIBROKOM". (In Russian; Original work published 2008).

Fairclough, N. (2006). *Discourse and social change*. Polity Press.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. Longman Inc.

Rotman, D. G., Pravdivets, V. V. (Eds.). (2007). *Metody sociologicheskogo izucheniya osobennostej funkcionirovaniya politicheskogo polya [Methods of sociological study of the features of the political field functioning]*. Belarusian State University. (In Russian).

Verkhovny Sovet Respubliki Belarus'. (1990, July 27). *O gosudarstvennom suverenitete Respubliki Belarus' [On the state sovereignty of the Republic of Belarus]: Deklaratsiya Verhovnogo Soveta Respubliki Belarus', 27 iyulya 1990, No. 193-XII*. <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=v09000193> (In Russian).

Verkhovny Sovet Respubliki Belarus'. (1991, September 19). *O nazvanii Belorusskoj Sovetskoj Socialisticheskoy Respubliki i vnesenii izmenenij v Deklaratsiyu ... [On the name of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and amendments to the Declaration...]*, No. 1085-XII. <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=3961&p0=V19101085> (In Russian).

Obukhova, N. I. (2019). *Iosif Antonovich Goshkevich – missioner, diplomat, lingvist, vostokoved [Joseph Antonovich Goshkevich – missionary, diplomat, linguist, orientalist]*. Minsk Regional Institute for Education Development. (In Russian).

National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. (2024, November 19). *K 200-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya I. A. Goshkevicha [On the 200th anniversary of I. A. Goshkevich's birth]*. <https://niab.by/newsite/ru/content/all/k-200-летию-со-дня-рождения-иа-гошкевича> (In Russian).

Vergeichik, S. (n.d.). *K 30-letiyu ustanovleniya diplomaticheskikh otnosheniy mezhdu Respublikoy Belarus' i Kitayskoy Narodnoy Respublikoy [On the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China]* (in Russian). <https://bissr.gov.by/mneniya/k-30-letiyu-ustanovleniya-diplomaticheskikh-otnosheniy-mezhdu-respublikoy-belarus-i>

RUE «National Centre for Marketing and Price Study», Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus. (n.d.). *Contractual and legal basis of bilateral relations*. https://belaruschina.by/en/belarus_china/legal.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus. (n.d.). *Sovmestnoe zayavlenie Belarusi i Kitaya o dal'neyshem razvitii otnosheniy vspogodnogo i vstodoronnogo strategicheskogo partnerstva v novuyu epokhu [Joint Statement of Belarus and China on Further Development of All-Weather and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in the New Era]* (in Russian). <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/fb2937bef6398e2d.html>

President of the Republic of Belarus. (n.d.). *Zavershilsya gosudarstvennyy vizit Aleksandra Lukashenko v Kitayskuyu Narodnuyu Respubliku* [Alexander Lukashenko's state visit to the People's Republic of China has ended] (in Russian). <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/zavershilsya-gosudarstvennyy-vizit-aleksandra-lukashenko-v-kitayskuyu-narodnuyu-respubliku>

Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation. (n.d.). *Homepage*. <https://belaruschina.by/en/>

Xi, J. (2021). *O sozdanii soobshchestva edinoj sud'by chelovechestva* [On creating Human Community with a Shared Future] (in Russian). Chzhun'yan byan'i chuban'she.

United Nations Security Council. (2017). *Resolution 2344 (2017), adopted by the Security Council on 17 March, 2017*. [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2344\(2017\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2344(2017))

Bloomberg. (2022, October 18). *Full text of Xi Jinping's speech at China's Party Congress*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-18/full-text-of-xi-jinping-s-speech-at-china-20th-party-congress-2022>

President of the Republic of Belarus. (n.d.). *Constitution of the Republic of Belarus*. <https://president.gov.by/en/gosudarstvo/constitution>

