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**UKRAINIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONS  
WITH BELARUS**

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## ABSTRACT

The topic of the work is Ukraine's foreign policy from the perspective of relations with Belarus. The actuality of the topic is related to the need to systematize information on Belarusian-Ukrainian relations in the context of modern history.

Belarus is one of the most important strategic partners for Ukraine, its measured by territory (1084 km border line), by common goals and by historical background. Since 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1918 when Belarussian National Republic's mission came to Kyiv for establishing a partnership relation with Ukrainian Government and 13<sup>th</sup> February 1991 when both governments developed an agreement "112\_011 Agreement between the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic" which declared determination of the parties by each other sovereign states and the obligation to refrain from actions that could harm their state sovereignties, the agreement is still , valid. On August 17, 1995, during the official visit of the President of the Republic of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, to Ukraine, the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus was concluded<sup>1</sup>. On May 12, 1997, the Agreement between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus on the State Border was concluded in Kyiv, which is indefinite<sup>2</sup>. An additional, indisputable factor in confirming the importance of the strategic partnership between Ukraine and Belarus may be the creation of a military structure "Chase" (2014-2016), which consisted of Belarusian volunteers, whose goal was to counter the Russian aggression in the Donbass<sup>3</sup>.

However, despite all the positive aspects, currently, Belarus poses a threat to Ukraine. Not only the strengthening of relations, by the (illegitimate) President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, in the field of the economy and the nuclear energy sector, but also in the military field ("West 2021")

The improvement of cooperation with Belarus may lead Ukraine to better security situation, liberal economy, and social life. It would even be more correct to designate "Strengthening relations between Belarus both with Ukraine and with the European Union", however, this paper analyzes the relationship between Ukraine and Belarus since the ratification of the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation of Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus of July 17, 1995, which entered into force on August 6, 1997 and is currently valid. And about 200 valid agreements more including economic, trade cooperation, development of military-technical cooperation and defense missions.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/112\\_692#Text](https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/112_692#Text)

<sup>2</sup> [https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/112\\_004#Text](https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/112_004#Text)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/belpahonia?fref=ts>

It's important to mention that this topic is extremely volatile in nowadays. According to recent events, Belarus (to be more specific – Alexander Lukashenko)<sup>4</sup> prefers to strengthen relations with Russia, which hinders Ukraine's development in the European direction. Moreover, it threatens Ukraine's sovereignty. During studying the key dynamics of their connection will be studied, such key points, as: the ensuring trade between them and joint economic-development ventures.

Because of huge influence of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, as well as Belarus, is still considered underdeveloped country. However, due such strong economic partners as the United States of America, European Union, and strong economic potential of Ukraine it is possible for the country to become economically stable and powerful state. Besides of economic, security and social benefits from the cooperation, while Belarus is pursuing a pro-Russian policy, there are growing threats in cooperation with it. Where cooperation may mean weakness of as international, as governmental power for Ukraine<sup>5</sup>. The main aspects will be analyzed and discussed in the text.

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<sup>4</sup> Protests over Belarus election surge. *Toronto Star*, 2020-08-1, pA22. Found at [https://vb.vdu.lt/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_newspapers\\_2434231293&context=PC&vid=VDU&lang=en\\_US&search\\_scope=VDU&adaptor=primo\\_central\\_multiple\\_fe&tab=default\\_tab&query=any.contains,Belarus%20election%20&sortby=rank&facet=searchcreationdate,include,2020%7C.%7C2021&mode=simple&offset=0](https://vb.vdu.lt/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_cdi_proquest_newspapers_2434231293&context=PC&vid=VDU&lang=en_US&search_scope=VDU&adaptor=primo_central_multiple_fe&tab=default_tab&query=any.contains,Belarus%20election%20&sortby=rank&facet=searchcreationdate,include,2020%7C.%7C2021&mode=simple&offset=0)

<sup>5</sup> Kazharski, Aliaksei, & Makarychev, Andrey. (2021). Belarus, Russia, and the escape from geopolitics. *Political Geography*, 102377. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102377>. Found at: <https://www.sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.vdu.lt:2443/science/article/pii/S0962629821000378?via%3Dihub>

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

EU – European Union
US – United States of America
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
USSR – Ukraine under Soviet Union (1918 – 1991)
SSR – Socialist Soviet Republic (1917 – 1991)
EEU – Eurasian Economic Union
IMF – International Monetary Fund
UN – United Nations
IMF – International Monetary Fund
PACE – Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
SSU – Security Service of Ukraine
SME – Small and Medium sized Enterprises
EFTA – European Free Trade Association
IR – International Relations
PCA – Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
DCI – Development Cooperation Instrument
TACIS (CIS) – Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
EPCA – Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
TCG – Tripartite Contact Group

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# INTRODUCTION

**Preface.** Nowadays, in an environment of developed globalization, where boundaries are blurry, countries seek to form alliances with as many foreign players as possible in order to strengthen their international presence, build stability, economy, and reduce reliance on global forces. By John Braddock<sup>6</sup> – there are three types of games in International Relations: 1 – Zero-sum game (In such game one of the parties is beneficiary, while the other player is a loser); 2 – Positive-sum game (Both side of the bilateral agreement are in benefit); 3 – Negative-sum game (All parties are losers, the winner is the party which lost less, such strategy used to destroy the opponent by emaciation); In the face of foreign institutions or unions such as the European Union (EU) or the International Monetary Fund (IMF), certain countries tend to integrate with international actors (IMF), they play positive-sum game. These connections would aid countries in their commercial, military, and political growth. Others are focused on building and strengthening ties with neighboring countries or other world hegemonic forces, which will play an important role in improving their stability, economy, and other issues. Each government has its own growth strategy, which includes priority development and secondary development vectors. The United States of America (US), for example, is expanding and advancing its presence and power around the world through diplomacy, military support, and economic strength. By saying to “the entire world”, author means to: “countries, regions and international actors, under the US’s interests”. Like, Russia is acting on a very similar dimension, and by being an international hegemonic power, it is protecting self-interests and promoting Russia’s military and political influence, by it’s strategy Russia plays mostly zero-sum game, it’s always in benefit and the other part of cooperation usually ended up as a loser. Thus, it possible to say, that such world powers have relatively similar politics of development and of relations with foreign countries. Another vector of development can be observed from less powerful countries, which do not have such powerful military capabilities, strong political influence on the international system and world’s leading economy. For example, Ukraine or Belarus from CIS region, or Baltic states from East European region.

Ukraine is a country located in the Eastern Europe region, with neighboring countries, such as Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The historical aspects, as well as important strategic location, current escalated armed conflicts on the East and occupied territories had put Ukraine to its place of a country, which is aiming to establish strong relations with as many as possible states from the west region (countries which mostly follow the rule of democratic law, through different dimensions, such as politics, diplomacy, economics, cultural and humanitarian

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<sup>6</sup> John Braddock - a CIA case officer He developed, hired, and managed sources in the areas of weapons proliferation, counter-terrorism, and political-military issues; “Spy’s Guide”.

cooperation. For instance, today, Ukraine has very developed and close ties with Lithuania, developing and perspective economic connection with the US, long-term educational and professional cooperation with Turkey and so forth. Then it will be reasonable to mention less significant, but still important countries for Ukraine's development, such as: Lithuania, Poland, Germany, United States of America, Azerbaijan, France, Turkey and other.

**Novelty and relevance of the topic.** Furthermore, there are other international actors, who have some connections to Ukraine's foreign policy, but not as a primary priorities of Ukraine's development goal. For example, the European states such as Latvia, Hungary or the Netherlands, these countries have developing relationship with Ukraine in terms of economic, humanitarian and cultural cooperation. Provision of educational grants for Ukrainian citizens from Hungarian and Latvian governments based on the Memorandums signed between Ministries of Science and Education of both sides. The Belarus is also one of the interesting partners of Ukraine in field of trade, humanitarian and cultural exchange and investments. This international actor in the face of the Belarus was taken to the research because of its non-stable role on the Post-Soviet area, close ties with Russia and high potential of creation a United government. It threatens Ukraine's sovereignty and further development and rapprochement with Western norms, what is one of the main priorities for nearest future in Ukrainian Foreign Policy. It is very important to keep an eye on closest neighbor political situation and understand its development vector..

**Research problem.** Ukraine is a young and developing country with enormous economic potential and strategic importance for global political actors. As previously said, multiple elements combine to make Ukraine a very significant piece of cake for global powers such as China, Russia, the United States, and other European powers. As a result, Ukraine must cultivate partnerships with various players in the international system, such as regional integration with the International Monetary Fund. The relations of Ukraine with the Belarus have roots since the gaining of independence by Ukraine in 1991 and after signing and implementing the bilateral document of recognition of sovereignty agreement in 1991, the cooperation between two international players was increased. In this thesis paper, the relationship between Ukraine and Belarus will be analyzed in detail with supporting arguments.

**The object of the thesis.** The subject of the study is the foreign policy of Ukraine. **The object of the study** is the foreign policy of Ukraine toward the relations with Belarus (1999 – Present).

**The goal of the thesis.** To analyze the dynamics, prospects and outcomes of the relationship between Ukraine and Belarus.

**The tasks of the thesis:**

As a result of the work, Ukraine's foreign policy will be considered from the perspective (point of view) of relations with Belarus. To do this, I have accomplished the following tasks: Consider the

strategies of international relations and foreign policy of Ukraine and Belarus; Consider practical aspects of international integration and foreign policy; Consider aspects of Ukraine's international integration; Consider Ukraine's foreign policy and its strategies; Provide a description of Ukraine's position in the international order; Provide a description of Ukrainian international cooperation; To characterize the international relations of Ukraine from a constructivist theoretical point of view; Describe the relations between Ukraine and Belarus; Research methodologies are presented; Describe Ukraine's foreign policy towards Belarus; Describe the preconditions of relations between Ukraine and Belarus; Describe the current relations between Ukraine and Belarus; Provide a description of the economic sphere of cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus; A description of the energy and security spheres of cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus is provided;

**Hypothesis.** Ukraine – Belarus relations are based on the friendly neighboring policy and are focused on the economic, humanitarian, cultural partnership and development pacts.

**Research methods.** It's have been decided to use both theoretical and empirical research methods. Where theoretical study is composed of generalization and description approaches, which will aid in the definition of significant concepts in international relations theory. While empirical research was conducted using a qualitative research strategy and methodology, obtained data was analyzed using inductive research reasoning. The qualitative technique also aids in explaining Ukrainian ties with Belarus and describing the problem under investigation.

The theoretical approach of the thesis paper was founded on the premise that cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus would benefit both countries. These international players' primary natural aims are parallel, which implies they are interested in shared growth without political influence. Constructivism, in general, is excellently suited to observing Ukraine's interactions with Belarus, because both are equally uninterested in complete integration for various reasons and are attempting to develop more new relationships with international players in order to achieve stability for themselves. Thus, the example of Ukraine's collaboration with Belarus is one of neutral and mutually beneficial partnerships in several aspects of collaboration. When cooperation emerges on its own internal dynamic, constructivists focus on common interests shared by governments and agents. Both actors are interacting in a restricted way, avoiding superfluous sectors of interest by contributing only to those that are critically or considerably essential for them.

**Research source base:** The information for the thesis was primarily derived from secondary sources compiled by various researchers and online sites. Accuracy, relevance, authority, and contemporaneity were critical factors in selecting the best source of information. For example, the work of Beasley, Ryan K., Kaarbo, J., and Lantis, Jeffrey S. (The Analysis of Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspectives), which is very useful when researching the concept of foreign policy,



internet sources, including information from authoritative online newspapers, such as the New York Times, BBC news, Forbes, or CNN news, and official websites of various governmental institutions.

**Structure of the paper:** First chapter of “Strategies of International Relations and Foreign Policy” begins with the “International Integration and Foreign Policy” subchapter, where conceptions of regional cooperation and foreign policy with explanation of the main strategies and politics were examined. Following section explains “Ukrainian Foreign Policy” with further studying of the “International Relations of Ukraine from Constructivist Theoretical Perspective”, where the reason of choosing the constructivism was explained as well.

Next chapter of empirical research “Relations between Ukraine and the Belarus from 1999-Present” starts with “Presentation of Research Methodology”. Then goes the “Foreign Policy of Ukraine Towards Belarus” section, which explains the main interests, threats and reasons of bilateral cooperation. The paper ends with the section of “Dimensions of the Ukraine – Belarus relationship” which studies the main fields of their cooperation.

# 1. STRATEGIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND FOREIGN POLICY

The international relations are the most important part in today's global political affairs. It attempts to explain the behavior that occurs across boundaries of states, the broader relationships of which grow into the integrations, cooperations, and other different interactions.<sup>7</sup> The integration – is the cumulative process of change in the nature of the relations among sovereign political units, such as states, international organization and others, during which these international actors accept some kind of authority or institutions.<sup>8</sup> According to Hanrieder, a Professor of the Department of Political Science at UCSB, the global integration requires at least four constituent elements, such as: 1) the involved political parties have to permit the creation of central institutions, which will promulgate the politics; 2) the functions of these institutions must be specific, important and cannot be trivial or vague; 3) the functions and tasks of the performing central authority must be “expansive”; 4) due to ensuing benefits the political units must remain committed to common action.<sup>9</sup> Besides of global integration there also exist regional, economic and functional integration.

