

Waste removal can be beautiful

Private company removes almost half of Minsk's communal waste

By Irina Feliksova

Many of Minsk's courtyards now boast neat plastic containers instead of rusty iron boxes, collected every day by 'Remondis' trucks. The company won a tender to remove the city's rubbish (once the prerogative of state communal services) less than two years ago. Now, Remondis Minsk (a branch of the famous German firm involved in processing secondary waste) has captured a large share of the Belarusian 'waste pie'. It cannot yet boast high profits but is optimistic for the future.

Driving in white

A large, white MAN waste collecting truck enters a spacious Minsk courtyard, full of dignity and beauty. The driver's and passenger's doors open and two men jump out, heading for the bins, which they push to the rear of the vehicle. There's no noise or dirt. In Western-style, it's a scene common to many Minsk courtyards now.

In 2008, Remondis decided to expand its activity

in Eastern Europe, focusing on Ukraine, Russia and Belarus. The General Director of Remondis Minsk, Ingo Tausch, admits that, when the company was joining the local market, it was clear that long term investment was needed to generate real profit; patience was necessary.

The company concluded a framework agreement with the Minsk City Executive Committee to service three districts: Moskovsky, Frunzensky and Oktyabrsky. These account for half of Minsk's territory, while housing 45 percent of the capital's residents. State-run Spetskommunavotrans services other districts. In addition to residential courtyards, Remondis has another 1,200 clients: firms, kindergartens, schools, hospitals and polyclinics. Its fleet numbers just ten vehicles but these worthily rival fifty in terms of efficiency. Old Soviet-style waste collecting trucks can load 17 cubic metres of waste, while a single MAN vehicle can collect almost 6-times



Trucks with 'Remondis' logo become recognisable for capital's residents

more (100 cubic metres) — approximately 100 containers. A single trip to a waste ground cleans the city of 20 tonnes of communal waste and, during a shift, the crew loads and unloads the truck twice. The machinery produces little noise and can work almost 24h a day.

"Just look: all the trucks are clean," notes Vitaly Romaneiko, who manages the production. "These are rear loading, with waste held inside by special curtains; accordingly, we have no complaints from yardkeepers about 'escaped' rubbish. The old waste collecting vehicles raised containers 4m in the air so, when the wind blew, waste could flutter away. Moreover, containers could fall onto whoever was operating the truck. The new vehicles are much safer, as they don't raise the con-

tainer as far."

The only problem is that it can be difficult to access courtyards when cars are parked close to each other, disregarding traffic laws. Accidents can occur (such as when vehicles have to mount the curb) and only relatively small-sized MAZ vehicles can gain access to some territories.

Two Euro waste

Six hundred branded plastic containers on wheels have been distributed. These don't rust and there's no need to paint them. Moreover, they're light, can be easily moved and have covers. Being yellow, they certainly stand out. All collected waste is then sent to Ekores company.

It's too early to speak of profitability; like other communal enterprises, the company is experiencing a loss at present. "The only source of income is the tariffs regu-

lated by the Minsk City Executive Committee. Last year, they rose several times but were still surpassed by costs. "We're striving to optimise our logistics — as most of our expenses arise from there: fuel, drivers' salaries and repairs. We're now studying the issue of raising tariffs for companies, as we'd then make a profit. However, this is an intermediary period, as prices for car components and fuel are changing all the time. As a result, we are only catching up with increased expenses by raising tariffs," explains Mr. Tausch. "We hope the city understands simple arithmetic: if you pay 2 Euros a year for having your waste removed, there's little prospect for such business to develop."

Waste and revenue

The expansion of its market share and a wider list of services could be the

answer. Initially, Remondis planned to work in the Belarusian regions but the aggravated economic situation 'froze' these plans. In the first half of 2012, Remondis Minsk plans to launch a complex to sort secondary waste; according to calculations, this could partially cover the company's logistics-related expenses.

"To develop the system (not only waste collection but secondary processing), we require legislation. In Germany, each district has its own charter covering the rights and obligations of operators working in the field of removing, processing and disinfecting waste," notes Mr. Tausch. Sadly, Belarus has nothing of the kind. Moreover, the country lacks any schedule for tariff growth and such financial vagueness hampers the private company to prognose its revenue.

