Выступление
Министра иностранных дел В.В. Макея
на открытии белорусского-швейцарского
бизнес-форума «Doing Business in Belarus»
Женева, 8 апреля 2019 г., 15:15

Дорогие гости,

Позвольте сердечно приветствовать вас на этом мероприятии, посвященном бизнес-возможностям и инвестиционной среде в Беларуси.

Первая часть моего выступления, как бы это ни было традиционно для таких форумов, я начинаю с заявления, что я уверен, что Беларусь - это лучшее место для вашего инвестирования.

Возможности и инвестиционная среда Беларуси: я уверенно заявляю, что Беларусь - это лучшее место для вашего инвестирования.

В то же время, стремясь убедить вас в этом, я предвосхищаю многих спикеров из Беларуси, предоставив вам некоторые сведения, которые могут оказаться важными, когда вы решишь развивать контакты с белорусскими компаниями.

Во второй части моего выступления, которая может быть необычной для такого аудитории, я хочу обратиться к вам, как к активным представителям вашей общин, солидарно вкладывшимся в развитие вашего страны, региона и Европы. Здесь в Женеве, мы не можем игнорировать проблемы мультилатерализма, устойчивого развития и взаимной зависимости с международной безопасностью и безопасностью.

Перед тем как перейти к конкретным успехам швейцарских компаний в Беларуси, я должен упомянуть, что Швейцария является важным торговым и экономическим партнером Беларуси. Швейцария постоянно занимает одну из ведущих позиций среди иностранных прямых инвесторов в белорусскую экономику. Наша торговля товарами также растет стабильно. Последний год показал торговлю на сумму 187 миллионов долларов США и увеличение более чем на 17%. Наша торговля услугами даже более впечатляющая: в 2018 году она достигла 270 миллионов долларов США.

В числе инвестиционных проектов, которые гордятся Беларусь и Швейцария, звездой отца является “Стадлер Минск” Планет. Планета была официально открыта 20 ноября 2014 года. Компания является частью “Стадлер Рейл Групп”, швейцарской компании, которая в течение более 75 лет является одним из лидеров европейских производителей железнодорожных вагонов.
Another important project is carried out by “Franck Muller” at the Minsk Watch Plant. I am confident that it will be fully implemented in the foreseeable future. This company is hosting today’s event and I would like to express our sincere gratitude for their hospitality.

Apart from these solid examples, one may recollect the most recent case when Swiss “Sika” acquired in March 2019 the Belarusian company “BelINEKO”, which is a producer of chemical products for constructions.

Of course these are not the only examples. In total, 118 enterprises with Swiss capital are registered in Belarus. It proves that foreign investment and technology can bear fruit on Belarusian soil.

These true stories of success speak for themselves. The conditions which Belarus has created for foreign investors meet even such high standards as are requested by Swiss companies. Belarusian goods are in demand in Switzerland, while Swiss goods are popular in Belarus.

Of course, we still have lot of space for improvement.

With this understanding, the Government of Belarus systematically improves all types of infrastructural and related services. The Government has learnt to hear foreign partners.

We have restricted bureaucracy and administrative procedures to minimum. Our economic, banking, trade and other related legislation is stable, predictable and codified. You need an example from IT-sector? I will tell you that our legislation on blockchain technology is the most advanced in the world. An example from a more down-to-earth sphere? It is difficult to find a place in the whole world where it is easier to register your property than in Belarus. We hold the fifth place in that category according to Doing Business 2018 Report.

Belarus is at the final stage of negotiations on accession to the World Trade Organization. We are sure that this will open up new opportunities for doing business “in” and “with” Belarus, as well as will give additional guarantees directly to you.
National Agency for Investment and Privatization of Belarus is a guide and assistant for you. It meets the investor by the hand and accompanies them through all the procedures, up to, if necessary, signing the contract.