At the same time, the foreign policy is the general objective that guides a state in its activities, interactions and relationships with other international actors. According to Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, Leopold von Ranke, a leading German historian of XIX century, who invented the scholarly method of teaching, which had a great influence on Western historiography, outlined the geography and external threats as primary things shaping foreign policy.<sup>10</sup>

This chapter will briefly study the terms of international integration and foreign policy with supporting arguments to help a reader to get into the know with these conceptions and to see from which point of view author has researched Kazakhstan's relations with the EU.

## 1. 1. International Relations and Foreign Policy

The nature of international relations and foreign policy between the countries that form them, determine the logic and continuity in the formation and development of forms of international economic integration. International relations is the highest level of development of international

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<sup>7</sup> International Relations. Department of Political Science. *College of Letters and Science*, 2018. Found at: <https://polisci.wisc.edu/fields/international-relations>. Last accessed: 08/02/2018.

<sup>8</sup> Hanrieder, W. F. Global Integration. *Encyclopedia*, 2008. Found at: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/international-integration#C>. Last accessed: 25/01/2018.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Foreign Policy. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2018. Found at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/foreign-policy>. Last accessed: 25/01/2018.

economic relations, when the internationalization of economic life is manifested in the intertwining of national economies of two or more countries and their coordinated interstate trade and economic policy.

The dynamic development of international relations processes is due to:

- economic development of countries, their groups and regions of the world in conditions of uneven distribution of resources;
- patterns of scientific and technological progress;
- trends in demographic development;
- the presence and need to solve global problems (energy, food, economic, environmental protection, use of the world's oceans and space, economic growth and population, economic security, disarmament);
- a sharp reduction in distances due to the development of transport and communication networks,
- market "unification" of economic development.

Foreign policy is called foreign state relations, the country's relationship with other countries in its interests or the general state course in international relations. Foreign policy regulates the relations between the state and other states and peoples in accordance with the principles and goals through the use of various means and methods. The most important means of foreign policy is diplomacy. Foreign policy is closely linked to domestic policy. The main foreign policy department of the state is the relevant domestic body in the field of foreign relations, which conducts practical work on foreign policy, which in many countries is called the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is usually headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. According to the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the mission of the Ministry is to make the world favorable and safe for the Ukrainian state, economy, society and citizens, supporting the unity of Ukrainians around the world<sup>11</sup>.

Thanks to the effective work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ukraine is a proactive subject of international politics, which has a reputation as a prospective partner and protects democracy and universal values, strengthens Ukraine's security, and Ukrainian citizens can travel freely and feel protected in any situation. . The partnership between business and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stimulates the growth of Ukrainian exports and investment. Ukrainians abroad feel the support of their state and help in its development and protection of national interests in the world.

A new stage in the history of diplomacy in Ukraine began on July 16, 1990 with the adoption by the Verkhovna Rada of the USSR of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine, which stipulated that: "Ukraine as a subject of international law consular, trade missions, participates in the

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<sup>11</sup> Official site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine: [mfa.gov.ua](http://mfa.gov.ua); Last accessed 25.05.21

activities of international organizations. "Ukraine" acts as an equal participant in international communication, actively contributes to the strengthening of general peace and international security, directly participates in the European process and European structures". In the first independent years, Ukraine was recognized by 170 countries, and diplomatic relations were established with almost all countries of the world and active cooperation was established.

Today, Ukraine has an effective network of consular and diplomatic missions and is a member of more than 90 international organizations. In 2000-2001, Ukraine was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, concluding and executing more than two thousand international legal instruments.

During the years of independence, the representatives of Ukraine have repeatedly headed and been elected leaders of many authoritative international structures, primarily the United Nations. As an exceptional example, the representative of Ukraine, Gennady Udovenko was elected President of the 52nd session of the UN General Assembly

On July 2, 1993, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine approved the Main Directions of Ukraine's Foreign Policy.

According to Article 106 of the Constitution of Ukraine, the foreign policy of the state is managed by the President of Ukraine, who represents the country in international relations, negotiates and concludes international treaties of Ukraine, decides on the recognition of foreign states, appoints and dismisses heads of diplomatic missions of Ukraine. organizations, accepts credentials of diplomatic representatives of foreign states.

According to the Presidential Decree "On Regulations on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine"<sup>12</sup> of April 3, 1999, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (MFA of Ukraine) is the central executive body and is the leading and main body of the central government. in the field of Ukraine's foreign relations and coordination of measures in this area, including those aimed at implementing the strategic goals of the country's foreign policy to ensure Ukraine's entry into the European space and creating preconditions for Ukraine's membership in the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO) ».

In 2005, significant changes took place in the process of implementing Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic and European integration efforts. Ukraine was granted the status of a market economy country by the European Union and the Forum of the Community of Democratic Choice was held in Kyiv.

In accordance with the Decree of the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko of August 22, 2005 "On Amendments to the Decree of the President of Ukraine" On Measures to Improve the

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<sup>12</sup> Decree of the President of Ukraine "On Regulations on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine" of April 3, 1999. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/357/99#Text>; Last accessed 25.05.21

Coordination of Executive Bodies in Foreign Relations ", the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has been given significant powers to coordinate state executive bodies. .

More than 500 foreign ministry workers supported the Orange Revolution in a statement by Ukrainian diplomats.

The next sub-section observes the main strategies of the international relations that are used in today's political world. The main ways of implementation, fields of impact and dimensions of cooperation will be provided and studied.

### **1.1.1. Development of International relations**

The development of international relations on the basis of the international division of labor is becoming increasingly important for many national economies. The main trend of the world economy is the rapprochement and strengthening of interdependence of states and their economic entities. The processes taking place in the economic systems of individual states and their integration groups cannot be considered without taking into account the external factors caused by the globalization of the world economy. The growing economic interdependence between economic units is evident in the pace and duration of the global economic crisis. Manifestations and consequences of the global financial and economic crisis are different and mainly depend on the country and its role in the world economic system. The reserve of stability of the national economy in the uncertain circumstances of globalization is due to a balanced combination of government protectionist policies and the advantages of the international division of economic factors. A systems approach is necessary for a purposeful qualitative change in the position of each individual unit and the system as a whole in the changing architecture of the world economy.

The process of strengthening the interconnection and interdependence of individual states is the main direction of the world economy. Scientific and practical interest in international economic integration has grown and continues to gain momentum. The authors consider and summarize the theoretical foundations, main trends and key areas in the field of international integration. The most significant regional international agreements have been identified.

Ukraine takes an active part in many organizations, including the UN, OSCE, OPCW, IAEA, Interpol and others. Ukraine participates in all areas of UN activity, including the maintenance of peace in the world and security, strengthening the law in relations between states, development of cooperation in solving humanitarian and socio-economic problems, ensuring human rights.

Carrying out general coordination in the work of Ukrainian agencies related to Ukraine's membership in international structures, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the same time acts as the main responsible agency of Ukraine in relation to twenty of them (including the UN and its main

bodies). Among such structures are regional organizations, as well as integration groups - the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the Organization for Democracy and Development - GUAM, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), the Central European Initiative (CEI). Many issues of such organizations and the variety of tasks associated with the participation of the Ukrainian side in them require the involvement of many other agencies.

Thus, cooperation within the BSEC is related to the promotion of Ukraine's interests in the field of communications and transport, scientific and financial cooperation, environmental protection and energy, and tourism. From February 2007 to April 2008, our state successfully chaired this organization.

Today, GUAM is an efficient and dynamic organization with a great potential for cooperation in the energy, transport, security and humanitarian spheres. Ukraine's membership in GUAM should help improve Ukraine's prestige in the international arena and strengthen Ukraine's role as a regional leader. CEI is a regional grouping of Eastern and Central European countries, whose activities are aimed at developing cooperation in the socio-economic, political, cultural and scientific spheres, as well as promoting on this basis the deterioration of stability and security in the region. Priorities for Ukraine are participation in project activities in the field of transport, cross-border cooperation, energy, science and technology, industrial development.

Ukraine's membership in the Council of Europe is a very important aspect of Ukraine's integration into the single legal space of Europe by bringing Ukraine's national legislation in line with the norms of this organization. The main areas of cooperation between Ukraine and the Council of Europe are ensuring human rights and unity, reforming the judicial system. The fight against corruption is the basis of the CoE Action Plan for Ukraine for 2008-2011. According to the CoE Statute, Ukraine is in all major bodies of the Council of Europe, and in 2010-2011 Ukraine chaired the CoE Committee of Ministers<sup>13</sup>.

### **1.1.2. Foreign Policy Strategies**

A well-formulated and scientifically sound, open and transparent foreign policy strategy is an integral attribute of a civilized and democratic state today. Most developed countries have such a strategy and consistently implement it in practice. The great powers and the leading international associations even develop and implement their own geostrategy - foreign policy on a global scale<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Council of Europe Office in Ukraine. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/kyiv/cooperation-of-ukraine-with-the-council-of-europe>. Last accessed: 25.05.21

<sup>14</sup> The experience of the Visegrad Four countries on the way to the EU: opportunities for Ukraine: Analytical assessments. - Uzhhorod: V. Padyak Publishing House, 2013.

Usually, foreign policy strategy stems from national and state interests and priorities in the international arena and is aimed at the gradual implementation of long-term goals to achieve a vital goal for the nation and state or a set of strategic goals. It is a kind of master plan of action and a "road map" of the movement of a sovereign state in the complex geopolitical vicissitudes of the present and the future. At the same time, the foreign policy strategy is a comprehensive program of coexistence and integration of the people and their state into the world community, global and regional systems of international relations. The main goal and basic principles of the foreign policy strategy of the state, as a result of socio-political consensus, must remain constant, ie stable, constant and completely independent of domestic political conditions and changes of political forces at the helm of state power.

## **1. 2. Ukrainian foreign policy**

The strategy of foreign policy reflects the main groups of national interests, foreign policy goals and means of achieving them ... programs of actions of state bodies aimed at achieving certain goals. Studying, borrowing and using the most positive aspects of the integration Euro-Atlantic experience of Central European countries - one of the new dimensions of Ukraine's cooperation with them at the present stage<sup>15</sup>.

Ukraine can overcome the negative trend towards stagnation of cooperation with the Central European states - the new EU members only if it is the first to clearly and clearly take the initiative to qualitatively change the system of cooperation with them<sup>16</sup>.

The following is considered expedient in this plan:

1. Development of priorities and concepts of Ukraine's policy in the Central European region as an integral part of the main - European integration direction of Ukrainian foreign policy.

2. Definition, coordination and coordination of common political, economic and other national-state interests in the international arena of Ukraine with the Central European states both at the bilateral and multilateral level.

3. Significant improvement of the mechanism of coordination of joint steps of Ukraine and Central European states at the regional and European level<sup>17</sup>.

4. Consistent study and practical application by Ukraine of the experience of European integration of Central European states - new EU members.

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<sup>15</sup> Ukraine in modern geopolitical space: theoretical and applied aspects / Ed. FM Rudicha.- K.: MAUP, 2012. - 438 p.

<sup>16</sup> Tikhonova LA International relations and foreign policy of the state. Ukraine in the world community. Lecture notes. // Kharkiv: 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

### **1.2.1. Ukrainian Position in the International Order**

The new format of Ukraine's relations with Central European countries means in the general dimension the transition from simple forms of cooperation and directions and types of cooperation to real intensive integration. This can be summed up in the following phrase: evolution from the paradigm of cooperation to the paradigm of integration. If Ukraine moves towards the EU and eventually becomes a member of the European Community, it has a vital interest in establishing inseparable, permanent and close ties with EU Member States, including its immediate neighbors. For this, for example, in the economic sphere it is not enough to develop only standard trade contacts, investment, infrastructure and other cooperation. It is necessary to move to a qualitatively higher level of interaction, which would ensure complementarity and convergence of economies as a whole. And in the political sphere, Ukraine's relations with neighboring EU member states should be based on constant coordination of mutual steps in the international arena<sup>18</sup>.

From Ukraine's European perspective, it seems important to overcome the current division of the CEE region into a new Central and a new Eastern Europe. It emerged after the accession of Central European states to the EU and NATO. The EU's new eastern borders have geopolitically divided the region, leaving Ukraine outside the enlarged European community. Therefore, due to the strengthening of cooperation with the Central European states, Ukraine needs to reduce the barrier nature of the new distribution lines. To do this, it is necessary not only to build good neighborly relations with Central European states, but to bring them to the level of a true strategic partnership or even alliance. To this end, all existing and new channels of regional cooperation should be used, for example, to establish effective mechanisms for cooperation with the international regional political association of Central European countries. The work of the Central European Initiative, etc. should be revived. In general, the Ukrainian state needs to consistently seek broad and concrete solidarity support of Central European countries in order to implement Ukraine's European integration strategy<sup>19</sup>.

### **1.2.2. Main vectors of Ukrainian foreign policy**

Currently, the global division of labor is a determining factor in the development of world economic relations and one of the main trends in world economic progress. The global division of

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<sup>18</sup> Ukraine in modern geopolitical space: theoretical and applied aspects / Ed. FM Rudicha.- K.: MAUP, 2012. - 438 p.

<sup>19</sup> Tikhonova LA International relations and foreign policy of the state. Ukraine in the world community. Lecture notes. // Kharkiv: 2017.



labor is the highest degree of development of the social territorial division of labor, which is based on the specialization of production of individual countries in certain types of products and services. The country gets the greatest economic effect with such a combination of factors, which provides the maximum reduction of material and labor costs for the production of products and services of better quality, in greater quantities at the same cost<sup>20</sup>. Each country subject to the global division of labor seeks to obtain high economic efficiency of the national economy, minimize the cost of social labor and ensure the competitiveness of goods and services of domestic producers in world markets. In countries that use the opportunities and benefits of participation in the global division of labor, as a rule, there are much higher rates of economic and social development. In the modern sense, international cooperation, the international division of labor is the specialization of individual countries in certain activities: goods, services, processes which are sold on the world market. The main direction of development of the international division of labor was the expansion of international specialization and cooperation of production. International cooperation and international specialization are considered as forms of international division of labor, as they express its essence<sup>21</sup>.

