

Biogas energy to generate heat

First stage of domestic waste and sewage sludge recycling plant comes into operation in Brest

By Mikhail Feoktistov

Brest's Domestic Waste and Sewage Sludge Recycling Plant, being constructed by Austrian Strabag, is using biogas fuel — generated from silt or sewage sludge fermentation. The latter is pumped from the city's sewage purification facilities to special storage containers.

The Austrians began building the enterprise in the spring of 2009 and, by the time the first stage came into use, Belarusian specialists had passed internships at similar facilities in Western Europe. Today, they are managing the new plant, which Brest needs desperately. Sewage purification facilities in the city suburbs have been overflowing into the floodplain of the Mukhavets River,

running into the Zapadny Bug River and creating ecological problems. Now, gas is being manufactured from the sludge, used as fuel to power three local mini power stations, generating heat and electricity. Biogas is being burnt in a huge cylinder-torch in trial mode, monitored by specialists; they'll determine its heating capacity and opportunities for purification to enhance energy efficiency.

Meanwhile, construction of the plant continues, with the second stage due to be complete by summer 2011; the enterprise will then be able to recycle solid communal waste. The Brest project is a pilot one for Belarus, with Strabag Concern favouring a joint venture to promote similar technologies country-wide.



Specialists from Brest's Recycling Plant measure gas levels

Substantial co-ordination

By Lilia Kosmacheva

Belarusian customs officials to reduce time spent at Customs Union external border

Vladimir Orlovsky, the Head of the Belarusian State Customs Committee's Customs Control Organisation Office, has told Belarusian and Russian journalists in Minsk that over 20 percent of goods imported into the Customs Union are controlled using the preliminary information system, reducing time spent on border crossing. Customs inspection is currently organised via a risk analysis and management system, reducing the number of inspections by more than 5-fold (on 2005). It brings subjective decision making to a minimum at the border.

The Chairman of the Belarusian State Customs Committee, Alexander Shpilevsky, stressed during a press conference that Belarus and Russia have been building the Customs Union for over 10 years already, boasting serious achievements in improving speedy crossings. As far as Kazakhstan is concerned (the third country of the Customs Union), there are difficulties in information sharing. According to Mr. Shpilevsky, the sides have agreed to mutually exchange information with Kazakhstan from January 1st, 2011. Accordingly, next year, Kazakhstan is likely to join the customs information sharing system of the Customs Union.

Facilities to efficiently combat rust

First Belarusian HD galvanizing plant for large-size metal construction to appear in Lida district next year

This significant investment project is sited in the Lida district, at Grodnoinvest FEZ, with a new company coming into operation next December; it aims to satisfy domestic needs, while also exporting. "It is to be a one hundred per-

cent import-substituting facility," stresses Prime Minister Sergei Sidorsky. "Our country currently lacks a plant able to protect metal constructions from rust by HD galvanizing. We only have specialised workshops at certain factories, so are obliged to place such orders abroad, paying with foreign currency. Meanwhile, Belarusian enterprises need about 120,000 tonnes of HD

galvanizing a year. Growing volumes on our national market have inspired us to consider opening our own facility, creating 130 new jobs."

The project is to use technology developed by the National Academy of Sciences, using original solutions which meet ecological standards, ensuring the local environment won't suffer. Powerful air purification filters will create a

high degree of protection, in addition to zero waste water.

According to calculations, the project should pay for itself within 6-7 years. Lida's facility — alongside a similar plant being built in Rechitsa — will provide HD galvanizing for up to 70,000 tonnes of metal constructions a year. As a result, import-substitution will exceed 25m euros annually.

Aster against red background and orchid against orange

By Vladimir Metelsky

Railways to compete against mini-buses and personal cars while launching new format for passenger transportation

Our railway has some ambitious plans. By 2015, Belarusians will have access to a European level railroad, offering business and economy classes, various travelling speeds and a principally new classification of lines.

"The new format envisages a comprehensive system of passenger transportation using progressive technological solutions and contemporary rolling stock," stresses Anatoly Sivak, the Head of Belarusian Railways. "It aims to strengthen ties between regions, offering speed, mobility, comfort and, of course, availability. The market for railway passenger carriage will be classified between international,



Renovation of railway transport is a reality

regional, inter-regional and city lines. The latter will be divided depending on class of comfort and the package of corresponding services offered."

Journalists present at the briefing were shown information on the seven new lines, each defined by a different colour and flower emblem. For example, an aster against a red background is to be depicted on city lines, while an orchid against orange is to indicate international business

class. International economy class will have a tulip against yellow while a crocus against blue will be the sign for regional business class. This rainbow of colours will be reflected in the colour of trains and in the uniforms of engine drivers and guides. Already, work is underway to complete the transformation.

"Infrastructural sites between Minsk-Passazhirsky and Zhdanovichi are being actively constructed and reconstructed. To accelerate

passenger boarding and deboarding, the height of platforms is to be raised to reach that of trains. Platforms will also be equipped with roofs and pedestrian tunnels laid. Near Minsk-Severny railway station a pedestrian tunnel will be built, connecting it directly with Molodezhnaya metro station," explains Mr. Sivak.

What do the railways hope for in radically changing the level of comfort, speed and availability of rail transport? Firstly, they aim to make ticket prices cover 100 percent of costs. Secondly, they plan to seriously compete against mini-buses and, even, private cars. New schedules and flexible tariffs will make many people reconsider how they travel: burning petrol while standing in traffic jams or travelling in comfort, while reading newspapers or surfing the Internet from the train.

Technology of modern indexes

By Yekaterina Nechaeva

Belarus plans to raise economic innovation index ranking within 'Europanel'

Belarus' State Innovative Development Programme for 2011-2015 plans to embrace the 'Europanel' method of calculating economic innovation. At present, Belarus' index stands at just 0.3 percent, against 0.31 percent in Lithuania and 0.29 percent in Poland. Sweden boasts an index of 0.63 percent. In the 'Europanel' country rankings, Belarus currently occupies 25th place. According to Igor Voitov, the Chairman of the State Science and Technology Committee, by 2015, the republic should reach an index of 0.48 percent, increasing its attractiveness to investors.

Mr. Voitov notes that funding within the new programme is to rise 4.5-fold, with the number of industrial organisations of the 5th and 6th technological mode forecast to grow 2-4 times. By 2015, our positive foreign trade balance should stand at 0.5-0.6 percent of GDP.

Strategy won't undergo changes

Energy Minister Alexander Ozerets asserts that Belarusian nuclear power station should come into operation within scheduled time, even if new construction partner is chosen

Belarus is negotiating with several world companies to construct its nuclear power station, including those from France, Japan and South Korea. Partnership with Russia hasn't been discounted but reliability, efficiency and security are the criteria which must be met, stresses Mr. Ozerets. He notes that legislation has been prepared to develop nuclear power in Belarus, "Everything needed has been already written; we're already aware of what to do and how."

He believes that a comprehensive approach is vital in solving issues relating to the nuclear power station and the choice of our strategic partner: security and reliability at the nuclear power station must meet IAEA standards. He assures us that the nuclear power plant will be built and become operational on schedule, even if our strategic partner changes. "Companies exist who are able to put a nuclear unit into exploitation within 44-45 months, rather than 60 months," he notes.