Vsebelorusskoye narodnoye sobraniye. (2024, April 25). *Ob utverzhdenii Kontseptsii natsional'noy bezopasnosti Respubliki Belarus'* [On approval of the Concept of National Security of the Republic of Belarus] (in Russian). <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=P924v0005>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus. (n.d.). *O vstreche Posla Belarusi S. Lukashevicha s zamestitelem Ministra inostrannykh del Brazili* [On the meeting of the Ambassador of Belarus S. Lukashevich with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil] (in Russian). https://mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/c69a0407d74c30a6.html

President of the Republic of Belarus. (n.d.-a). *Interv'yu kitayskomu telekanalu CGTN* [Interview with Chinese TV channel CGTN] (in Russian). <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/interv-u-kitajskomu-telekanalu-cgtn>

President of the Republic of Belarus. (n.d.-b). *Interv'yu zhurnalistu Bi-bi-si Stivenu Rozenbergu* [Interview with BBC journalist Steven Rosenberg] (in Russian). <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/interv-u-zhurnalistu-bi-bi-si-stivenu-rozenbergu>

United Nations. (2024, October). *BRICS Summit: Guterres underscores bloc's role in boosting global cooperation*. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1156086>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus. (n.d.). *O statuse strany-partnera BRICS dlya Belarusi* [On the status of a BRICS partner country for Belarus] (in Russian). https://www.mfa.gov.by/press/news_mfa/e76e1922bbd6ca01.html

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus. (2023, July 4). *Memorandum ob obyazatel'stvakh Respubliki Belarus' v tselyakh polucheniya statusa gosudarstva – chlena SHOS* [Memorandum of Obligations of the Republic of Belarus for the Purpose of Obtaining the Status of a Member State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization] (in Russian). <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=I02300032>

Collective Security Treaty Organization. (2002, October 7). *Charter of the Collective Security Treaty Organization*. https://en.odkb-csto.org/documents/documents/ustav_organizatsii_dogovora_o_kollektivnoy_bezopasnosti_#loaded

II Minskaya mezhdunarodnaya konferenciya po evrazijskoj bezopasnosti. URL: <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/ii-minskaa-mezhdunarodnaa-konferencia-po-evrazijskoj-bezopasnosti>. Accessed: 23.11.2024. [II Minsk International Conference on Eurasian Security] (in Russian).

Ob utverzhdenii Osnovnykh napravlenij vnutrennej i vneshnej politiki Respubliki Belarus': Zakon Respubliki Belarus', 14 noyabrya 2005, No. 60-Z. URL: <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=H10500060>. Accessed: 20.05.2024. [On approval of the Main Directions of Domestic and Foreign Policy of the Republic of Belarus: Law of the Republic of Belarus, November 14, 2005, No. 60-Z] (in Russian).

Dogovor o družbe i sotrudnichestve mezhdur Respublikoj Belarus' i Kitajskoj Narodnoj Respublikoj: ratificirovan Zakonom Respubliki Belarus' ot 22 oktyabrya 2015, No. 312-Z. (2015). Pravo.by. <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=I01500037&p1=1>

Soglashenie mezhdur Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Belarus' i Pravitel'stvom Kitajskoj Narodnoj Respubliki o Kitajsko-Belorusskom industrial'nom parke: ratificirovan Zakonom Respubliki Belarus' ot 7 yanvarya 2012 No. 348-Z. (2012). Etalonline.by. https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=i01100029&q_id=

Ukaz Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus' ot 5 iyunya 2012 No. 253 "O Kitajsko-Belorusskom industrial'nom parke". (2012). President.gov.by. <https://president.gov.by/ru/documents/ukaz-253-ot-5-iyunya-2012-g-1492>

Great Stone China-Belarus industrial park. (n.d.). *Industrialpark.by*. <https://en.industrialpark.by>

Bobrova, A. G. (Red.). (2022). *Kitajskij opyt povysheniya kachestva zhizni naseleniya* [China's experience in improving the quality of life of the population]. Belaruskaya navuka.