Specific subject specialization of a country on certain goods (raw materials, food, equipment, research, information programs, patents and licenses, parts and components, etc.) and services (tourism, maritime transport, banking, engineering services and etc.) is determined by a combination of national and international factors. But, having a certain historical and economic continuity, it can change significantly over time. Cooperation today is the reproductive basis of socio-economic and scientific and technological progress in the world, the center of global processes, regional economic integration, transnationalization of international industrial cooperation and globalization. This form of interaction has been a catalyst for industrial restructuring, including due to the widespread use of electronic and information technology. International specialization and cooperation correspond to a high level of development of productive forces and act as one of the most important objective preconditions for further development of internationalization of economic life, strengthening of interconnection of national economies<sup>22</sup>.

The importance of international cooperation is due to the constant trend of increasing the capital intensity of new products, which requires huge financial resources. International cooperation can significantly reduce the preparation time of new products and reduce their capital intensity. Of particular importance now is the international production specialization, including technological and scientific and technical. The role of international industrial and technological cooperation is to

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<sup>20</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

<sup>21</sup> Ukraine in modern geopolitical space: theoretical and applied aspects / Ed. FM Rudicha.- K.: MAUP, 2012. - 438 p.

<sup>22</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

modernize the economy through diversification of exports. International industrial and technological cooperation is a channel of dissemination and a source of know-how, technological innovations and innovations and is widely used in joint research and development of new technologies.

Given the rapid development of the world economy for Ukraine, regional integration processes are one of the most important factors in the development of the national economy. At the same time, the reorientation of international specialization from commodity export-oriented industries to knowledge-intensive ones remains a priority task of the Ukrainian economy. Given the economic conditions in which the modern international specialization of Ukraine was formed, as well as taking into account the trends and priorities of world economic leaders (EU, USA, newly industrialized countries), the development of IT services has obvious prospects for our country<sup>23</sup>. According to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, in 2019 Ukraine's total exports amounted to \$ 46.6 billion. At the same time, goods accounted for 81.8% of exports (\$ 38 billion) and services for 18.2% (\$ 9.6 billion). In the export of services, the category of IT services ranks second after transport. If we analyze the place of IT in the structure of exports of services, they occupy the second place. If we study their position in the general structure of exports, they are in ninth place, far behind many traditional for Ukraine areas of trade (Table 1).

*Figure 1 The largest sectors of exports of goods and services of Ukraine in 2019*

Category	Amount, billion USD	Place in the structure of exports, %
Ferrous metals	8	1
Cereals	6	2
Transport	5,2	3
Fats and inks	3,3	4
Ore, slag, ash	2,2	5
Electric machines	1,9	6
Nuclear reactors, boilers, machines	1,9	7
IT services	1,5	8

<sup>23</sup> Ukraine in modern geopolitical space: theoretical and applied aspects / Ed. FM Rudicha. - K. : MAUP, 2012. - 438 p.

Abroad, Ukraine is associated with IT services outsourcing. Ukraine provides 90% of IT services outsourcing to foreign customers. According to the growth rate of IT outsourcing, Ukraine ranks second in the world after India. According to the NBU, there was an increase in exports of IT services - telecommunications, computer and information - from the country, against the background of a general decline in exports. The share of IT in the export of services in 2019 increased to 17%, and the volume - up to 2.1 billion dollars. At the same time, the total export of services from Ukraine in 2019 decreased by 16.9% to 12.4 billion dollars. Information technology has become the only type of service export that has grown steadily in recent years. The largest share of this type of export is computer services (79%), mainly software development outsourcing. Among the reasons for the rapid development of this area can be identified relatively low cost of services of Ukrainian IT professionals. Ukraine is a promising center for outsourcing services, primarily for European companies. Compared to Asian countries, we have the advantage that we are closer and can win by the hourly difference in transportation costs. In order for Ukraine to be considered as a potential participant in the global market, it is necessary to increase the transparency of doing business and the investment climate, the level of knowledge of English and IT technologies, the quality of education in narrow specialties. By 2025, Ukraine intends to become a leader in the field of IT outsourcing. The new project, which involves the creation of 100,000 jobs in this area, is launched by the Ukrainian government together with representatives of IT companies. It is expected to receive revenues of more than 10 billion US dollars from IT services in the US and the EU, as well as 1 billion US dollars of investment in the expansion and modernization of the education system<sup>24</sup>.

Thus, the development of Ukraine's specialization in the field of IT outsourcing should not be seen as an independent task, outside the context of the general opportunities and risks of the national IT industry. In any of the development options in the new global and domestic context, the outsourcing industry itself will rather play a supporting role. Ukraine does not face the task of accelerating the creation of a national school in the field of information technology, the issue of integration of the existing school into the world market and successful commercialization of the results of its work is much more urgent. Against the background of global observations that show that the business of outsourcing has entered a phase of maturity, Ukraine should rather strive to create a higher-level industry aimed at developing finished products that are effective in the domestic market (where the share of domestic software is still does not exceed 25%) and worldwide. The reorientation from Western markets to still developing countries and the transition to a development ideology based on the creation of mass and affordable solutions that can be applied in countries with low relative incomes but rapid economic growth opens up serious global prospects. This path can allow Ukrainian

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<sup>24</sup> Ukraine in modern geopolitical space: theoretical and applied aspects / Ed. FM Rudicha.- K .: MAUP, 2012. - 438 p.

companies to move from peripheral positions in the global software market to the role of conceptual leaders in global digital transformation.

### **1. 3. International Relations of Ukraine from Constructivist Theoretical Perspective**

Ukraine's foreign policy is systemic. Its structural elements are the interests, goals, objectives, methods and directions of foreign policy. The main goals of Ukraine's foreign policy are to ensure the country's sovereignty as a subject of international law, guarantee national security, and create favorable conditions for the political, socio-economic, and spiritual development of Ukrainian society and its citizens. Achieving these goals involves solving a number of foreign policy tasks: ensuring the stability of Ukraine's international position; preservation of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders; establishing mutually beneficial cooperation with all interested countries; protection of the rights and interests of Ukrainian citizens and legal entities abroad; creating conditions for maintaining contacts with the Ukrainian diaspora; presence in the international arena as a reliable partner. It also proclaimed that the Ukrainian SSR is an equal participant in international communication, actively promotes general peace and international security, directly participates in the European process and European structures, recognizes the superiority of universal values over class, the priority of universally recognized norms of international law over domestic law<sup>25</sup>.

Ukraine has identified the following as priority areas:

European integration is a key priority that accumulates a whole range of Ukraine's domestic and foreign policy efforts to move closer to the EU and create the necessary preconditions for future accession to the European Union. An integral part of Ukraine's European integration course is to provide diplomatic support for the completion of Ukraine's accession to the WTO. The European Union, which unites 27 member states (Croatia officially became its 28th member in July 2013), has gone through all stages of integration construction - a free trade area, a customs union, a political union - and has become the largest political union in the modern world. economic creation with the largest gross domestic product, which in 2019 reached 12, 65 trillion euros, or 25.2 thousand euros (33.5 thousand dollars) per capita, the total number of which is 503 million people. The EU ranks first in the list of both world exporters of goods and services (32.9% of world exports in 2011) and world importers (33.5% of world imports). The success, closeness and importance of the EU for the post-Soviet states recognized the use of the European model in Eurasian integration construction.

Euro-Atlantic integration - protection of Ukraine's security interests, participation in the creation of the Euro-Atlantic area of stability and security, gradual integration into NATO. This goal must be

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<sup>25</sup> Ukraine in modern geopolitical space: theoretical and applied aspects / Ed. FM Rudicha.- K .: MAUP, 2012. - 438 p.

achieved through the use of cooperation mechanisms with NATO, in particular the Action Plan and annual Target Plans, as well as accession to the Membership Action Plan.

At the bilateral level, Ukraine seeks to use the full potential of the strategic partnership based on mutual interest and common approaches to the development of relations with the United States, Russia and Poland; to achieve and maintain good relations with neighboring countries in an atmosphere of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. Ukraine will achieve its goal of promoting European values in the region, in particular by actively participating in the resolution of frozen conflicts<sup>26</sup>.

Ukraine pursues an active multilateral policy within the framework of universal and regional international organizations. Participation in the UN is aimed, first of all, at advancing the interests of Ukraine in the process of making the most important decisions for the entire world community. Activities within the OSCE will remain an important factor in complementing and enhancing regional and overall stability and security in Europe<sup>27</sup>.

An important priority to ensure Ukraine's strategic interests is economic expansion in both traditional and new markets for Ukrainian goods and services in the Middle East, Latin America, Asia and Africa<sup>28</sup>.

The protection of Ukrainian citizens abroad and the rights of the Ukrainian diaspora, which are constantly in the center of attention, is a constant priority of foreign policy and a sphere of special attention of diplomatic and consular institutions of Ukraine.

The development of Ukraine's relations with Western European countries, which is a consequence of the recognition of its important geopolitical position, is encouraging. It is in Ukraine's interests to restore the former and establish new economic ties with the post-Soviet countries, first of all with Russia. Relations between the CIS countries are not easy. There are certain problems in Russian-Ukrainian relations as well. In addition, different political forces in Ukraine have different ideas about its foreign policy strategy. Some consider Ukraine's orientation to the West and separation from Russia a priority, while others prefer an orientation to the East, primarily to Russia. Some advocate the neutrality of Ukraine, others - for its active participation in collective efforts to maintain peace and security in the world. Ukraine's geopolitical orientation to Europe does not mean isolation from Russia. The real situation in Ukraine requires directing foreign policy efforts to where they can ensure their national interests. It is also important to determine the extent to which its participation in

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<sup>26</sup> The experience of the Visegrad Four countries on the way to the EU: opportunities for Ukraine: Analytical assessments. - Uzhhorod: V. Padyak Publishing House, 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Kapitonenko MG Foreign policy strategy // Ukrainian diplomatic encyclopedia: In 2 volumes / Editor.: LV Gubersky (chairman) and others. - Kyiv: Knowledge of Ukraine, 2014. - P.520.

<sup>28</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

the processes taking place in Europe, Russia and other CIS countries is consistent with these interests<sup>29</sup>.

The factors of influence of the Ukrainian state on international affairs are the following: geographical position of Ukraine - it has an internally united territory, access to the sea, established channels of communication with many countries in Europe and Asia; the multi-million population puts Ukraine among the world's great powers; rich deposits of coal, iron and manganese ore, fertile chernozems, significant reserves of fresh water, favorable climate for health; developed energy, metallurgical and machine-building industries, powerful potential of aircraft, space and military industries; combat-ready military forces; absence of acute interethnic conflicts; recognition by Ukrainian society as a priority of universal values and condemnation of double standards; gradual development of a democratic political system; the desire of the majority of the population to see the Ukrainian state strong and prosperous; Ukraine's growing popularity in all spheres of public life in the world community, etc.

At the same time, there are the following factors that weaken Ukraine's influence: Ukraine's proximity to the countries under whose expansion its territory was; the emergence of a tendency to reduce population growth; lack of the required amount of oil, gas, cotton and other natural resources; weakening the country's economy by converting production, changing the structure of its industries and markets, the growth of the shadow sector, a large financial debt to foreign countries; attempts by some countries to attempt neocolonialism against Ukraine by setting unequal prices, economic pressure, and imposing unfavorable agreements in order to limit its political sovereignty; lack of strong socio-political, national, ideological and religious unity of the people of Ukraine; existence in his environment of gentlemen of Ukrainian, pro-Russian, pro-American and other sentiments and even separatist actions. All this is a confirmation that Ukraine is a young state. Its foreign policy course and geopolitical orientations are still being developed and concretized in accordance with the international situation. But the principles underlying this course are in line with the progressive tendencies of the modern world political process and will contribute to Ukraine's positioning as a full member of the world community<sup>30</sup>.

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Ukraine recognizes the superiority of universal values over class ones, the priority of universally recognized norms of international law over the norms of state law.

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<sup>29</sup> Kapitonenko MG Foreign policy strategy // Ukrainian diplomatic encyclopedia: In 2 volumes / Editor.: LV Gubersky (chairman) and others. - Kyiv: Knowledge of Ukraine, 2014. - P.520.

<sup>30</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

The national interests of Ukraine are as follows:

- guaranteeing the sovereignty of the state;
- maintaining the territorial integrity and inviolability of borders;
- achieving security in all its dimensions: military-political, economic, etc .;
- overcoming the economic crisis;
- creation of a democratic state governed by the rule of law;
- ensuring national consent;
- political and social stability, guarantees of human rights;
- establishing good neighborly relations with countries near and far abroad;
- The focus is on fruitful work at the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

The second direction is foreign policy diplomatic activity. Ukraine establishes diplomatic relations on the basis of equality, sovereign equality, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, recognition of territorial integrity and immobility of existing borders. The third direction of modern Ukraine's foreign policy is the establishment, support and development of economic, cultural, scientific and technical relations with all countries of the world community, except for countries that have been declared economic by the UN Security Council. The fourth direction is participation in solving global problems of the modern world.

