

Profound issues gain special focus

By Vitaly Volynsky

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko discusses prospects for mastering new potassium salt deposits with Head of Boule Mining Group, Jean-Raymond Boule

The Luxembourg-registered Boule Mining Group has been showing interest in Belarusian deposits since last year. Involved in the mining of nickel, diamonds and titanium ore worldwide, it is now interested in Belarus' potassium salts.

Mr. Lukashenko met Mr. Boule in July, outlining his position, "You can make promises but, I'd like to tell you here and now that, if new companies appear, ready to start working tomorrow, we'll work with them. We'd like our agreements to be concrete and scheduled in a business-like manner."

It seems Boule Mining Group promptly reacted to the President's comment, with its heads recently arriving at his Residence with detailed proposals. Mr. Lukashenko stressed that several investors are already showing interest in developing new potassium salt deposits, explaining the reasons for such enhanced interest, "The market for potassium fertilisers is on the rise. All large market participants say the same thing. Growing consumption and demand for food are

contributing to rising fertiliser prices. It's certainly a very profitable business for our state."

The President asked Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikovich — who also attended the meeting — to work promptly with the investors. "Vitaly, we must not hamper the process. New deposits should be developed by those investors who propose the best terms," he said.

A similar focus is being applied to the possible sale of Belaruskali shares. "We'll sell to those who offer the higher price if we need to sell shares in our major enterprise," Mr. Lukashenko noted. Speaking of Belaruskali, he added that its assessment has been completed, with Sberbank of Russia confirming its previously announced value of \$30bn.

The President is keen to see a single approach applied to all investment projects. "Everything should be honest and open, conducted via tender. The best conditions and the best proposals will be immediately accepted," he emphasised.

After the meeting, Mr. Boule noted that the dialogue was constructive, explaining, "We consider that there is a favourable climate for investing in Belarus. Boule Mining Group is negotiating a multi-billion Dollar project with the Government, to invest in the mining industry."

Results of activity and tasks for the future

Belarus' National Academy of Sciences hosts International Scientific-Practical Conference — *20 Years of the Commonwealth*



20 Years of the Commonwealth conference

By Dmitry Petrovsky

Belarus' Prime Minister, Mikhail Myasnikovich, read a greeting letter on behalf of the Head of State, addressing the scientific forum. He noted that, over the past five years, more advanced integration associations have taken shape within the CIS, originating from the Commonwealth. These enable each of the eleven member states to choose a proper format of integration, in addition to bestowing certain advantages and obligations. Without any supranational authorities and almost without a budget for development, quite a few procedures have been set up to aid decision implementation. The CIS is well known globally, while many useful joint projects are being

implemented.

The conference gathered official representatives from CIS member states, heads of Commonwealth bodies, prominent public and political figures and scientists. They joined representatives of business and financial circles to analyse the situation within the post-Soviet space in the smallest detail. Economic interaction was studied, while a special sub-section was devoted to co-operation in the field of science and innovative development. The humanitarian sphere also came under focus, as did legal issues of collaboration.

On the eve of the conference, an analytical report was prepared: *Results of CIS Activity Over the Past 20 Years and Tasks for the Future*. The report

showed, as conference participants agreed, that the Commonwealth has played a key historical role worldwide and regionally, politically and economically. It greatly contributed to solving the most complicated problems following the USSR's collapse, while assisting sovereign states in establishing themselves. The CIS has aided the preservation and further development of historically established ties within the post-Soviet space while supporting trade-economic relations under market conditions. Constant political dialogue and multi-sided interaction in almost all spheres have been established.

The Commonwealth has endured a tough journey, having to keep expectations realistic while searching for the

best forms of co-operation and adapting its institutions and mechanisms to the needs of multilateral interaction. It now boasts a working system of charter and branch bodies, in addition to basic organisations within different spheres of interaction. The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly has been established and an inventory of legislation has been conducted, producing the Single Register for CIS Legal Acts. Necessary procedures have been developed to oversee its working while its mechanism of election and referendum observation has been refined. Multi-format and multi-level co-operation have been established, presupposing flexibility and the ability of member states to reach consensus. In 2007, the CIS Further Development Concept was adopted, becoming an important stage in the organisation's development.

It was stressed during the forum that, over the two decades of its existence, the Commonwealth has become a unique regional interstate organisation, jointly solving shared problems relating to trade, security, politics, humanitarian co-operation and migration. Meanwhile, ties have been carefully nurtured between CIS members. Proposals voiced during the conference have been included into its final document, to become a guide for the future improvement of CIS mechanisms.

Fruitful meetings in New York

Belarusian delegation head — Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov — takes part in political discussions at UN General Assembly's 66th session

In particular, Belarus chaired an informal meeting of CSTO member states' foreign ministers. Representatives of delegations discussed their co-operation within the organisation, while focusing on issues concerning the coordination of CSTO member states' positions with



the UN agenda. A Belarus-initiated statement regarding CSTO states' position

regarding international security and disarmament was also agreed at the First Committee of the 66th session of the UN General Assembly.

Mr. Martynov co-ordinated the second annual meeting of the Group of Friends United Against Human Trafficking. The latter was created following Belarus' initiative in 2010 and, at present, unites 21 countries from all over the world. At the meeting, opinions were shared regarding the

Group's future actions to fulfil the Belarus-initiated Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (which the UN General Assembly passed in 2010). Participants of the meeting also adopted a declaration which will be distributed as an official document of the UN General Assembly.

On September 27th, Mr. Martynov delivered a speech during political discussion, as part of the UN General Assembly's 66th session.

Initiatives to find support

Belarus proposes ways of supporting talented young people, at Ministerial Meeting of Alliance of Civilisations' Group of Friends — held as part of the UN General Assembly's session

The Belarusian delegation was led by the Head of the International Organisations De-

partment at the Foreign Ministry, Vladimir Pavlovich. He reported on Belarus' efforts to maintain intercultural and interreligious dialogue, drawing special attention to the Belarusian initiative within the UN to recognise diverse ways of achieving progressive development.

As part of the Belarusian

initiative within the UN to promote the prosperity of future generations, Mr. Pavlovich urged the Alliance to discuss ways of supporting talented young people, expressing willingness to co-operate more closely in this field.

Attending the meeting were representatives of 47 states and international or-

ganisations, who discussed the main priorities for the Alliance's future activities. They also tackled the topic of national efforts to combat religious and cultural intolerance, while member states of the Alliance of Civilisations' Group of Friends spoke in favour of building a UN programme activities in this area.

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