

# Everything following agreed and well-coordinated plan

President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, makes second official visit to Belarus

By Vladimir Yakovlev

Mr. Berdymukhamedov spoke sincerely of Turkmenistan's interest in collaboration with Belarus, saying, "You have many high-tech enterprises here, so we'd like to borrow from your experience." He has invited Belarusian companies to aid in the modernisation of the Turkmen economy.

The potential for joint activities is endless, with Turkmenistan boasting huge deposits of oil and gas. Of course, the country's leadership realises that it must shift from the direct sale of hydrocarbons to highly developed industrial manufacture. Belarus would be a reliable ally in this respect, being an acknowledged world leader in the processing of potash salts. Minsk's Belgorkhim-prom has agreed with Turkmenkhimiya Concern to set up Garlyk mining facilities, able to yield up to 1.5m tonnes of fertilisers annually. The price of \$1bn sounds quite significant but Belarusian expertise seems worth it.

Alexander Lukashenko told his Turkmen colleague, "Belarus is ready to share everything Turkmenistan finds interesting." In proof, he noted the number of students from Turkmenistan in Belarus: almost 6,000 in secondary special and higher education (including 30 paid for by Belarus). Hundreds of Turkmen students are studying the science of extraction and processing of potash salts — knowledge which may be more precious than any technol-



Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov and Alexander Lukashenko during official meeting in Minsk

ogy. Such educational liaisons are the result of previous top level agreements, following Mr. Lukashenko's visit to Ashgabat around a year ago. At that time, the presidents agreed to meet every 12-18 months to assess how agreements were being fulfilled.

The recent meeting looked at how best to encourage trade-economic, sci-tech and cultural relations, attracting business co-operation at all levels — including small and mid-

dle-sized businesses. On the eve of Mr. Berdymukhamedov's visit to Minsk, a large group of top ranking Turkmen managers arrived in Belarus, touring the National Academy of Sciences, as well as enterprises, ministries and departments. Final amendments were made to almost 15 documents on co-operation: later signed by our two presidents. These cover the supply of Belarusian agricultural, road, construction and communal machinery, and fleets

of urban transport. In addition, there are agreements regarding co-operation in geodesy, map making, satellite data collection and education. Construction of industrial and housing facilities, as well as social infrastructure, is planned, as is sci-tech co-operation by our national academies of sciences. Similar documents have been signed by representatives of agrarian ministries, chambers of commerce and industry, and a range of universities.

Clearly, science and education are a major focus, indicating that Belarus has no secrets from its Central Asian partners. Of course, the documents signed in Minsk will promote further turnover growth — thought to be far from reaching its limit.

Meanwhile, on returning home from being educated in Belarus, thousands of young Turkmen graduates should become 'ambassadors' for our state, promoting all-round friendly

relations for years to come.

Our two presidents have agreed on supplies of Belarusian agricultural, road, construction and communal machinery to Turkmenistan, signing a corresponding agreement. Additionally, Belarus has proposed setting up an educational institution in Turkmenistan to train middle-management specialists (a project being actively developed by the education ministries of our two countries).

The visit has also resulted in a joint Belarusian-Turkmen communiqué regarding mutual interaction and assistance within international organisations — including tackling human rights issues. Belarus and Turkmenistan advocate further strengthening of collaboration in co-ordinating the battle against human trafficking and other global problems — including ecological. Turkmenistan is even offering assistance to Belarus in establishing interaction with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (promoting Belarus' application for observer status).

The Turkmen President's visit was intensive, including a tour of the Belarusian State University. BSU Rector Sergei Ablameiko has awarded the title of BSU Honorary Professor to the high guest, for his great contribution to the development of science, bilateral Belarusian-Turkmen relations and strengthening of cultural and educational ties. Mr. Berdymukhamedov also invited Mr. Lukashenko to visit Turkmenistan.

## Eurasian Union has time factor

By Tatiana Polezhaeva

**Answering journalists' questions during a visit to Chernobyl-affected regions, Alexander Lukashenko noted that Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia are experiencing no real contradictions regarding the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union**

"There are no fundamental disagreements, so we'll form the Eurasian Union in 2015 for sure," underlined Mr. Lukashenko. He noted that Belarus and Russia hold similar views on the establishment of the Union. "The issues Russia and Belarus can handle independently and the issues relating to the sovereign rights of our countries should not be under the jurisdic-

tion of the Union. We should not delegate all sovereignty-related matters to the Eurasian Commission — a supranational body which is still weak. We're able to handle these issues on our own while coordinating them with Russia and Kazakhstan," believes the Belarusian leader. He said that Kazakhstan had serious objections to that. "However, it's important that Kazakhstan assured that it would sign the agreement by 2015 for sure. It is a breakthrough decision. Therefore, the Eurasian Union will be definitely established in 2015," stresses the President. "There are no fundamental disagreements; however, there're certain time frames," added the Head of State.

Mr. Lukashenko noted that he plans to discuss these issues with

President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev during his forthcoming visit to Belarus. The Belarusian leader said that the two presidents are going to control the implementation of the bilateral agreements. According to him, Belarus takes part in 30 out of 35 Kazakh modernisation programmes. Belarus not only supplies machinery to this country but is also going to take part in agriculture development projects. According to Mr. Lukashenko, Kazakhstan would like to study Belarus' experience. "We're ready to construct agrotowns, supply machinery and reclaim farmlands: we can do a lot and we can share our expertise and knowledge in farming with our Kazakh friends," noted the Head of State.

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