The next direction is the preservation and further strengthening of good neighborly relations with the former republics of the USSR and participation in solving complex and urgent military-political problems.

Ukrainian-Belarusian relations are a rather complex and debatable issue, which has been particularly pressing over the past few years, as it has many pitfalls. The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the armed aggression in eastern Ukraine are the factors that prove the unconditional urgency of considering the issue of international policy with Belarus, as this state is the third party to regulate the Ukrainian-Russian conflict.

## **2. RELATIONS BETWEEN UKRAINE AND BELARUS FROM 1999-PRESENT**

With the independence of Ukraine and Belarus, an active process of forming a new model of interstate relations as independent and democratic states began. The recent history of centuries-old ties between the Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples is connected with the formation and implementation of a strategic partnership in the post-Soviet space. Both countries, which faced similar political and economic problems after the collapse of the Soviet Union, began to develop close political-diplomatic, trade-economic, scientific-technical, and cultural-humanitarian relations. The catalysts for the development of bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus were the historical affiliation of both countries to the Eastern region of Europe, the presence of a common border, the absence of territorial claims, close economic ties between the former Soviet republics and the closeness of cultures, historical traditions and ethnicity. both Slavic peoples. Therefore, in the conditions of development and establishment of both Ukraine and Belarus there is a need to objectively investigate the process of establishment and development of Ukrainian-Belarusian bilateral relations, their patterns, dynamics and specifics. During 1991–2014, Belarus and Ukraine were members of the CIS (starting from April 2014, Ukraine's cooperation within the CIS was minimized, and from May 19, 2018, the participation of the Ukrainian state in the statutory bodies of this organization was finally terminated), but geopolitical and geostrategic goals in them differed significantly. Thus, Ukraine sought to integrate into Western European intergovernmental structures, in particular, the European Union. Although Belarus has developed dynamic trade and economic relations with the EU, membership has never been discussed. Belarus has maintained close integration ties with the Russian Federation throughout the study period and currently forms the basis of the Eurasian Economic Union together with Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan<sup>31</sup>.

Ukraine's intensification of the Euro-Atlantic foreign policy after the Revolution of Dignity and the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU changed the balance of power in the region, turning the Ukrainian-Belarusian state border into a kind of outpost between East and West. That is why the joint partnership activity of the states should reduce the tensions that are now felt in the region, form a fundamentally new model of further effective cooperation between Ukraine and the EAEU member states. This can be realized, according to the author, on the basis of the traditions of good neighborliness, strategic partnership, cultural and ethnic kinship of our peoples and mutual respect for the choice of mutual foreign policy vectors of development.

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<sup>31</sup> Tikhonova LA International relations and foreign policy of the state. Ukraine in the world community. Lecture notes. // Kharkiv: 2017.



The history of the formation of interstate Ukrainian-Belarusian relations, their development in the new system of international relations is of considerable scientific interest to both Ukrainian and Belarusian, and often other foreign (mostly Polish) researchers. Historians have studied Ukrainian-Belarusian relations in different historical periods. However, with the independence of both countries in 1991, a new stage in the development of Ukrainian and Belarusian historiography began. This is evidenced, in particular, by the emergence of new scientific approaches to the formation and development of modern relations between Ukraine and Belarus, expanding and deepening research issues, holding international scientific conferences, round tables, publishing comprehensive monographs, professional articles and journalistic works. It should be noted that despite the fact that they all differ in style of presentation of material, scientific level, theoretical and methodological approaches, assessments of certain events, together they together occupy an important place in the historiography of modern Ukrainian-Belarusian relations.

## **2. 1. Presentation of Research Methodology**

In this context, the relations between Belarus and Ukraine become especially important. It should be noted that among the EAEU and CSTO member states, Belarus is currently showing the greatest interest in Ukraine, in particular, supporting it in the search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Donbas, seeking to develop mutually beneficial cooperation in the post-Soviet space.

At the present stage, the relevance of the initiated research is also due to the fact that there are no comprehensive scientific works on Ukrainian-Belarusian relations that would reveal all aspects of bilateral cooperation in Ukrainian historical science. This is due to the insignificant distance in time, incomplete process, variability of bilateral cooperation, which in turn requires constant thorough, holistic and objective study. Under such conditions, scientific research of the experience of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations on the basis of modern theoretical and methodological approaches, analytical scientific literature, a wide range of sources is, in our opinion, an important and urgent task of both Ukrainian and Belarusian historiographies<sup>32</sup>.

The study is based on the principles of **historicism, objectivity, scientificity, systematization and complexity, as well as general scientific** (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, abstraction, comparison, generalization, etc.), special-historical (historical-chronological, comparative-historical, historical-typological) and concrete-historical (system-structural, statistical) scientific methods. The scientific work is based on a comprehensive application of a wide range of historical sources on this issue, as well as a holistic and systematic approach to the disclosure of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations in modern international realities.

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<sup>32</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

Bilateral political dialogue between Belarus and Ukraine can be described as pragmatic and mutually beneficial. The leaders of Belarus, having allied commitments with Russia in the Union State of Belarus and Russia, participation in the Eurasian Economic Union and the CSTO, did not provide support in the Crimean occupation, nor did they recognize or accept the legitimacy of so-called referendums in eastern Ukraine. Political relations between Ukraine and Belarus became highly dynamic during 2017-2018. Thus, in 2017, three presidential meetings were held, including and the official visit of President Alexander Lukashenko to Ukraine on July 20-21, which showed the high level of Belarusian-Ukrainian relations, public support for Belarus 'sovereignty and territorial integrity, readiness to help resolve the situation in eastern Ukraine, and the countries' desire to increase significantly. volumes of trade between countries. According to the website of the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in Ukraine<sup>33</sup>, foreign economic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus are based on the free trade regime in accordance with the CIS Free Trade Agreement of 14.10.2011<sup>34</sup> and the Agreement between the Government of Belarus and the Government of Ukraine on free trade. from 17.12.1992<sup>35</sup>. In 2020, Ukraine took the second place in terms of trade turnover and exports among all trade partners of the Republic of Belarus, and the fourth place in terms of imports. Belarus is Ukraine's sixth largest trading partner after China, Poland, Russia, Germany and Turkey. In 2020, the trade turnover between the two countries amounted to 4.5 billion US dollars and decreased by 22.2% by January-December 2019. Exports of Belarusian goods to Ukraine amounted

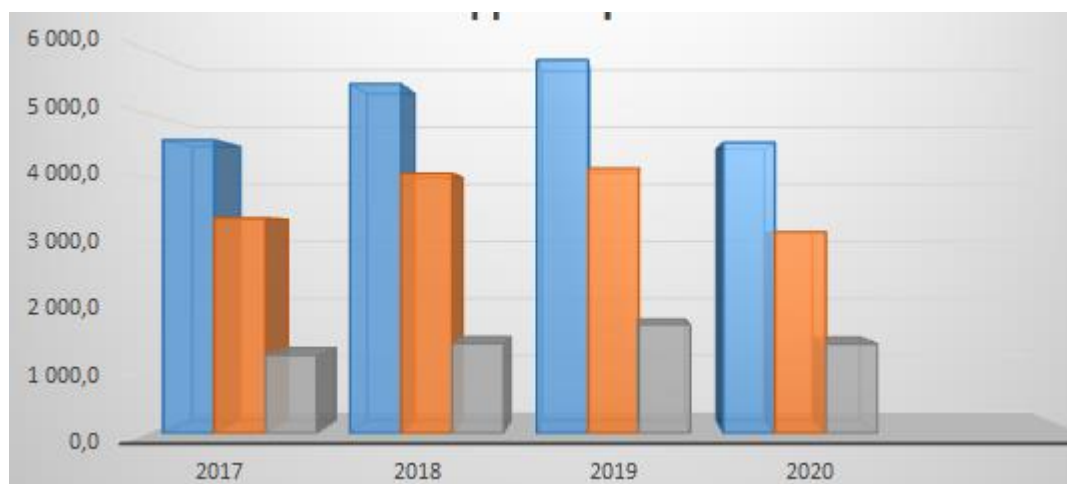


Figure 2 International trade of Ukraine and Belarus

to \$ 3.1 billion (down 24%). Imports of Ukrainian goods - 1.4 billion dollars (down 17.7%).

The basis of Belarusian exports in 2020 were: petroleum products, mixed mineral fertilizers, petroleum coke and bitumen, petroleum gases and other hydrocarbons in gaseous, tractors

<sup>33</sup> Official site of the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in Ukraine <https://mfa.gov.by>. Last accessed 18.05.21

<sup>34</sup> Free Trade Agreement. [https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/997\\_n25#Text](https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/997_n25#Text). Last accessed 18.05.21

<sup>35</sup> Protocol between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Belarus on exclusion from the free trade regime to the Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Belarus. [https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/112\\_021#Text](https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/112_021#Text). Last accessed 18.05.21

and tractors, trucks, potash fertilizers, fiberboard, nitrogen fertilizers, tires. The basis of Ukrainian exports are agricultural and food products, freight cars, railways or trams, rolling stock parts, flat rolled products of non-alloy hot-rolled steel, plastic containers, paper and cardboard containers, medicines.

Belarusian-Ukrainian cooperation in the trade and economic sphere in 2020 developed in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the introduction of quarantine restrictions on entry / exit from countries, and the reduction of the economies of the world's leading countries. Under these conditions, despite the decline in turnover, the parties managed to maintain business activity and keep important trade flows at an acceptable level. The main tool for coordinating trade and economic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus is the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Ukrainian Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, the 27th meeting of which took place on December 13, 2019 in Kyiv. The platform for discussion of topical issues of mutual trade is the Belarusian-Ukrainian High Level Group, the last meeting of which took place in Minsk in February 2020 and during 2020 maintained intersectoral contacts in the field of mechanical engineering, light industry, agriculture and others. In July 2020, a delegation of the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Belarus headed by Minister Parkhomchik PA visited Ukraine. In August 2020, at the invitation of the Ukrainian side, a working visit was organized to Ukraine by a delegation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus headed by Minister II Krupko. to participate in the 32nd International Agro-Industrial Exhibition "Agro 2020" (Kyiv).

Interregional ties remained an important factor in strengthening and developing economic relations between the two countries. In June 2020, the second meeting of the bilateral Working Group on Interregional and Cross-Border Cooperation (in the form of videoconferencing) was held under the chairmanship of First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus A. Evdochenko and First Deputy Minister for Communities and Territories of Ukraine V. Lozinsky.

In March 2020, before the termination of traffic through the coronavirus, the delegation of the Brest region headed by the Deputy Chairman of the Brest Regional Executive Committee Borisyuk GI and the mayor of Brest Rogachuk AS took part in the Lviv Export Forum. Meetings were held with the head of the Lviv Regional State Administration MM Malsky, the mayor of Lviv AI Sadov. As a result of the visit, export contracts worth more than \$ 4.5 million were signed. During 2020, active preparations were made for the organization of the third Forum of Regions of Ukraine and Belarus, which was planned for October 2020 in Grodno. Subsequently, at the initiative of the Ukrainian side, the Forum was postponed. Due to quarantine restrictions, countries have moved presentations of their industrial potential to specialized Internet sites. The first virtual exhibition of

Belarusian manufacturers Made in Belarus #AgroFood started on June 16, 2020 and presented the products of leading Belarusian companies in the field of agriculture and food.

In May 2020, at the initiative of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Belarus and Ukraine, a conference "Ukraine - Belarus: economic cooperation in the face of global challenges" was held with the participation of governmental organizations and diplomatic missions of both countries, business circles. In total, almost 200 participants took part in the event. A significant contribution to trade and economic cooperation is made due to the broad cooperation of the Chambers of Commerce of Ukraine and Belarus, the organization of business meetings in the format of the Advisory Council for Business Cooperation of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine, held annually. The regular IX meeting of the Advisory Board was held in the format of videoconferencing in November 2020 and signed a number of contracts in the contract of financial agreements totaling about \$ 100 million. The event was attended by more than 130 business representatives. An agreement was also signed between the institutes of the academies of sciences of Belarus and Ukraine on the implementation of projects in the field of new technologies, as well as six agreements on cooperation of regional chambers of commerce and industry.

Ukraine has a well-developed distribution network of Belarusian exporters, consisting of more than a hundred companies. Such flagships of the Belarusian economy as BelAZ, MTZ, MAZ and Atlant have an extensive network of dealer structures in the regions. There are 324 enterprises with Ukrainian capital in Belarus, including 129 joint ventures and 195 foreign organizations.

One of the main areas of trade and economic cooperation is industrial cooperation. The preferential possibilities of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on production and scientific and technical cooperation of May 29, 2002 are actively used. Currently, there are eleven assembly plants of Belarusian equipment in Ukraine (tractors and MAZ equipment, combine harvesters, elevator equipment, MAZ and Belkommunmash trolleybuses, collar systems, electricity meters). Including, in 2020 3 assembly plants were opened - trolleybuses (Brovary and Vinnytsia) and municipal vehicles on the basis of MAZ chassis (Kremenchuk). Cooperation ties are traditionally maintained with many industrial companies of Ukraine. With the active participation of Belavtodor holding companies in Ukraine, a number of large infrastructure projects in the field of road construction and current repairs of the Ukrainian road network are being implemented. The pause in interstate relations announced by the Ukrainian side in the second half of 2020 led to a reduction in contacts at the official level. At the same time, the interaction of business structures and economic entities of the two countries remains active.