Direktiva Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus' ot 31 avgusta 2015 No. 5 "O razvitii dvustoronnih otnoshenij Respubliki Belarus' s Kitajskoj Narodnoj Respublikoj". (2015). Pravo.by. <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=P01500005>

Minskij gorodskoj ispolnitel'nyj komitet. (n.d.). *Goroda-pobratimyy na karte mira* [Twin cities on the world map]. <https://minsk.gov.by/ru/city/>

Postanovlenie Soveta Ministrov Respubliki Belarus' ot 19 avgusta 1998 No. 1312 "O zaklyuchenii Soglasheniya mezhdur Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Belarus' i Pravitel'stvom Kitajskoj Narodnoj Respubliki o vzaimnom priznanii dokumentov ob obrazovanii". (1998). Etalonline.by. <https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=c29801312>

Ministerstvo obrazovaniya Respubliki Belarus'. (2024, November 22). *V sfere obrazovaniya Belarusi i Kitaya sformirovan kolossal'nyj potencial dlya razvitiya dvustoronnego vzaimovyygodnogo sotrudnichestva* [Colossal potential for bilateral cooperation in education has been formed between Belarus and China]. <https://edu.gov.by/news/v-sfere-obrazovaniya-belarusi-i-kitaya-sformirovan-kolossalnyy-potentsial-dlya-razvitiya-dvustoronne/>

Tozik, A. A., Molotkova, Y. V., & Bukata, A. M. (Ed.). (2022). *Kitajskij yazyk v obrazovatel'nom prostranstve Respubliki Belarus'* [Chinese language in the educational space of the Republic of Belarus]. Vostochnaya kul'tura.

Natsional'naya biblioteka Belarusi. (2024, November 22). *Forum rektorov vedushchih universitetov Respubliki Belarus' i Kitajskoj Narodnoj Respubliki* [Forum of Rectors of Leading Universities of Belarus and China]. <https://www.nlb.by/content/news/national-library-of-belarus/forum-rektorov-vedushchikh-universitetov-respubliki-belarus-i-kitajskoj-narodnoj-respubliki/>

Belorusskij gosudarstvennyj universitet. (2024, November 22). *Novye dogovorennosti o sotrudnichestve dostignuty mezhdu BGU i Pekinskim universitetom v ramkah Foruma rektorov vuzov Belarusi i Kitaya* [New cooperation agreements between BSU and Peking University]. <https://bsu.by/news/novye-dogovorennosti-o-sotrudnichestve-dostignuty-mezhdu-bgu-i-pekinskim-universitetom-pku-v-ramkakh-d/>

Mokreckij, A. Ch. (2023). O «Vsepogodnyh i vsestoronnih otnosheniyah strategicheskogo partnerstva» KNR i Respubliki Belarus'. *Kitaj v mirovoj i regional'noj politike. Istorija i sovremennost'*, (28), 166–184.

Rubo, O. P. (2023). Interesy i perspektivy uchastiya Respubliki Belarus' v SHanhajskoj organizacii sotrudnichestva v kachestve polnopravnogo chlena. *Postsovetskie issledovaniya*, 6(2), 160–168.

The Economist. (2024, May 9). The liberal international order is slowly coming apart. *The Economist*. <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2024/05/09/the-liberal-international-order-is-slowly-coming-apart>

Information about the author:

Pisarchyk Alesia – docent, candidate of political science, associated professor of the Political Science Department, Law Faculty, Belarusian State University, (Minsk, Republic of Belarus, e-mail: alesya.p.325@gmail.com).

Авторлар туралы мәлімет:

Писарчик Алеся Сергеевна – доцент, саяси ғылымдарының кандидаты, Беларусь мемлекеттік университеті Заң факультеті саясаттану кафедрасының доценті (Минск қ., Беларусь Республикасы, электрондық пошта: alesya.p.325@gmail.com).

Информация об авторах:

Писарчик Алеся Сергеевна – доцент, кандидат политических наук, доцент кафедры политологии юридического факультета Белорусского государственного университета (г. Минск, Республика Беларусь, e-mail: alesya.p.325@gmail.com).

Поступила 20 декабря 2024

Принята 20 февраля 2025