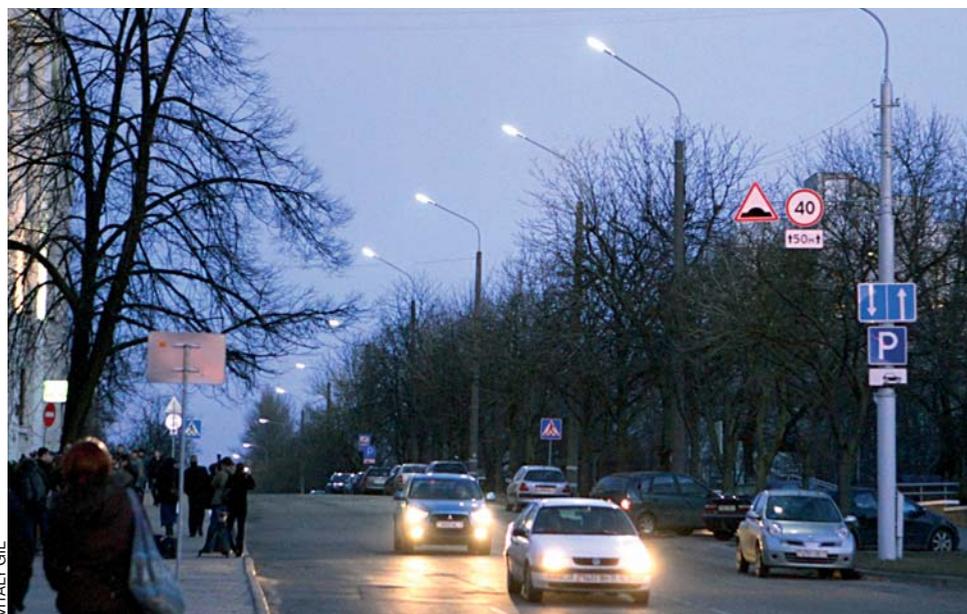
Bright illumination for big city

By Tamara Rogova

Minsk street gains LED illumination

Akademicheskaya is the first Minsk street to use LED illumination, with energy efficient Phoenix lamps installed (developed by the National Academy of Sciences' Centre for LED and Optoelectronic Technologies jointly with Philips). In all, 26 lamps are installed in Akademicheskaya, each having 72 LED modules. "This is a pilot project but I'm convinced it'll lead to LED lamps being used on other streets and avenues — probably chosen by tender," says the Chairman of the National Academy of Sciences' Presidium, Anatoly Rusetsky. He adds that the Centre is ready to provide the best quality test-proven lamps for streets.

Arjan de Jongste, CEO of



Light-emitting diode street lamps in Minsk's Akademicheskaya Street

Philips in Russia and the CIS, stresses that the technology is cost efficient, saving 40-50 percent of energy. According to the Director of the National

Academy of Sciences' Centre for LED and Optoelectronic Technologies, Yuri Trofimov, the use of LED street lamps should save up to 60 percent

of energy. "The existing lamps consume 175W of energy but our new 114W lamps provide the same illumination. Meanwhile, the programme cuts

energy consumption at midnight by another 50 percent — consuming just 57W," he explains.

The new street lamps in Akademicheskaya should last 15 years and are expected to pay for themselves within five and a half years. As the National Academy of Sciences notes, LED products manufactured and sold in the first two years have already paid for themselves in saved electricity (having been paid for from state funds).

The Centre joined Philips in developing street LED modules in 2009 and, in 2011, mass production of unique LUXEON-based LED modules began at the National Academy of Sciences — known as Phoenix.

At present, the Academy produces a range of models for such street lamps.

More orders to come

By Nikolay Zhdanov

Gomselmash Production Association dispatches first grain harvesters to Kyrgyz' Avtomash Radiator JSC

Gomselmash specialists have arrived in Bishkek to conduct pre-sale preparation of vehicles, while training local drivers and technical personnel. Importantly, field results and consumers' wishes will be used to inform the next stage of work.

Gomselmash was recently visited by several firms operating with Kyrgyz capital — including Composite Group JSC and RadiatorLAND JSC — who are keen to see a trading house set up in Central Asia.