

Scanner sees everything, as do customs officers

The Kozlovichi customs clearance point (part of Brest Customs Service) tackles up to 80 percent of the cargo transported between the Customs Union and the European Union. Accordingly, it recently launched a stationary inspection device to x-ray cargo. This allows vehicles to be processed quickly, without the need for individual close-hand inspection.



Chief inspector of Brest Customs Service Dmitry Drobot supervises the work of stationary x-ray scanning device for cargo inspection

By Valentina Koverina

“Brest Customs Service has a two-sided task: to process cargo as quickly as possible; and to identify prohibited goods,” explains the head of Brest Customs Service, Leonid Dosov.

Russia and the EU are keen to see Belarusian customs form a reliable shield, protecting against smuggling across the EU and the Customs Union: across West and East. China has allocated around \$4m of free assistance to install

and service the first stationary scanning system for large-haul vehicles on

Instalment of the x-ray scanning device along the western border of the Customs Union is the next huge task being undertaken by Belarus' State Customs Committee. A complex programme for the development of road checkpoints is running from 2011 to 2015, with much achieved last year alone

the western border of the Customs Union (the first of its kind). The new device allows for more thorough inspection and can process up to 15 trucks hourly,

working day and night.

“Previously, we had to unload a vehicle if we were

in any doubt, calculating the cargo and comparing it against the documents submitted by a driver. This is no longer necessary, as operators can view high-quality

x-ray pictures to decide whether additional inspection is needed. It takes us

just 3-4 minutes to adopt a thoroughly thought-out decision,” notes Mr. Dosov.

During the scanning process, any ‘suspicious’ vehicles are sent to the x-

ray box, where 6 megaelectronvolts scan the cargo; it's even easier when the vehicle has steel sides (up to 30cm) rather than tarpaulin. Importantly, safety rules are adhered to, with crash gates and an infrared barrier. If anyone steps in, the x-rays automatically stop, so there's no real cause for concern. Meanwhile, food, cosmetics and medicine's quality are unaffected. He explains, “Our x-rays do not even influence electric appliances or transport vehicles.”

The device was trialled for several weeks, during which time customs officers detected illegal cargoes on their way to Russia: alcohol, food and flowers. “A similar device is to be installed on the railway, to scan cargo transported in containers,” Mr. Dosov tells us.

Instalment along the western border of the Customs Union is the next huge task being undertaken by Belarus' State Customs Committee. A complex programme for the development of road checkpoints is running from 2011 to 2015, with much achieved last year alone. The State Customs Committee's Press Service tells us that Domachevo checkpoint, built on the Polish border, is now operational. Peschatka checkpoint is still being built while Privalka (at the Belarusian-Lithuanian border) and Grigorovshchina (at the Belarusian-Latvian border) are being modernised, with similar plans for Verkhny Terebezhov (at the Belarusian-Ukrainian border) and Urbany (at the Belarusian-Latvian border).

The results are evident: after the Domachevo and Kozlovichi cargo terminals came into operation, processing capacity rose to 28,000 vehicles daily (against 24,000 in 2010). This enables Belarusian customs officers to work quickly and thoroughly, while reducing the time spent in queues.

Mobile medical consultation

There are three ways to make appointment with a doctor. You can go to a polyclinic or phone ahead, as most elderly people tend to do. Those who are Internet savvy can book online but Minsk's 19th central district polyclinic has taken the idea even further, offering appointments via the mobile version of the Internet.

“Of course, it's been possible to make an appointment using a mobile phone for a while,” says the Deputy Chief Doctor of the poly-

clinic, Gennady Misyachenko. “However, the large volume of information made downloading slow; old mobile phones found this particularly difficult.”

Now, the mobile version of the webpage is synchronised with the registration desk's database, making the process much easier. Around 10-15 patients in the district use the option daily, choosing appointments with particular doctors at their own time of convenience. However, only twenty per-



cent of all time slots are available online, so that elderly people are not disadvantaged. “The system shows how many places are available for a certain doctor,” adds Mr. Misyachenko. “You then make an appointment personally or by phone and are told if any appointment is cancelled.”

Patients returning to healthy and normal life

By Svetlana Savkova

Belarusian surgeons conduct first simultaneous heart and kidney transplant

The Cardiology Republican Scientific and Practical Centre hosted the 11 hour operation, with two brigades of cardiology surgeons working to transplant a donor heart to a 30 year old man. Later, colleagues from the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre for Organs and Tissue Transplantation undertook his kidney transplant.

According to Belarus' chief cardio-surgeon, Yuri Ostrovsky, the operation went ac-

ording to plan; it has taken a year to find a suitable donor, as the transplantation of two or more organs requires each to be in perfect condition — even more so than for a single transplant. The patient's heart and kidney condition was such that a single transplant would have been unsuccessful and thus wasteful. His heart condition didn't allow the transplant of a kidney alone, while his kidney was almost useless, requiring dialysis three times a week (artificial cleaning of the blood). However, he is now stabilising and should be able to return to a usual ward with time.

Simultaneous double

transplants are still rare worldwide. Russia recently achieved its first, explains Mr. Ostrovsky. He tells us, “We began our preparations almost at the same time but our Russian colleagues managed to find a suitable donor earlier.” He hopes that such combined transplantations will become more common in the future. Among the most difficult combinations are heart and liver, and heart and lungs; both are now on the agenda for Belarusian surgeons.

Belarus currently leads among CIS countries for the volume of transplants achieved: 241 in 2011.