On April 22, 2020, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba had a telephone conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Volodymyr Makeyev, during which he thanked the Belarusian side for fruitful cooperation in counteracting the spread of COVID-19. After the events of August 2020, there is a reversal of the trend that has determined bilateral relations in previous decades. After some hesitation, Kyiv refused to recognize the results of the presidential election in Belarus and, consequently, the legitimacy of Alexander Lukashenko's new presidential term. Moreover, the Ukrainian authorities have stated their intention to join the EU sanctions against Belarus.

Minsk, in turn, immediately demonstrated that it is ready to respond to such actions by Kyiv by increasing the degree of tension in bilateral relations. It is still difficult to predict how far the parties can go in this political confrontation. As well as what consequences the Belarusian crisis will have for regional security. However, it is obvious that a new chapter is beginning in Ukrainian-Belarusian relations.

The military developments in Belarus since the 2020 presidential election confirm that Russia views Belarusian territory as a theater of operations from which to deploy a group of Union State troops reinforced by the Belarusian armed forces. During the last round of exercises, the Slavic Brotherhood, Russian airborne troops were deployed in just a few days in sufficient numbers to conduct the operation in any direction.

In response, Ukraine has strengthened its defense in the Belarusian direction, including using tools that may restrict the use of, for example, aircraft or missile forces. Bilateral military cooperation between Kyiv and Minsk has no clear prospects. Ukraine would be ready to assist Belarus on its own in the face of the threat from the East if Belarus demonstrated the appropriate political will. However, after the onset of the domestic political crisis, Belarus effectively severed ties with the West and Ukraine and focused entirely on relations with the Kremlin.

Minsk's actions in the situation with the so-called Wagner APC were perceived by Kyiv as unfriendly, as a result of which trust between the parties, especially at the highest level, was completely lost. As a result, today the military-political relations between Ukraine and Belarus are at the lowest level in almost 30 years. Kyiv regards Belarus as a state that poses direct military threats to Ukraine. Kyiv has every reason to expect negative dynamics in these relations in the future, as Alexander Lukashenko has no choice but to further strengthen ties with the Kremlin.

At the same time, against the background of geopolitical transformations in the post-Soviet space, Ukraine intends to increasingly strengthen its subjectivity. And this automatically

programs a further confrontation with Russia, which will continue to try to maintain a dominant influence in the post-Soviet space.

## **2. 2. Foreign Policy of Ukraine towards Belarus**

In the context of covering bilateral relations between Ukraine and Belarus, the theoretical and conceptual clarification of such concepts as "political relations" and "economic relations" is of key importance. It should be noted that the content and essence of these concepts determine the identification of the main directions, trends and forms of cooperation in Ukrainian-Belarusian relations, conducting their detailed analysis. Therefore, in our opinion, political relations should be understood as one of the components of the activities of Ukraine and Belarus in the international arena as a set of different mechanisms and means of their interaction in all spheres of life. Ukrainian-Belarusian political ties are based on bilateral diplomatic cooperation, numerous official and working visits of presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, heads of parliaments of both countries, leaders of individual political parties, etc. During such meetings, representatives of the Ukrainian and Belarusian political elites usually negotiate on certain issues of bilateral relations or on key international issues, and legislate the specific agreements reached. It should be noted that the process of political interaction contributes not only to the rapprochement of the two countries, but also to some extent allows to counteract internal and external challenges.

Interstate economic relations can be considered as a system of various economic (industrial, monetary, financial, scientific and technical and other) relations between the national economies of the two countries, based on the international division of labor. Economic relations are characterized by the interaction of legal entities and individuals of the two states. The formation and development of interstate economic relations is conditioned by the strengthening of interconnections and interdependence of the economies of the two countries. They have a special influence deployment of scientific and technological progress, liberalization and strengthening of globalization of economic life. Interstate economic relations include bilateral trade, production, scientific and technical cooperation, currency and financial and credit cooperation, transport and communication relations<sup>36</sup>.

At the beginning of the XXI century. relations between Belarus and Ukraine have acquired qualitatively new forms of bilateral cooperation and have begun to be characterized as strategic. In view of this, it seems appropriate to clarify and clarify the meaning and essence of the terminological concept of "strategic partnership". This will allow a more detailed analysis of the main priorities,

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<sup>36</sup> Tikhonova LA International relations and foreign policy of the state. Ukraine in the world community. Lecture notes. // Kharkiv: 2017.

directions and forms of Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation in the new system of international relations. The term "strategic partnership" has a fairly wide range of definitions. Analyzing the main components of this concept, concluded that such an instrument of foreign policy as a strategic partnership, obviously includes cooperation between states, which focuses on the whole complex of their national interests, however, the main emphasis should be on the vital strategic national interests and foreign policy objectives of the state, which are long-term in nature. In addition, as a characteristic of bilateral relations, strategic partnership provides for their special, higher quality compared to the usual, traditional relations between the two states. Accordingly, the strategic partnership is a higher level of trade and economic relations, mutual foreign policy support, the effectiveness of contacts of state-political, financial-industrial, scientific and cultural elites. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the application of theoretical principles only in conjunction with the methodology allows a comprehensive approach to the analysis of modern relations between the two neighboring countries - Belarus and Ukraine. In our opinion, the theoretical and methodological apparatus should be considered as a complex that includes scientific principles, methods and approaches aimed at a comprehensive, holistic and objective study of the events of Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation. Given this approach, in studying the main stages of formation and development of modern bilateral relations between Ukraine and Belarus, a number of methodological principles were used, among which are: historicism, objectivity, scientificity, systematization and complexity.

The principle of historicism is one of the most important, as it provides coverage of the main facts, events and phenomena of Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation in relation to the specific historical situation and taking into account the domestic and foreign policy orientation of the two countries. The use of the principle of historicism allows to determine in the historical context the reasons and prerequisites for establishing good neighborly partnerships between Ukraine and Belarus, to show the real content and key areas of revival of interstate cooperation in the medium and long term. The principle of historicism contributes to our consideration of the process of building Ukrainian-Belarusian bilateral relations through the prism of modern international requirements and challenges, creates opportunities for the separation in their evolution of the main stages and priority areas of interstate activity. In addition, the use of this principle allows you to analyze, systematize and summarize internal and external factors, as well as temporary factors that affect the dynamics of cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus in modern international life<sup>37</sup>.

The next principle is the principle of objectivity. It should be noted that it is closely connected with the principle of historicism in the coverage of bilateral Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation in politics, diplomacy, economics, international cooperation, etc. The application of the principle of

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<sup>37</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

objectivity set the author the task to take into account when studying the system of relations between Ukraine and Belarus both positive and negative factors and factors that influence bilateral relations. Objectivity as a methodological principle means covering the historical process in a real, true dimension, without concealing or deliberately distorting certain historical facts. In studying the outlined problem, the principle of objectivity led us to study modern Ukrainian-Belarusian relations as a complex system of good-neighborly, multifaceted and at the same time contradictory relations. Each of these areas is considered by the author in terms of objective patterns, which in turn involves the confirmation and provability of factual material and the objectivity of the conclusions. Analyzing the cooperation between Belarus and Ukraine, we should focus on clarifying and verifying individual facts, comparing the characteristics of events, phenomena and processes of interstate cooperation. It should be noted that this principle allowed to cover the dynamics of objective historical development of the whole process of formation and development of modern Ukrainian-Belarusian relations, to clarify the main trends, problems and priorities of cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus in modern conditions and in the future.

### **2.2.1. Background of the Relationship between Ukraine and Belarus**

The formation of a new Ukrainian-Belarusian interstate cooperation became possible due to radical changes of both international and domestic nature in the late twentieth century. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of independent Ukraine and Belarus as full-fledged subjects of international relations, geopolitical location, territorial proximity, close economic ties and mutual interest have created favorable conditions for Ukrainian-Belarusian relations. During the years of independence, relations between Ukraine and Belarus have grown into close political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation and are characterized as strategic. At the same time, modern Ukrainian-Belarusian relations cannot be called simple and unambiguous, and therefore developing a strategy for our relations for the future is a priority for both countries<sup>38</sup>.

In our opinion, the factors that contributed to the transition of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations from the inter-republican to the interstate level were both external and internal. The formation of interstate relations between Ukraine and Belarus took place, on the one hand, under the influence of global transformation processes in Europe, as both states are integral components of the Eastern European geopolitical space and full subjects of international politics, and on the other - caused by domestic socio-political and social - economic circumstances. The main preconditions for the formation of modern Ukrainian-Belarusian interstate relations were formed during 1990-1991.

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<sup>38</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.



Negotiations between the delegations of the Ukrainian SSR and the BSSR, which took place on October 17, 1990 in Kyiv, played an important role in the formation of Ukrainian-Belarusian interstate cooperation. The parties considered a wide range of issues, in particular, bilateral relations in the new political realities. Following the talks, a resolution was adopted: "The Ukrainian SSR and the BSSR, based on the age-old traditions of brotherhood and mutual assistance, realistically assessing the political and socio-economic situation in both republics, are convinced of the need to further strengthen mutually beneficial political, economic, scientific and technical and cultural cultures. as sovereign states ". It can be concluded that already in the late 1990s favorable conditions were created for Ukraine and Belarus to pursue an independent foreign policy and build bilateral relations on the principles of sovereignty, equality and strategic partnership. This was largely due to the crisis and centrifugal tendencies that swept the Soviet Union in 1990.

In the international arena, joint Ukrainian-Belarusian activities independent of the union center began within the UN]. In October 1990, within the framework of the UN General Assembly, Ukrainian and Belarusian delegations, despite Moscow's opposition, initiated a resolution on the Chernobyl problem. The coordinated actions of the diplomats of both republics allowed the adoption of the first legal act on December 4, 1990 - "International cooperation in mitigating the consequences of the Chernobyl accident." It is worth noting that this victory of the young Ukrainian and Belarusian diplomats played an important role in shaping Ukrainian-Belarusian diplomatic relations on new principles, as their clear and coordinated actions convinced the international community that they should be regarded as representatives of sovereign states.

The signing of the Agreement between the Ukrainian SSR and the BSSR on December 29, 1990 was a document that contributed to the formation of modern interstate Ukrainian-Belarusian relations. In this document, the parties recognized each other as sovereign states and undertook to refrain from actions that could harm their territorial integrity; guaranteed to citizens who lived in the territories of both countries, after the adoption of the laws on citizenship by the parties, the right to have the citizenship of the country in whose territory they reside; provided guarantees to the inhabitants of the neighboring state on the level of their citizens' rights and freedoms in accordance with the current legislation and their equal legal protection; agreed to develop equal and mutually beneficial cooperation in politics, economics, education, culture, health, ecology, science, technology and trade<sup>39</sup>.

In addition, in accordance with Article 15, the parties agreed to exchange plenipotentiaries and establish the procedure for exchanging a special agreement. On the same day, December 29, 1990, a protocol on consultations was signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR

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<sup>39</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the BSSR, in which both sides agreed to hold regular talks and consultations at the level of foreign ministers also on bilateral relations and European cooperation. The parties also pledged to pay special attention to coordinating their efforts to obtain international support in minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl accident<sup>40</sup>.

Adhering to the common approach in Ukrainian and Belarusian historiography, the main criterion of which in distinguishing the stages of bilateral cooperation and their chronological framework, we can consider the basic agreements concluded between the countries. According to the Belarusian researcher D. Yurchak, the basic relations for Ukrainian-Belarusian relations are the Treaty between the BSSR and the USSR of December 29, 1990 and the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation of July 17, 1995. However, two stages of cooperation chronological framework does not reflect the real dynamics of political and trade and economic relations between Ukraine and Belarus in the post-Soviet period, as quantitative and qualitative changes in bilateral relations were not due to the content of the contractual framework, but its practical implementation. It can be concluded that the outlined criterion of division of cooperation into stages and has the right to exist, but is not a basis for reflecting the real state of bilateral Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation.

The criterion for the periodization of the latest Ukrainian-Belarusian interstate cooperation is considered to be the activity of foreign policy of Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus. In Ukrainian historiography there are five stages of foreign policy: the first stage - 1991-1994; the second stage - 1994-2004; the third stage - 2005-2010; the fourth stage - 2010-2013; the fifth stage - from 2014. It should be noted that the periodization of Ukraine's foreign policy is directly related to the presidents of the state, because, according to the Constitution, it is the President who provides leadership in foreign policy. Belarusian historiography distinguishes two stages of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus: the stage of the parliamentary republic - 1991-1994; stage of the presidential republic - since 1994. Thus, the conditional periodization of the foreign policy of the Republic of Belarus depends on the type of political regime in the country. The outlined approach to the periodization of modern Ukrainian-Belarusian relations takes into account only domestic political changes in both countries and cannot show all the dynamics of post-Soviet Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation, and therefore needs to be adjusted and detailed<sup>41</sup>.

The main criteria are quantitative and qualitative changes in the political dialogue between the two countries, the peculiarities of the domestic political situation of Ukraine and Belarus, which influenced their foreign policy orientation, as well as external factors that determined the specifics of cooperation between the two countries. Analyzing the chronology of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations,

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<sup>40</sup> Tikhonova LA International relations and foreign policy of the state. Ukraine in the world community. Lecture notes. // Kharkiv: 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

it can be argued that they were characterized by variable intensity. It should be noted that relations between Ukraine and Belarus have evolved and are currently defined as strategic. The dynamics of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations have unfolded in an ascending direction: from the establishment of interstate cooperation to the most intensive bilateral political ties, from good neighborly relations to strategic partnership.

