

# Moving towards safe nuclear power engineering development

By Dmitry Krotov

Preliminary works are near completion at the construction site near Ostrovets, with final infrastructure for Belarus' first nuclear power station being finished. The schedule is being strictly adhered to, while international consultations on the project are continuing — with neighbours and on a wider scale.

Any country's decision to build a nuclear power station is, undoubtedly, its own internal business. However, Belarus is also joining a 'club' of countries using nuclear power, which makes the project global, bringing attention from the whole world.

Naturally, the International Atomic Energy Agency is keen to follow Belarus' plans. In fact, our country is one of the founders of the organisation, which currently unites 153 states. We have experience of liaising with the IAEA in connection with Chernobyl problems but, of course, this is a new context.

IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano's visit to Belarus ended with meeting President Lukashenko. On warmly welcoming his guest, the Belarusian leader noted, "I'm very concerned to see nuclear energy in use, as it is the most secure and the safest way to generate cheap energy — as needed worldwide."



Meeting of President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko and IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano

Recent events in the guest's homeland have, unfortunately, undermined trust in nuclear power, as Mr. Lukashenko noted sincerely, recalling the reaction of some states towards the disaster at the Japanese Fukushima station. Several have curtailed or ceased their nuclear programmes but many are still eager to develop the area further. According to Mr. Lukashenko, Belarus is among them. He stressed, "During this pe-

riod, we firmly and unanimously declare that we won't just declare our intention to construct a nuclear power station; we've already begun."

The project has special importance, being implemented in the country which has most suffered from Chernobyl. However, progress must march on. Today, plans to construct the Belarusian station are supported by most of the Belarusian population: an

important sign.

"I believe that the IAEA organisation is extremely interested in similar secure projects being realised worldwide. Accordingly, we hope that Mr. Amano, like previous heads of this agency, will provide us with serious moral assistance in the construction of our nuclear power station. If we have this, with support and corresponding conditions, we'll even be ready to construct a second nuclear station in

Belarus," added Mr. Lukashenko.

Later, speaking to journalists, Mr. Amano responded to the President's words by saying, "The IAEA doesn't dictate how many nuclear power stations should exist in any country. Each state chooses independently, deciding whether to construct a nuclear power station. However, if a country does build a nuclear power station, it should be done in the most secure way. In this con-

text, the IAEA can provide its services."

In a conversation with the President, Mr. Amano named Belarus as a very important partner. Although the Chernobyl experience is negative, it provides an extremely valuable lesson to the world's nuclear energy industry and has been useful in solving the current problems following the Fukushima disaster. Of course, we must learn from the past. The guest mused, "Each country needs to develop its power engineering while improving the quality of life for its population. In this respect, the decision to use nuclear energy is vital."

Mr. Amano believes it's very important that Belarus takes responsibility for ensuring a higher level of security and transparency for its project. He stresses that each nation must bear responsibility for meeting nuclear safety laws. However, the IAEA can help in this respect; an IAEA integrated mission is to be sent to Belarus to assess infrastructure for the nuclear power station. Mr. Amano explains, "In sending the mission and organising meetings, we'll be able to see that nuclear power engineering is being used safely by the country. We wish to observe the protection of nuclear sites long-term."

Such co-operation coincides with the expectations of Belarus.

## Work continues along natural path

### Both chambers of National Assembly gather for regular sessions

By Vladimir Vasiliev

This is the House of Representatives' tenth session and the eighth for the Council of the Republic. The parliamentary pre-election campaign is kicking off, with the day of voting yet to be announced. However, the Chair of the Central Election Commission, Lidia Yermoshina, tells us that the date could be anytime from June (until September 23rd at the latest). Parliament will then reconvene in autumn.

As emphasised by the Chairman of the House of Representatives, Vladimir Andreichenko, existing deputies and senators have a duty, alongside the Council of the Republic and the Government, to 'define the main issues needing solution, in order to close this session beautifully and worthily': words echoing the wishes of the President. He has assured them that this builds the foundations of the

Lower Chamber's activity. The Council of the Republic's Speaker, Anatoly Rubinov, sees the restoration of public spending power as the main task and has urged his fellow parliamentarians to keep in mind the wishes of citizens. Speaking in the Oval Hall, Mr. Andreichenko added, "It's especially important to achieve open dialogue with people, hiding none of our problems. We must show what the authorities are doing to improve standards of living; this is our action plan for the forthcoming election campaign."

Naturally, both chambers are tackling relations with the EU. Mr. Andreichenko believes that a policy of sanctions contradicts logical partner relations and could have negative consequences. "Such steps contradict the basic interests of the citizens of Belarus and the EU, and the fundamental principles of international relations. They prevent us from enjoying calm Belarus-EU



Opening of House of Representatives' session

dialogue," he noted.

The House of Representatives is to study 52 issues this session — covering various aspects. In all, 14 draft laws are having their first reading while another 18 are having their second and 16 tackle the ratification of international agreements. The list will expand as draft laws which are currently being studied by permanent

commissions reach their final preparation and co-ordination stages.

According to Mr. Andreichenko, the Law 'On State Innovative Policy and Activity' will be given great consideration, as it aims to support small and medium-sized businesses, stimulating innovation. Economic issues are a priority, being studied through the prism of the Customs Union and

the Single Economic Space. Meanwhile, state social support will also be hotly debated.

On their first day of work, at its first reading, a draft law 'On Commercial Secrets' was adopted, allowing employees who disclose company secrets to be dismissed (a completely new situation). Additionally, a draft law 'On Changes and Supplements to Some Laws of the Republic of Belarus on Issues of Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues' was adopted. This allows Belarus to establish a single register of those opting out of the system of automatic approval for their organs to be donated after death. As the Health Minister, Vasily Zharko, explains, organ and tissue transplantation is developing rapidly in Belarus, making the law one of great importance.

At their first reading, changes and additions were made to Belarus' Code on Mineral Deposits, simplifying the procedure whereby deposits gain permission for mining — increasing their investment attractiveness and mining efficiency.