

New targets have been stipulated; achievement lies ahead

Priorities of 2015 Programme have intensive focus

By Mikhail Kovalev

Belarus is debating a draft project of Basic Guidelines of the Programme of Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the coming years, keeping its traditional goals of improving the quality of life for citizens. Belarus is eager to remain among the top ten states boasting the lowest level of social inequality, alongside such countries as Sweden and Slovenia.

By late 2015, we'll approach the level of developed European states regarding standards of living. GDP per capita in Belarus should reach \$26,000-27,000, growing 11 percent

annually. Of course, administrative measures alone won't ensure this; we need to drive forward the market to achieve our aim. Besides the state sector, a modern private sector needs to be developed, using foreign investments. Our task is to create a barrier-free business environment, governed by the 2015 Programme. Alongside already adopted measures, this should create more liberal business conditions for entrepreneurs.

The major criteria for success over the coming five years will surely be export growth for goods and services, alongside well-balanced and efficient foreign trade. If our exports exceed



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imports by \$1bn a year, we'll certainly demonstrate our increasing international competitiveness to investors.

By 2015, we want to see exports rise from the present \$25bn to \$50-52bn. Perhaps the most complicated task will be the doubling of our agricultural exports (to reach \$5bn), while making them fully profitable. Programmers are likely to realise their task more easily since, over the last five years, they have raised ex-

ports 8-fold, with revenue significantly outstripping that spent on importing IT products. With this in mind, the sector must aim high, raising exports from today's \$200m to \$2bn. Once this is achieved, Belarus' 'Silicon Valley' should equal leading outsourcers in India, the UK and Ireland.

No doubt, our logistics will contribute much to export development. In 2010, exports are set to reach \$3bn. The Suez Canal can hardly cope with the huge

flow of containers from China, so why shouldn't some travel to Brest's warehouses by rail, transiting Customs Union territory.

The success of Belarusian products' promotion abroad relies on integrating exporters' sales networks into large, modern commodity distribution systems of sales and technical maintenance, under the 'made in Belarus' trademark. The establishment of chains of Belarusian hypermarkets abroad is also vital. The realisation of this

major goal requires a shift in the focus of our country's banking system — from crediting imports to crediting exports. Instead of aiding foreign partners in their mastery of tied import credits, our banks must move towards efficient financing of Belarusian exporters, while crediting buyers of our tractors, combines, buses and other manufactures.

Over the next five years, we may start printing our own currency, including minting coins.

Logistics has taken us to Kiev

Santa Bremor actively expanding its presence — primarily, within post-Soviet space

By Victor Mikhailov

The title of this article is, naturally, more understandable for Russian speaking readers. In ancient times, the expression existed: 'your tongue will take you to Kiev'. It meant that an investigative and communicative person could more easily find their way without getting lost. Many years ago, Kiev was known as the centre of the Eastern-Slavonic nationhood. Even little educated people, travelling by foot, were aware of its existence. The present capital of Ukraine was a lighthouse for anyone on a long trip.

Times have changed, with the distance between Minsk and Kiev easily covered by rail or car, in just a few hours. Travelling by air cuts this time even further yet this destination remains less popular among businessmen, in comparison to Moscow. Perhaps it's no wonder: Belarus has mastered the Russian direction more efficiently — for a variety of reasons. Now, the turn of Kiev has come, with economic ties between our two neighbouring states gaining enhanced significance. Interestingly, entrepreneurs have also 'caught up' with this trend. Santa Bremor company — specialising in fish and sea products — is among those which have noticed the attractiveness of this market. The launch of a modern centre of logistics in Kiev, cost-



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Santa Bremor relying on use of high-tech equipment, including the development of logistics

ing \$11m, testifies to its serious intentions. Its 3,000sq.m warehouse complex boasts all necessary infrastructure and equipment, enabling Santa Bremor to successfully supply its goods to Ukrainian shops.

"The construction of a logistics centre in Kiev, operating at 100 percent capacity, isn't our ultimate goal," notes Alexander Moshensky, the General Director of the joint German-Belarusian company, Santa Bremor. "It is an additional support for us, allowing our company to expand, gain access to new areas and guard against possible risks."

Santa Bremor currently supplies just 10-15 percent of its output to Ukraine, so much work lies ahead; in comparison, the company supplies almost 40 percent of its products to Russia. To reduce costs and increase market access, Santa Bremor is also

developing a network of its own warehouses, at home and abroad. According to Mr. Moshensky, this strategy should aid the company's development. Already, the first stage of a logistics centre in Moscow is close to completion — worth over \$13m; the whole complex is requiring around \$30m of investment. Santa Bremor is convinced that the investment should pay for itself, since it supports future prospects.

Santa Bremor currently exports to over a dozen countries worldwide, including Germany, Canada and, even, New Zealand. Its distribution network is ever expanding and, according to the company's managers, efficient logistics enable Santa Bremor to enhance the mobility of its distribution centres, while reducing its own costs. Moreover, despite rising prices for fish and sea products

on the global market, the company has kept its prices affordable.

Santa Bremor is a bright example of business success. It was registered 12 years ago as a free economic zone Brest resident. At first sight, a lack of raw materials may have seemed an obstacle (Belarus has no sea access) but its smart business sense and management, alongside bold decision making have enabled the company to gain a strong foothold. It now produces over a hundred products, ever diversifying. New lines — to produce ice-cream and non-alcoholic beverages — are also developing, and even these non-profile assets are doing well. Certainly, Santa Bremor will conquer new territories in the near future, with Kiev being far from the final stop on the company's entrepreneurial route. Logistics help ensure this path runs smoothly.

Satellites come into view

Mission Control Centre soon to come online, operating Earth remote sensing

According to Mikhail Myasnichikov, Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, a state commission has been established to monitor progress. He notes that it has already begun its work and stresses the importance of Belarus' possessing a fully-fledged terrestrial facility controlling satellites. "We're almost autonomous and independent, working successfully in information transfer and reception," he asserts. He adds that special attention should now be given to preparing Belarusian enterprises to make full use of the data. The forestry industry should find it particularly useful, while emergency situations and the weather will be able to be monitored and forecast more accurately. In addition, satellite data will be used to create cartographic materials. "It's not enough just to receive signals; we must be able to process them and apply the data," he underlines.

The Belarusian satellite will go into orbit with a Russian cluster launch next year. The new space apparatus will be lighter and more manoeuvrable than the previous one, weighing around 400kg. The satellite will ensure space surveillance of the whole Belarusian territory.