

Constructive atmosphere for meeting

Presidents of Belarus and Russia meet in Sochi

According to information agencies, Alexander Lukashenko and Dmitry Medvedev chatted for about two and a half hours, critically assessing the state of Belarusian-Russian relations and stating that they could be improved upon to meet the status of a strategic partnership. Certain problems were mentioned, with the heads of state convinced that solutions must be found in the near future. The presidents have agreed to take practical steps to restore a high level of partnership between our two countries, from this meeting onwards.

Mr. Lukashenko especially remarked on the need to ensure a fully-operational Single Economic Space for Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia from January 1st, 2012. Belarus has borne serious expenses on joining this project but the Single Economic Space will be essential to create equal conditions for citizens and companies in member states. The Russian President agreed with this position.

The heads of state consider it necessary to activate relations between Belarus and Russia within the Union State. They have preliminar-

ily agreed to organise a Union State Supreme State Council meeting in November.

The discussion also tackled the construction of a nuclear power station in Belarus, with the Head of Rosatom Corporation, Sergey Kirienko, ordered to ensure the signing of all necessary agreements regarding construction and loans in September. These are to follow the scheme and terms used by Russia in the Kaliningrad Region.

Continuing their talks at a recent OSCE informal summit, Mr. Lukashenko and Mr. Medvedev tackled the topic



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of this organisation's efficient functioning. They also discussed issues within the international arena, debating in detail prospects for our

countries' co-operation with Ukraine.

The Belarusian President also told his Russian colleague in detail about the

Belarusian delegation's visit to Qatar and the resulting agreements, while explaining prospects for collaboration with Venezuela.

Partners wish to use reserves for further obtaining of mutual benefit



By Vasily Velikhov

Belarus hopes to shift to national currencies in trade with China

A swap agreement worth \$3bn was signed with Beijing back in 2009, called a breakthrough in our two states' relations by experts — especially taking into consideration the

instability of the global financial market. However, the mechanism is yet to become operational — due to lack of experience and excessive caution from Chinese partners regarding the use of Yuans in foreign trade turnover and to sluggishness from Belarusian officials. A recent sitting of the Council of Minister's Presid-

ium has now set measures in place for the coming months, to help change the situation.

The pace of Belarusian-Chinese trade co-operation has outstripped all expectations, with the goal of raising volumes of mutual trade to \$2bn fulfilled two years ahead of time; in 2010, our turnover stood at \$2.5bn. From January-May 2011, Belarusian-Chinese trade in goods and services reached \$1.2bn. However, the Government is eager to improve on this further.

Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister, Anatoly Tozik, tells us that documents are now being prepared to create favourable conditions for the successful realisation of several major investment projects,

with the establishment of a Belarusian-Chinese industrial park being the largest of them. At least \$1bn of direct Chinese investments should be attracted; an intergovernmental agreement is due to be signed this September.

Belarus is also to construct Lebyazhy residential suburb, using Chinese funds. This year, the building of a five-star hotel complex and multi-purpose information, trading and business centre — called China Town — is to begin. The Chairman of Bellegprom Concern, Gennady Vyrko, has announced that, soon, representatives of Chinese companies are to arrive in Minsk to negotiate investments into the modernisation of Orsha Linen

Mill and the linen branch as a whole.

Some existing joint projects are being realised more slowly than was hoped, so are to be facilitated, including those in the transport sphere and relating to Minsk National Airport's development. At present, over ten major projects are underway with the participation of Chinese partners, whose credit support stands at \$4.5bn. Not long ago, Minsk's TPP-2 was launched after modernisation, with TTP-5 now almost ready. New technological lines for cement production are being installed, while the Chinese are also to invest in developing Svetlogorsk Cellulose and Cardboard Plant.

Promo film headed for YouTube

Film about Belarus' tourism potential being prepared

A tender is soon to be announced to select a company to produce a one-minute film. The project is open to advertising agencies and all other interested companies, with cost being the major criteria, alongside the experience of the designing company. An outline of the film must be submitted, with the winner later co-ordinating with the National Agency for shooting. The film will be used during seminars and conferences featuring foreign guests and is to be posted on the websites of Belarusian embassies and video hosting services, including YouTube.

Response to sanctions is a compelled measure

By Vitaly Antonov

Decision made to suspend Belarus-US projects to exchange highly enriched nuclear fuel

Andrei Savinykh, the Head of the Information Office and the Press Secretary of Belarus' Foreign Ministry, has informed on Belarus' retaliatory measures in response to US sanctions. He states, "The new US economic sanctions go against the spirit of co-operation and teamwork. Under these conditions, Belarus has decided to freeze projects to exchange highly enriched nuclear fuel — developed together with the US

as part of the US Department of Energy's Global Threat Reduction Initiative. The MBA project at the Belarusian State University will also be suspended." Meanwhile, Belarus will remain committed to its international non-proliferation obligations.

Mr. Savinykh underlines that Belarus condemns the US economic restrictions as ungrounded and unjustified. "These are politically charged decisions which contradict the international commitments of the United States," he adds. "The move by the US is a blatant violation of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum which bans the US from using

economic duress against Belarus. The US has broken the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act, which binds all states 'to refrain from any act of economic coercion designed to subordinate to their own interest the exercise by another participating State of the rights inherent in its sovereignty,'" he says.

The official representative of Belarus' Foreign Ministry notes that the Republic might reciprocate. In his view, if the United States stops using economic coercion against Belarus and restores normal relations, co-operation on these projects will be resumed.

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