### **2.2.3. Current Relations between Ukraine and Belarus**

Nowadays, the interest in studying Ukrainian-Belarusian relations in the new system of geopolitical coordinates has increased. Political ties are especially important in bilateral relations. In our opinion, this is due to the fact that the study of the political component of interstate relations will identify general trends in cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus, reveal mutual influences on the foreign policy of both countries, predict the development of cooperation between the two countries for decades to come.

In the history of bilateral relations between Ukraine and Belarus, the period 1991-2004 became decisive, during which the formation and development of interstate relations in the political sphere took place. At that time, special attention was paid to the issues of mutual recognition of independence of both states, processes of establishing diplomatic relations, exchange of embassies, intensification of political dialogue, definition of common approaches to cooperation and solving common problems, formation of legal framework, regular direct contacts<sup>42</sup>.

## **2. 3. Dimensions of the Ukraine – Belarus Relationship**

Geopolitical changes in Eastern Europe in the late twentieth - early twenty-first century. led to the fact that the international activities of Ukraine and Belarus need a new understanding and understanding. Against this background, the study of the process of building modern Ukrainian-Belarusian relations is of particular importance for the development of state-building processes in both countries, especially since the potential for bilateral cooperation is not exhausted and has significant prospects for further expansion. For modern Ukrainian historiography, the study of the interaction between Ukraine and Belarus becomes a priority, because in the domestic historical science there are no complex works on the outlined problem. In addition, the application of the latest theoretical and methodological approaches allows us to formulate new approaches that can be useful in developing promising concepts for cooperation in Ukraine with Belarus and other countries in the Eastern European region in the context of global transformation processes. A significant amount of

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<sup>42</sup> Tikhonova LA International relations and foreign policy of the state. Ukraine in the world community. Lecture notes. // Kharkiv: 2017.

available theoretical and documentary material, unpublished archival sources, the use of the full range of modern theoretical and methodological tools contributed to a deep and comprehensive study of patterns, as well as features of the formation and development of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations.

### **2.3.1. Economic Sphere of Cooperation**

The economic vector in the relations between Ukraine and Belarus is a priority for both countries in the development of bilateral cooperation. At the present stage, Ukrainian-Belarusian economic relations are built on new geopolitical principles, which are primarily related to globalization, the global economic crisis, and Russian aggression against Ukraine. These trends have significantly affected the dynamics of trade and economic cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus. At the same time, today, in the conditions of actual closure of the Russian market for Ukraine, Belarus shows the greatest interest among the EU member states in the development of interstate economic cooperation and supports the expansion of bilateral trade ties. Under such conditions, the priority for the governments of both countries is to completely abandon protectionist measures and trade restrictions as a means of putting pressure on the neighboring country to resolve problematic issues, as well as the ability to distance themselves from "third party" positions in choosing optimal foreign economic partners<sup>43</sup>.

Ukraine and Belarus are two post-Soviet countries whose economies were not an integral system before gaining independence in 1991, but were only part of a single economic complex of the USSR. Being part of the Soviet Union, Ukraine and Belarus in their foreign trade were completely focused on the all-Union market. Of course, under such conditions, the transformation of economic systems, as well as the transition to the interstate level of trade led to a long-term economic crisis in both countries<sup>44</sup>.

After gaining independence in 1991 and severing former economic ties, Belarus and Ukraine automatically became world leaders in terms of economic openness, which in turn led to a sharp drop in production and a reduction in the dynamics of mutual export-import operations. Thus, the new format of foreign economic relations between Ukraine and Belarus as sovereign states was based on two key factors: the desire of both countries to maintain existing since Soviet times close cooperation and level of trade, while establishing interstate economic relations on market terms, and interaction within the framework of economic projects in the CIS.

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<sup>43</sup> Tikhonova LA International relations and foreign policy of the state. Ukraine in the world community. Lecture notes. // Kharkiv: 2017.

<sup>44</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

At the present stage, the economic component plays a leading role in interstate cooperation in the international arena, and therefore requires a developed system of contractual and legal support. The first document concluded between Ukraine and Belarus in the field of economy can be considered, signed on October 25, 1991 in Kiev, the Agreement on the Principles of Economic Cooperation between Enterprises and Organizations for 1992. It should be noted that this agreement became the main legal act, which regulated Ukrainian-Belarusian economic cooperation in the first months after the independence of both countries. Significant attention was paid to the development of economic relations between Ukraine and Belarus by the leadership of both republics. However, given the lack of regular high-level political contacts in the first years of independence, the Ukrainian embassy in Belarus played an important role in resolving key issues of economic cooperation between the two countries. The main efforts of the diplomatic mission of Ukraine during 1993 - the first half of 1994 were aimed at full implementation of the bilateral trade and economic agreements reached during the visit of the Belarusian Prime Minister V. Kebich to Ukraine. In addition, the embassy regularly raised the issue of the need to establish an intergovernmental commission, a chamber of commerce and industry, a joint bank and Ukrainian-Belarusian enterprises. Thus, during 1991 - the first half of 1994, the Ukrainian embassy in Belarus was entrusted with full control over the development of trade and economic ties.

A new stage in the development of economic relations between Ukraine and Belarus began in the second half of 1994 and was associated with the presidential elections held in both republics. The expansion of interstate political contacts, after the election of Leonid Kuchma as President of Ukraine and Alexander Lukashenko as President of Belarus, has led to the intensification of bilateral economic cooperation. Already the first summit meetings have shown that trade and economic relations are a priority in Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation<sup>45</sup>.

In fact, during the official visit of the President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma to Belarus (July 13-15, 1995) one of the central topics of the talks was the issue of

interstate economic cooperation. The heads of both states noted that the Belarusian-Ukrainian economic relations are of special importance. L. Kuchma and O. Lukashenko reaffirmed their readiness to promote the further development of bilateral economic relations and agreed to instruct the governments of Ukraine and Belarus to approve the composition of the joint commission on trade and economic cooperation at the ministerial level. In addition, the parties called for the settlement of mutual debts, the implementation of measures to simplify customs procedures, as well as the expansion of direct ties between the economic entities of the two countries.

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<sup>45</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

Discussion of the possibilities of restoring the positive trend in the dynamics of bilateral trade and economic cooperation was the central topic of the meeting of the Presidents of the two countries, which took place on May 6, 2009 in Gomel. During the talks, Yushchenko and Lukashenko focused on working out common ways to overcome the effects of the global economic crisis. In this context, the leaders of Ukraine and Belarus expressed hope that regular discussions at the highest level of the economic aspect of bilateral relations in the global financial crisis will provide the necessary impetus to enter a positive trajectory of mutual trade. The presidents of the two countries also agreed to instruct the prime ministers to begin the practical implementation of the agreements reached between the leaders of Ukraine and Belarus and to hold a regular meeting of the intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation.

On June 12, 2009, the working visit of the Prime Minister of Belarus S. Sydorsky to Ukraine began. The main result of the talks between the Prime Ministers of Ukraine and Belarus was the conclusion of an interstate contract for the supply of Ukrainian electricity to Belarus, which came into force upon signing. In addition, S. Sidorsky made a statement about the establishment of a national regime by Belarus for trade in Ukrainian goods and the abolition of the 10 percent duty on Ukrainian products, which existed before<sup>46</sup>.

During January-December 2002, the dynamics of trade between Ukraine and Belarus continued to be negative. In fact, in 12 months the total volume of bilateral trade amounted to only 562.3 million dollars. USA. This unfavorable trend was due to an even larger, compared to 2001, decline in Belarusian imports to Ukraine (supplies decreased by more than 50% and amounted to 271.6 million dollars). Exports of Ukrainian goods, on the other hand, increased by 4.5% and amounted to 290.7 million dollars.

The large-scale decline in the volume of products imported from Belarus was due to two factors. The first was a sharp reduction in supplies of Belarusian oil products due to the saturation of Ukraine's domestic market with Ukrainian products. The second factor was due to a decrease in sugar supplies to Ukraine by more than \$ 30 million. The problem of trade in sugar products between the two countries appeared in 1997, when Belarus removed Ukrainian sugar from the list of products subject to the free trade regime and imposed a duty of 25% on it. This in turn restrained sugar exports from Ukraine to Belarus. The unresolved issue of the issue due to the Belarusian side's disregard for the Ukrainian proposals to phase out 25% of the duty led to the fact that at the end of 2001 the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine decided to impose a similar duty on Belarusian sugar imports.

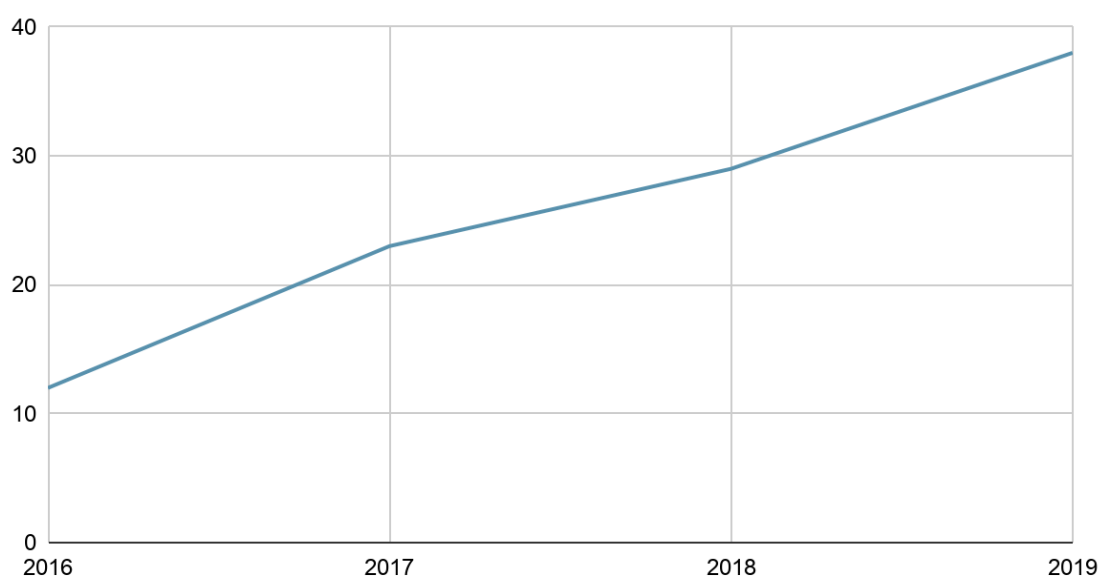
2013 was a turning point for Ukrainian-Belarusian trade and economic cooperation, with the beginning of which there was a tendency to a significant increase in mutual trade. In particular, during

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<sup>46</sup> Tikhonova LA International relations and foreign policy of the state. Ukraine in the world community. Lecture notes. // Kharkiv: 2017.

January-December, the total trade turnover between the countries amounted to 728.8 million dollars. and increased compared to the same period in 2012 by 28.9%. Ukrainian exports amounted to 369.86 million dollars. (increased by 28.1%), imports - 358.94 million dollars. (increased by 29.7%). Consolidation of the positive growth trend of Ukrainian-Belarusian trade led to even higher rates in 2014 - for the first time since 1997, the annual total trade turnover exceeded 1 billion dollars. (1162.87 million dollars) and increased compared to 2015 by 59.5%. It should be noted that the positive balance of the bilateral trade balance for Ukraine, which for 12 months of 2014 amounted to 42.45 million dollars, against 12.01 million dollars. and \$ 10.53 million. in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

### Ukraine and Belarus trade



*Figure 3 Ukraine and Belarus trade. International Trade.*

During 2016–2018, the indicators of Ukrainian-Belarusian trade and economic cooperation reached new record figures. Thus, in 2016 the total trade turnover between Ukraine and Belarus amounted to 2458 million dollars, in 2017 - 3006.5 million dollars, and in 2018 it reached almost 5 billion dollars. (\$ 4904.9 million). During this period, Ukraine remained one of the main trade partners of Belarus (second place among the CIS countries and third - among all countries). The main volume of Ukrainian exports fell on intermediate and investment goods: metal products, components, components and parts for assembling equipment, sunflower oil, varnishes and paints, gas turbines, wagons, and electricity. The basis of Belarusian imports were tractors, trucks, refrigerators, elevators, petroleum products, polymers, tires, potash fertilizers, fabrics, fibers, glass, food products [54]. Thus, from 2013 to the end of 2018, cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus in the trade and economic sphere developed in an upward trajectory, which allowed to achieve record economic indicators of bilateral cooperation since the two countries gained independence.

Since the beginning of 2019, both countries have been affected by the acute phase of the global financial and economic crisis, which was accompanied by a economic downturn, curtailment of corporate lending, and declining production. As a result, in the first 12 months of 2019, the trade turnover between Ukraine and Belarus decreased significantly and amounted to 2982.5 million dollars. Exports of Ukrainian products to Belarus decreased to 1289.4 million dollars, and supplies of Belarusian goods to the Ukrainian market decreased to 1693.1 million dollars<sup>47</sup>.

However, in early 2018, due to the beginning of the exit of the economies of Ukraine and Belarus from the crisis, as well as due to the adopted systemic measures for the development of trade and economic cooperation, trade between the two countries began to grow again and amounted to 4439.9 million dollars. The trade balance remained negative for Ukraine and amounted to 684.7 million dollars.