As a transit country, Belarus has one of the best road and rail networks in the region. We have plenty of warehouses and loading terminals. Belarus has direct flights to almost all European capitals. Since 2013, there has been a direct flight between Minsk and Geneva three times a week.

We allow visa-free entry for air passengers from more than 100 countries for a period of up to 1 month. In the future such conditions may also be extended for those traveling by land.

Belarus has one of the best Internet coverage in the region in terms of its availability, speed and quality.

The national education system and the support provided to young people ensure the high-quality training for both specialists with higher education and specialists of working professions.

Foreign families feel comfortable in Belarus, like if they were at home. We have friendly and safe cities. Education and health issues are easily solved. The level of healthcare, in terms of its availability and price-quality ratio, is comparable with the one in OECD countries.

Let’s now add to all these conditions such macroeconomic preferences as:
- free access to the market of Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union;
- free trade zone with Ukraine and other CIS countries, Vietnam, Serbia and soon with Iran;
- preferential conditions for investors in the FEZs, in small towns of Belarus;
- and exceptional conditions for producers of goods in the Belarusian-Chinese industrial park.

One should not forget the army of high-class Belarusian programmers, who, having started with computer games, including the famous World of Tanks, have
actually created a new sector of economy with billions in terms of exports. They are ready to provide your business with necessary program solutions at competitive prices and without leaving the capital’s boundaries.

Of course, Belarus is ready to welcome investors bringing new high value-added products and services to the country, with an emphasis on innovations and high-tech.

At the same time, we remain firmly committed to the idea of strengthening the country’s industrial potential. We are ready to consider concrete proposals on cooperation, joint ventures and even on privatization of enterprises of traditional sectors of Belarusian economy, including, for example, engineering, petrochemistry, food industry, etc.

In terms of working with investors, we have no geographical or political preferences, because, as you know, economic interests predetermine our foreign policy principles.

I want to assure you that we do not make friends with somebody against somebody. On the contrary, we aim to be friends with all our neighbors and equally with more distant countries.

Historically Belarus has been placed between the world’s key players, on the border between two economic unions. It is of our vital strategic interests to create single economic space with free movement of goods, services, people and capital from Lisbon to Vladivostok, or even from Vancouver to Vancouver. This is a guarantee of peace and stability for Belarusians and for all the people of Europe.

That is why we oppose politically motivated economic restrictions (especially unilateral sanctions) in international trade. We oppose restrictions on legal transfer of technology. We oppose creation of new dividing lines in Europe, including between the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union.

Given the economic background, we are deeply convinced that there is an urgent need for direct dialogue between regional economic integrations in order to remove economic barriers and to promote business contacts.
Belarus calls for establishment of substantive cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union. I am sure that there is large space for developing cooperation in such areas as standardization, veterinary and phytosanitary control, government procurement, etc.

President of Belarus called this approach “integration of integrations”. The current President of Germany once called it “greater connectivity” in Europe.

I am convinced that each businessman and investor should support the essence of this concept, no matter how it is called.

We expect that political understanding of importance of its practical implementation will first come directly from you, representatives of Swiss, European and transnational businesses. No government in the modern world can ignore the interests of its business elite and business community. We should promote this idea together in a consistent and straightforward manner.

In this context, I would like to stress the important role of Belarusian honorary consuls, who often combine business and politics, in promoting the concept of “integration of integrations”.

Dear honorary consuls of Belarus in Lausanne, Zurich, Lyon and Biarritz, by being present here today, you confirm your strong focus on promoting the whole set of bilateral relations between our countries including economic cooperation. Dear guests, the Belarusian honorary consuls are another operative tool at your disposal.

I would like to express my special gratitude to Dr. Dorit Sallis, Managing Director of the Switzerland-CIS Joint Chamber of Commerce, for your help in organizing our meeting here in Geneva and for signing today the Cooperation Agreements with Belarusian National Agency on Investment and Privatization and National Center of Marketing under my Ministry.

I wish you success in your work. May this evening be full of valuable business contacts.

Thank you for attention.