

Planning joint action while paying attention to circumstances

By Ignaty Averianov

Priorities of Collective Security Treaty Organisation discussed in Minsk by CSTO Council of Defence Ministers

The sitting was chaired by Belarus' Defence Minister, Lieutenant General Yuri Zhadobin, with the participation of CSTO General Secretary Nikolai Bordyuzha. The realisation of decisions adopted at

the CSTO session last December was high on the agenda.

The participants discussed the CSTO's areas of responsibility, placing special emphasis on Belarus' initiatives. In particular, the parties discussed how best to provide the Collective Rapid Response Forces with the latest weaponry and equipment. "We hope a relevant programme will be launched soon," stressed Mr.



Sitting of CSTO Council of Defence Ministers

Zhadobin. "Unified response to emerging challenges and threats, with simultaneous use of available potential (military and political), will help us to preserve the CSTO's ability to guarantee security for its member states."

Mr. Bordyuzha explained that member states met this May for a

joint business game. It helped form a plan of action to prevent and resolve hostilities within the CSTO's area of responsibility. He believes it revealed not only strengths but weaknesses. Mr. Bordyuzha asserts that, this year, all efforts are focused on training of CSTO forces for various crisis situations. The

organisation is also considering liaising with the UN in peacekeeping operations.

Taking part in the CSTO Defence Ministers Council session were the heads and deputy heads of the defence ministries of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Anti-crisis measures take social protection into consideration

Government outlines plan of action to ensure balanced economic development

By Vyacheslav Liberov

The Council of Ministers' official site (www.government.by) has published a decree outlining a plan of action to ensure the balanced development of the economy, under the changed conditions of the Belarusian Rouble's official rate. According to the Deputy Prime Minister, Sergei Rumas, some actions — such as raising pensions from June 1st — are already being realised. A further recalculation is to follow on August 1st and November 1st.

Non-cash housing subsidies are envisaged for families with low incomes, whose expenses for housing and community utilities exceed 15-20 percent of their income. The Government proposes to increase local budgets for state targeted assistance, with unemployed persons' training allowances rising and employers being subsidised for their professional training of workers who are under threat of dismissal or who are in their first job. Other measures of social protection include subsidising state organisation canteens and the purchase of medicines, as well as compensation for the additional expenses of recuperating children at camps.

The financial part of the plan envisages the updating of budget figures for 2011, to ensure deficiency of no more than 1.5 percent of GDP. Emissive crediting for state programmes is to be cut by no more than 4 percent of GDP. More-



Brest's company with Polish capital — Black Red White — has well thought-out market strategy

over, the Government plans to review construction and financing of housing accommodation in 2011, taking into account the number of developers already observed in each region and Minsk. Financing of the State Investment Programme is to fall by 30 percent.

The Government plans serious measures to protect the domestic consumer market, ensuring that consumer goods' prices are comparable with those in neighbouring states, promising social protection of the population. Duties on alcohol and tobacco are to be optimised, matching rates in Russia,

while constant monitoring of retail prices on consumer products is to be conducted, with prompt action taken regarding unfair shop pricing.

Among the measures aimed at regulating the currency market, the Government proposes to allow taxes and fees to be paid in foreign currency, alongside fuel at fuelling stations, hotel services, tourist and educational services, and the purchase of property and cars. Privileges on the obligatory selling of foreign currency are supposed to be abolished for entrepreneurs.

The plan also envisages steps

to eliminate price disproportions caused by rising energy prices. In particular, tariffs on electricity and heat energy for companies and individual entrepreneurs are to be indexed. Retail prices for oil products (sold domestically) are to be optimised, to eliminate price disparity with neighbouring states. Tariffs for city and railway transport, inter-city transportation and communication services may be reviewed.

By late 2012, citizens should be covering 30 percent of their housing and community utilities' cost, with tariffs rising in two stages.

Venture companies coming to regions

Number of innovatively active enterprises could reach a thousand in four years' time

The Council of Ministers' 2011-2015 State Innovation Development Programme for Belarus envisages major growth among innovative enterprises, with supportive infrastructure being developed. With this in mind, a Scientific-Technological Park specialising in nano-, biotechnologies and pharmaceuticals (Biograd) is to be set up and the High-Tech Park shall operate in multifunctional mode.

At present, there are 40 research and development centres and holding companies in Belarus, with their number set to reach 60 in five years' time. The number of technology transfer centres is to increase from 35 to 45, while the number of technological clusters will nearly double. Belarus will have three venture organisations instead of one, in addition to 15 engineering organisations (currently, ten) and 30 design organisations (up from 25). The number of business incubators will rise from 9 to 20 and the number of scientific-technical libraries, including those belonging to factories, will reach 500. New innovative centres are to be established, including informational and marketing centres, as well as those overseeing on-the-job training and career development.

The Belarusian Innovative Fund will continue its operation while two other specialised organisations are to be set up, to finance innovative projects. The former has been assigned additional functions relating to the financing of venture projects. According to the State Science and Technology Committee, there are plans to deploy a modern network of regional venture companies and funds in Belarus. The creation of venture companies in Minsk and regions will allow utilisation of local scientific, technical and manufacturing potential. Belarusian experts are now busy studying how best to attract foreign capital for such projects.

Counteracting challenges on a global scale

Belarus calls upon international community to establish new global partnership to protect interests of young people

Belarus voiced the initiative at the annual session of the Executive Board for the United Na-

tions Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/United Nations Office for Project Services. Discussing the Executive Director of the UNFPA's report, Zoya Kolontai — the Deputy Permanent Representative of Be-

larus to the UN — stressed the significance of the Fund's active involvement in solving youth problems. Participants focused on Belarus' initiative — *Contributing to the Prosperity of Future Generations*, which aims to counteract such threats as drugs, alco-

hol and violence.

In the near future, the Belarusian delegation is to participate in discussing UN financing, advocating the allocation of available resources to projects which meet the national interests of Belarus and other UN member states.