In the following years, Ukraine continued to be one of Belarus' strategic trade partners and in 2011 ranked third in terms of trade and exports to this country. Belarus, in turn, was Ukraine's fourth major trading partner after Russia, Germany and China. Bilateral trade in 2011 amounted to 6.2 billion dollars. and compared to 2010 increased by 39.5%. At the same time, it should be noted that the growth of Belarusian imports to Ukraine more than doubled the indicators of the increase in exports of Ukrainian products to Belarus (the negative trade balance for Ukraine in 2011 was a record \$ 2.2 billion. ).

In his interview in January 2013, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to Ukraine Valentyn Velychko, analyzing the state of development of Ukrainian-Belarusian trade and economic relations in the 21st century, noted the following: The main feature of the Belarusian-Ukrainian economic cooperation has been the dynamic development of bilateral trade for a long time. Over the past decade, trade between the countries has increased almost 10 times and in 2012 approached a new record figure - 8 billion dollars. This achievement is a confirmation of the fact that bilateral cooperation has long passed from "pure" trade to a qualitatively new level of strategic partnership ... <sup>48</sup>".

However, the events of 2014 dramatically affected the plans of both the Belarusian and Ukrainian sides. The annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war led to an acute economic crisis in Ukraine, which in turn affected trade with other countries, including Belarus. It

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<sup>47</sup> Maksak, H. (2010) *Ukrayina-Bilorus:2020. Osoblyvosti rozvytku zovnishnoyi polityky Ukrayiny shchodo formuvannia ukrayinsko-biloruskykh vidnosyn na dovgostrokovu perspektyvu* [Ukraine-Belarus: Horizon 2020. Features of the foreign policy of Ukraine concerning formation of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations in the long term perspective], Fond im. Fridrikha Eberta v Ukrayini, Kyiv.

<sup>48</sup> Maksak, H. (2010) *Ukrayina-Bilorus:2020. Osoblyvosti rozvytku zovnishnoyi polityky Ukrayiny shchodo formuvannia ukrayinsko-biloruskykh vidnosyn na dovgostrokovu perspektyvu* [Ukraine-Belarus: Horizon 2020. Features of the foreign policy of Ukraine concerning formation of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations in the long term perspective], Fond im. Fridrikha Eberta v Ukrayini, Kyiv.



should be noted that for our northern neighbor this situation was extremely serious, as Ukraine ranked second among Belarus' trading partners and that the most important balance of bilateral trade was in favor of Belarus (given the various trade restrictions by the EU and the general trade deficit). was a serious basis for the Belarusian economy). Against this background, it is noteworthy that in 2014 the trade turnover between Ukraine and Belarus did not decrease, but rather increased slightly compared to 2013 and amounted to 5868.42 million dollars, but a clear downward trend in bilateral trade. economic cooperation was observed throughout the year and resulted in a sharp decline in mutual trade since January 1, 2015. Analyzing the results of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic cooperation in 2014, it should be noted that among Ukraine's trading partners, Belarus ranked second among countries CIS (after Russia) and fifth among all countries in the world (after Russia, China, Germany and Poland).

One of the most common forms of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic cooperation was industrial cooperation between economic entities of the two countries and the creation of joint ventures. More than a hundred Ukrainian and Belarusian enterprises and organizations are connected by production and cooperation relations.

Analysis of the state of activity of economic entities of Ukraine in Belarus at the end of the twentieth century showed that it was carried out in three aspects: through the creation of joint ventures, through the provision of services and joint production on the terms of industrial cooperation. At the end of the 1990s, 119 joint Ukrainian-Belarusian enterprises with a statutory fund of over 10 million Belarusian rubles were registered in Belarus. There were no enterprises with 100% Ukrainian capital in the neighboring country. Instead, there were 38 Belarusian-Ukrainian joint ventures in Ukraine with a capital of \$ 20.245 million.

Cooperation in science and technology can also be called an important area of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic relations. Cooperation in this area was aimed at implementing bilateral programs operating under the intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in science and technology. Joint projects in priority areas, which were included in the bilateral programs, covered, first of all, the development of effective methods of protection of the population living in areas of radioactive contamination, the creation of elements of laser technology and new

technologies for the production of semiconductors, design of microprocessors and microlaser integrated circuits, etc. On the basis of JSC "Bilmedpreparaty" under the license of the Ukrainian Scientific Center "Sorption" was organized the production of sorbents with phytonutrients for the removal of radionuclides. In addition, combined methods of purification of media from heavy metal ions have been developed. At the same time, it should be emphasized that many projects did not receive funding from year to year due to lack of funds, and this primarily limited the potential of scientific and technical cooperation, especially in the field of basic research.

Cooperation in the field of agriculture remained a priority area of cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus throughout the period after gaining independence. The interaction between the two countries in this area is characterized primarily by the mutual supply of agricultural products. Ukraine traditionally supplies Belarus with significant volumes of grain crops, corn, sunflower oil, and cake. In turn, meat, dairy products and other foodstuffs are supplied from Belarus to Ukraine.

It should be noted that the volume of supplies of agricultural products from Ukraine to Belarus was not stable. They constantly fluctuated and depended on both the yield and the activity of the leadership of the Ukrainian agro-industrial complex, which did not always fully use its opportunities to promote domestic goods on the Belarusian market<sup>49</sup>.

The Embassy of Ukraine in Belarus in its analytical note "On the state of receipt of imports of agricultural products from Ukraine to Belarus" in the spring of 1998 noted: "In the last two or three years, Belarus receives from Ukraine agricultural products in small quantities. At the same time, the Belarusian market of agricultural products is filled with similar goods from other countries, and their supplies are growing every year.

In the same document, the diplomatic mission of Ukraine in Belarus also stressed that the Belarusian side is interested in supplying Ukrainian agricultural goods to its market, which the leadership

of the neighboring republic stated both during the negotiations at the highest interstate level and in talks with the Ukrainian ambassador, promising to reduce taxes and import duties, as well as to introduce a simplified procedure for crossing the border by transport of fruits and vegetables of Ukrainian origin. In this regard, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine needs to intensify its activities aimed at expanding the presence of domestic agricultural products in Belarus, in particular to organize exhibitions and fairs of Ukrainian products, to promote their import and sale, to study Belarusian in more detail. market.

In addition, in order to revive cooperation between the two countries in the field of agriculture, the Embassy of Ukraine in Belarus proposed to take a number of organizational measures: to accelerate the appointment of a representative of the Ukrainian agro-industrial complex in Belarus, to intensify the work of the Ukrainian representative office

It should be noted that the partial solution of the issues outlined by the diplomatic mission of Ukraine in Belarus has significantly increased the export of certain types of Ukrainian agricultural products to the neighboring republic. In particular, at the beginning of the XXI century. annual supplies of wheat from Ukraine to Belarus ranged from 0.8 to 2 million tons per year and depended

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<sup>49</sup> Maksak, H. (2010) *Ukrayina-Bilorus:2020. Osoblyvosti rozvytku zovnishnoyi polityky Ukrayiny shchodo formuvannia ukrayinsko-biloruskykh vidnosyn na dovgostrokovu perspektyvu* [Ukraine-Belarus: Horizon 2020. Features of the foreign policy of Ukraine concerning formation of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations in the long term perspective], Fond im. Fridrikha Eberta v Ukrayini, Kyiv.

on the amount of harvest. In addition, the parties held regular talks on the possibilities and conditions of supply of Ukrainian grain on a long-term basis. As of the end of 2014, food supplies accounted for more than 20% of the total structure of Belarusian imports from Ukraine.

The situation with the supply of Ukrainian fruit and vegetable products and wine to Belarus has also improved. This was facilitated by the organization and holding of exhibitions and fairs of Ukrainian wines and fruits and vegetables in the neighboring country. Thus, in accordance with the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated January 10, 2002, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy together with the ARC, Odessa and Zakarpattia regional state administrations held an exhibition-fair of Ukrainian fruit and vegetable products and wine in Belarus. Due to their high quality and reasonable prices, the goods of domestic enterprises aroused considerable interest from Belarusian importers. As a result of the exhibition-fair, a number of Ukrainian companies were able to reach agreements on the supply of their products to the Belarusian market. It should be noted that similar events were held in the following years and stimulated the expansion of Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation in the field of agriculture.

Ukrainian beer and wine exporters, with the assistance of the Ministry of Agrarian Policy, also took an active part in international specialized exhibitions ("Wine and Beverages"), which took place in Belarus. About ten Ukrainian companies took part in these events, which, however, represented a significant percentage of the range of beer, wine and wine materials produced in Ukraine. The participation of domestic companies in the exhibitions "Wine and Drinks" resulted in constructive negotiations and concrete agreements on the development of Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation in this area. Thus, the organization and holding of exhibitions and fairs of Ukrainian products in Belarus, as well as the participation of domestic companies in international exhibitions held in the neighboring republic contributed to the promotion of agricultural goods on the Belarusian market and general intensification of interstate trade and economic cooperation<sup>50</sup>.

Given that the foreign economic strategy of the Ukrainian state has identified the deepening of trade and economic relations with Western European countries, as well as given the increasing economic pressure on Belarus from Russia, it is important for the further development of bilateral Ukrainian-Belarusian economic cooperation. In 2009 of the Eastern Partnership project. As part of this EU initiative, Ukraine and Belarus have new, much broader opportunities to expand interstate cooperation, primarily in the energy and transport spheres, due to the transit status of the two republics. Significant potential for cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus in the field of energy was associated with the resumption of Ukrainian electricity exports to the neighboring country and its further transit to the Baltic states, including Lithuania. In our opinion, this was in line with

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<sup>50</sup> [http://old.kmu.gov.ua/kmu/control/en/publish/article?art\\_id=91678&cat\\_id=246405254](http://old.kmu.gov.ua/kmu/control/en/publish/article?art_id=91678&cat_id=246405254) Last accessed 19.05.21

Ukraine's economic strategy, as it ensured the entry of domestic energy companies into the EU electricity market<sup>51</sup>.

However, according to M. Plaksenko, the most promising area of interstate cooperation within the Eastern Partnership was the possibility of tripartite cooperation in the implementation of the project to create an international transport corridor Baltic Sea - Black Sea, which provided for the organization of cargo transportation between the ports of Illichivsk and Klaipeda via Minsk. For Ukraine and Belarus, the priority of this project was also determined by the fact that it opened up to both republics the opportunity to access EU credit resources, which were allocated for the development of relevant infrastructure projects.

The events in the Ukrainian state in late 2013 - early 2014 seriously affected the entire structure of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations, including the cooperation of the two countries in the field of economy. A new trend in interstate trade and economic cooperation has been a significant limitation on bilateral economic transactions. This situation was primarily due to the economic downturn in Ukraine, which was caused by the domestic political situation, as well as the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of Russian aggression against the Ukrainian state. Another reason for the negative trend of declining indicators of Ukrainian-Belarusian economic cooperation was the "economic war" that Russia has launched against Ukraine, using the mechanisms of the Customs Union and involving all member states of this integration association, including Belarus<sup>52</sup>.

Given the importance for both countries of the economic component of interstate relations and the mutual desire to change the negative trend in bilateral economic relations, this issue was discussed during the first meeting of the President of Belarus with the new Ukrainian leadership (Acting President of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov). During the talks, the leaders of the two countries discussed the problems of the transport corridor from the Black Sea to the Baltic, the work of joint ventures and plans for further development of cooperation in this direction, considered the procurement of electricity in Belarus. Following the talks, the two presidents announced a number of specific agreements in the field of trade and economic cooperation, as well as the need to increase trade between the countries and the presence of enormous unrealized potential in this area.

The new model of economic cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus in modern conditions should be based, first of all, on the principles of good neighborliness, equality, mutual benefit and strategic partnership. In our opinion, this goal can be achieved as follows in Fig 2:

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<sup>51</sup> Maksak, H. (2010) *Ukrayina-Bilorus:2020. Osoblyvosti rozvytku zovnishnoyi polityky Ukrayiny shchodo formuvannia ukrayinsko-biloruskykh vidnosyn na dovgostrokovu perspektyvu* [Ukraine-Belarus: Horizon 2020. Features of the foreign policy of Ukraine concerning formation of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations in the long term perspective], Fond im. Fridrikha Eberta v Ukrayini, Kyiv.

<sup>52</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // *Viche*, 2016, №4.

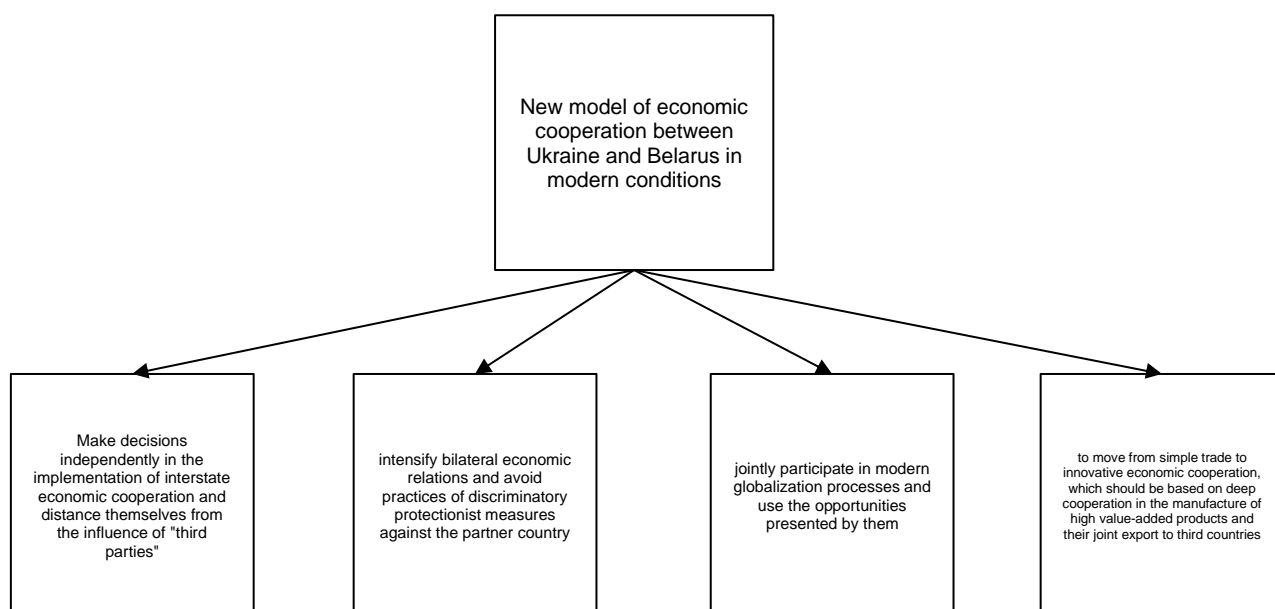


Figure 4 The new model of economic cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus in modern conditions. Made by me.

The period of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations testified to the importance and priority of the economic component in the structure of interstate relations, confirmed the correctness of the basic principles on the basis of which the model of bilateral economic cooperation was formed<sup>53</sup>.

### 2.3.2. Energetic and Security Spheres of Cooperation

Cooperation in the energy sector occupies an important place in the system of Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation. The current state of bilateral cooperation in this area is mostly characterized by the supply of Ukrainian electricity, energy equipment to the Belarusian market, as well as imports from Belarus to Ukraine of petroleum products produced at the Mozyr Refinery.

Regular supplies of various energy equipment from Ukraine to the Republic of Belarus were established after the signing in 1999 of a cooperation agreement between the concern "Bilenergo" and the Zaporozhye transformer

plant, Rivne plant of high-voltage equipment, Sumy NGO "Pump". In addition, in the same year, contracts were signed for the supply of equipment and materials to the neighboring republic with the Dnipropetrovsk, Nikopol and Khartsyzsk pipe plants<sup>54</sup>.

It should be noted that in recent years the export of energy equipment to Belarus has been accompanied by problems, which were related to the fact that the supply of these products from

<sup>53</sup> <https://neweasterneurope.eu/2021/01/29/ukraines-cautious-strategy-towards-belarus/>. Last accessed 18.05.21

<sup>54</sup> Kudryachenko A. The main principles of foreign policy of Ukraine // Viche, 2016, №4.

Ukraine was mainly carried out by intermediary firms, which in turn led to artificial price increases. In addition, such proposals of the Ukrainian side, given the fact that imports through intermediary structures in Belarus at the state level have never been encouraged, Belarusian consumers are often rejected. At the same time, they worked on alternative supplies of similar equipment from Russia and other producing countries.

For a long time, the main directions and forms of Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation in the energy sector were determined by the Interstate Program for Long-Term Economic Development for 1999-2008, decisions of the Intergovernmental Bilateral Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation and the Interdepartmental Working Group on Fuel and Energy Cooperation. Belarus. Important in this context is the decision taken on March 24, 2005 following the eleventh meeting of the Ukrainian-Belarusian Commission on Economic Cooperation to establish regular electricity supplies from Ukraine to Belarus. It should be noted that so far Ukrainian electricity has been supplied to the neighboring country in small quantities in accordance with the agreement concluded in 1999 between the Bilenergo concern and the Ministry of Energy of Ukraine on cross-border electricity flows.

New opportunities for Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation in the energy sector emerged after the launch of the EU's Eastern Partnership project and were related to the establishment of regular supplies of Ukrainian electricity to Lithuania through the territory of Belarus. Lithuania was extremely interested in the implementation of this project, as by the end of 2009 it was planned to decommission the Ingalina NPP, the capacity of which the Baltic Republic planned to replace with the import of Ukrainian electricity. To this end, three parties (Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus) prepared a project for the construction of a new power line Rivne NPP - Mikashevichi, which would double the capacity of interstate power lines of Ukraine and Belarus, and expand the export potential of the Ukrainian state in Belarus-Baltic route up to 9 billion kWh per year. However, due to lack of funding, this initiative was never implemented. As for the export of Ukrainian electricity to Lithuania via existing transmission lines, its volumes were different and depended on the cost and terms of supply through the territory of Belarus.

An important area of cooperation between the two countries in the energy sector can be considered the import of Belarusian oil products to Ukraine, produced in

mainly at the Mozyr Oil Refinery. In addition, both sides regularly explored opportunities to diversify oil and gas supplies to ensure their own energy security and reduce dependence on Russian energy, which Russia has often used as an instrument of political pressure on neighboring republics.

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Thus, considering the political cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus in the new system of international relations, it should be noted that bilateral relations in general were characterized by stability and mutual interest in increasing interstate cooperation. However, despite the active political dialogue at the highest state level, the current state of development of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations does not yet correspond to the potential of the two countries. This is primarily due to fundamental differences in the domestic and foreign policy of both countries. Relations between Ukraine and Belarus were influenced by external factors. Apparently, for a long time the interaction between the two sides took place against the background of the isolation of Belarus from the United States and the EU. The dynamics of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations was also negatively affected by the deepened integration of Belarus with Russia in the political, economic, military and social dimensions. In particular, the Belarusian side did not support Ukraine's position on expanding cooperation with the EU and NATO, and also delayed for a long time the completion of the legal registration of the common state border. This in turn affected the solution of problematic issues of bilateral cooperation. At the present stage, in the context of socio-political transformations in Ukraine and aggression by the Russian Federation, the issue of choosing reliable partners among neighboring countries is relevant for the Ukrainian state. It is in this situation that the dynamic and consistent nature of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations is noteworthy, due to the historical affiliation of both countries to the Eastern region of Europe, the presence of a common border, close economic ties, and close cultures and historical traditions<sup>55</sup>. Favorable dynamics of relations between Ukraine and Belarus and broad cooperation are an important factor for further joint cooperation to reduce tensions in the post-Soviet space, as well as for the implementation of a new model of effective interstate cooperation in today's international challenges.

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<sup>55</sup> <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/news/3552-viktor-janukovich-vidnosini-ukrajini-z-bilorussyu-zavzhdi-buduty-dobrosusidsykimi> Last accessed 18.05.21

## CONCLUSION

Concluding, based on the information provided in this research, it is possible to say that the formation of a new model of Ukrainian-Belarusian cooperation in modern conditions is inextricably linked with the formation of new relations, which occurred due to radical changes in the world in the late twentieth century.

- 1) Studied the concepts of the international cooperation and foreign policy as well as Ukraine's basic integrations and main strategic objectives. The disintegration of the USSR, the emergence of new independent states, favorable geopolitical location, territorial proximity, traditional ties, as well as the mutual interest of Ukraine and Belarus to maintain close political, economic and cultural-humanitarian contacts created objective preconditions for the formation and development of modern Ukrainian-Belarusian relationships.
- 2) Examined the theoretical perspectives of the cooperation according to Constructivism theory assumptions. Ukrainian-Belarusian relations have gone from formation to full-fledged cooperation, from good neighborliness to strategic partnership. In interstate relations during the period under study, the author's concept proposes to distinguish eleven stages, characterized by the dynamics of the Ukrainian-Belarusian dialogue and the intensification of bilateral cooperation. With regard to the legal framework for mutual relations, it should be noted that one of the most important, according to the author, tasks after independence in 1991 for Ukraine and Belarus, namely: created a system of legal support for bilateral relations, which was necessary for the strengthening and development of interstate relations. About 205 documents were concluded between the two republics, which made it possible to regulate legal relations in various spheres of cooperation.
- 3) Analyzed foreign policy of Ukraine towards Belarus. The processes of formation and development of Ukrainian-Belarusian political relations were characterized by the progressive nature of the evolution of their relations, due to historical, geographical, economic and cultural-humanitarian factors, as well as the presence of a long mutual border and lack of mutual territorial claims. The partnership between Ukraine and Belarus in the political sphere, first of all, should be considered as an important event in the consistent defense of the national interests of both countries, first of all, security at the regional and European levels. In our opinion, bilateral interstate relations have also contributed to the comprehensive development of cooperation and partnership in the Central and Eastern European region as a whole. Although Ukrainian-Belarusian relations of this period were characterized by sharp discussions and, to some extent, crisis phenomena, in general they can still be described as dynamic and promising. This is evidenced, in particular, by the significant intensity of



political contacts between the presidents, prime ministers, members of governments and parliaments of both countries. It follows that Belarus has become an important and consistent foreign policy partner of the Ukrainian state.

- 4) Understood dynamics of the relationship between Ukraine and Belarus. Bilateral economic relations occupy a priority place in the general structure of Ukrainian-Belarusian relations. Both countries were interested in developing trade and economic cooperation. This interest was due to both territorial proximity and a high level of cooperation in various sectors of the economies of the two countries. In addition, Ukraine and Belarus sought to develop cooperation in the framework of economic projects in the CIS. It was characterized by clear trends in bilateral economic cooperation, which were associated with significant attention from the leadership of both countries to this area of relations, the implementation of joint economic programs, cooperation within institutional organizations. At that time, the dynamics of interstate economic relations had a direct negative impact and some problems, in particular, the issue of payment of Ukrainian debt to Belarus was not resolved for a long time, trade barriers in each other's market persisted, investment activity was characterized by low rates.

**Hypothesis.** Modern Ukrainian-Belarusian relations, which are based on a developed system of legal and institutional support, can be considered effective in political, trade, economic, scientific, technical and other areas of cooperation. However, in view of the prospects of expanding cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus in the new system of international relations, at the present stage there are fundamentally new requirements and challenges that have led not only to reformat the model of bilateral relations, but also opened a wide range of additional opportunities for intensifying Ukrainian-Belarusian relations. connections. Continuing to study the full range of cooperation between Ukraine and Belarus in the new geopolitical and geostrategic coordinates will fully reveal the potential for cooperation between the two countries in the context of ensuring the national interests of each party, taking into account domestic and foreign policy priorities and international law.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Relations between Ukraine and Belarus.** After the independence of Ukraine and the Republic of Belarus in 1991, one of the most important tasks was fulfilled, namely: the creation of a system of contractual and legal support for bilateral relations, which was necessary for strengthening and developing interstate relations. About 205 documents were signed between the two republics, which made it possible to regulate legal relations in various spheres of cooperation.

**Partnership.** Bilateral interstate relations have also contributed to the comprehensive development of cooperation and partnership in the Central and Eastern European region as a whole. Although Ukrainian-Belarusian relations of this period were characterized by sharp discussions and, to some extent, crisis phenomena, in general they can still be described as dynamic and promising.

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## 6. Interviews

1. Major Olexiy Arestovich - Speaker of the TCG (Tripartite Contact Group) and Information Policy Advisor to the Head of the Ukrainian Delegation to the Minsk Group. Freelance Adviser to the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine Andriy Yermak on Strategic Communications in the Field of National Security and Defense. Performed on 30/03/21 at “Україна 24”. Found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsZdbxFtZFO> Interviewer: Tigran Martirosyan
2. Kuleba Dmitry – Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Performed on 13/02/21 at “Soromno”. Found at: <https://www.facebook.com/UkraineMFA/videos/160059125782760>. Interviewer: Yanina Sokolova
3. Kuleba Dmitry – Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, about Belarus and deoccupation of Crimea. Performed on 14/08/20 at “UA. Ukrainian Radio”. Found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61Jk1A5iILM>. Interviewer: Svetlana Myalyk.
4. Volodymyr Volodymyrovych Makei - Belarusian statesman and diplomat, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus since August 20, 2012. Performed on 11/04/21 at naviny.by. Found at: <https://naviny.online/new/20210411/1618124032-makey-zhestko-proshelsya-po-ukraine>.
5. Volodymyr Zelensky is the sixth and current President of Ukraine since May 20, 2019. Performed on 23/09/20 at Hospodárske noviny. Found at: <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/intervyu-prezidenta-ukrayini-slovackomu-ekonomichnomu-vidann-63881>.
6. Alexander Lukashenko - Belarusian politician and statesman. President of Belarus since 1994. From 09/20 retains power by falsification election process with violation of the laws of the Republic of Belarus. Interview has been named “For Ukrainian Media Sources”, where were discussed a main problem regarding Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. Performed on 26/09/19 at “Segodnya”. Found at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otFAf5\\_Aiwo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otFAf5_Aiwo).

7. Alexander Lukashenko - Belarusian politician and statesman. President of Belarus since 1994. From 09/20 retains power by falsification election process with violation of the laws of the Republic of Belarus. Performed on 11/01/21 at “Rossia 1”. Found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69ZamC4rQ-A>. Interviewer: Nailya Asker-zade
8. Alexander Lukashenko - Belarusian politician and statesman. President of Belarus since 1994. From 09/20 retains power by falsification election process with violation of the laws of the Republic of Belarus. Performed on 06/08/20 at “V gostyah u Dmitriya Gordona”. Found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5UmsPFMUaw>. Interviewer: Dmitriy Gordon.
9. Ukrayina ne vyznaye borgu pered Bilorussiu [Ukraine does not acknowledge the debt to Belarus], available at: <http://tsn.ua/groshi/ukrayina-ne-viznaye-borgu-pered-bilorussyu.html>. Last accessed 2/05/2021