



Alexander Lukashenko affirms to Ilham Aliyev intentions of further development of relations with Azerbaijan

Character of friendly relations

By Vasily Kharitonov

Mr. Lukashenko has many times spoken of the especially friendly character of the relations of our two states and our two leaders. In proof, he personally met the top Azerbaijani guest at Minsk Airport.

The two presidents first discussed areas of bilateral co-operation — in a narrow and then extended format. Mr. Lukashenko reaffirmed his commitment to further promoting relations with Azerbaijan in all spheres. “You’ve arrived in a very friendly country, where you are loved and respected for the great efforts you made (unconventional at times) to support Belarus in its time of need, during independence. Belarusians are aware of this,” noted the Belarusian leader.

He underlined that Belarus and Azerbaijan have no topics which need to be avoided. “We’ll always respond to any question you may ask and to which Azerbaijan needs a response,” Mr. Lukashenko emphasised.

Mr. Lukashenko underlines that meetings with his Azerbaijani colleague have already become a tradition, helping the fulfilment of agreements. President Aliyev views our liaisons so far as having excellent results: joint ventures, rising bilateral trade and success across various areas. He noted, “We’re glad we’ve managed to make our own contribution to solving issues of importance to you. The character and essence of our relations envisages mutual support. If one of us needs a shoulder, we should always be ready to lend that support.” He believes that our nations’ twenty years of relations have given proof enough of our strategic partnership.

The two leaders are keen to analyse our countries’ existing successes and to outline new projects and initiatives. The President of Belarus is eager to see these liaisons develop in almost every area since ‘Belarus and Azerbaijan have no political contradictions.’ He asserted, “We have similar viewpoints on acute problems of international relations so can successfully co-operate within international organisations.” He also noted the fact that the two states target dynamic economic development, aimed at raising living standards for the population. “We have absolutely no aim to collaborate against anyone. We have only one goal: to do all we can to improve life for our people,” added the Belarusian President.

Speaking of interaction in the economic sphere, the Belarusian President pointed out that our trade turnover neared \$1bn last year; although it is rather less this year, Mr. Lukashenko is confident that it can return to its former level. He noted, “Last year, Belarus and Azerbaijan saw impressive results in foreign trade but we need to go further. It’s vital that we don’t lose our intensity of interaction.” He refers primarily to the implementation of major joint projects and the development of investment and sci-tech collaboration, since these significantly reinforce and promote relations.

government programmes and those which are industry-wide. He pointed out that joint ventures in Azerbaijan have already done well, manufacturing tractors, trucks, municipal vehicles, optical devices and LED lamps. The production of wheeled tractors and MAZ buses dominate new areas of co-operation and, in 2011, assembly enterprises accounted for about 40 percent of Belarusian exports to the country.

Mr. Lukashenko is confident that his meeting with Mr. Aliyev will herald a new stage in our bilateral relations, promoting further avenues of interaction. “If we continue to promote our re-

an Azerbaijani delegation will be soon touring several such sites in Belarus.

The two presidents approved their intention to develop interaction in producing medicines and developing IT while joint manufacture of Belarusian buses in Azerbaijan is also foreseen.

Mr. Aliyev thanked the Belarusian leader for supporting Azerbaijan in the international arena: particularly, during Azerbaijan’s promotion within the UN Security Council. “Political relations between our two countries are characterised by a high degree of dynamism. Within a short period of time, we’ve achieved a great deal,” noted the Presi-

sional conditions for the expansion of leasing activity has also been signed.

Summarising the results, Mr. Lukashenko noted that the talks were held in narrow and extended formats and were very productive. He confirmed Belarus’ commitment to implementing joint ventures in the sci-tech sphere while helping train Azerbaijan’s specialists if needed. In turn, Belarus hopes that Azerbaijan will also share its knowledge.

“With Heydar Aliyev, we laid the foundation of collaboration between our countries. Back then, I couldn’t even imagine that we’d advance so far in our mutual relations. Over the past decade, we’ve achieved more than with any other country,” noted the Belarusian leader. He underlined that no problems have existed in our relations: only challenges to be solved.

To honour the high guest, an official dinner was held, at which Mr. Lukashenko presented Mr. Aliyev with the Order of Friendship of Peoples. Mr. Lukashenko noted that it is bestowed upon a limited number of politicians: those who make a considerable contribution to developing the Belarusian state and expanding ties. “This historical award is a tribute to you and to all the people of Azerbaijan,” asserted the Head of State.

Mr. Aliyev gave his thanks for the high award, saying, “I’ll do everything I can to bring our countries and nations ever closer.”

Mr. Lukashenko characterised negotiations as intensive and productive, as proven by new proposals to expand Belarusian-Azerbaijani co-operation in many areas. These will be discussed in detail in autumn, when Baku will be hosting a delegation from Belarus.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, Belarusian companies are ready for joint activity, providing services in the sphere of oil extraction. Belarus can also ensure the supply of top geophysical and drilling equipment.

Co-operation in the investment sphere is another area of interest to both nations. Mr. Lukashenko is offering Azerbaijan favourable terms of investment and business launch in Belarus. “If Azerbaijan is interested, it will receive the best terms in Belarus, since we know each other well and Azerbaijan has never let us down. You’re aware of our careful and reverent attitude towards foreign investments, especially those concerning the privatisation of Belarusian enterprises.”

Azerbaijani investment projects are currently being successfully implemented in Belarus in the spheres of logistics, trade and public catering but Mr. Aliyev is confident that this can be expanded further. He asserted, “This area of interaction is still at its initial stage but the results are positive so I’m sure that not only private companies but state-owned should invest more actively in Belarus, serving our common interests.” He added that, at present, Azerbaijani companies are involved in many investments abroad.

Belarus and Azerbaijan have outlined prospects for development of production co-operation and the expansion of direct supplies. Mr. Lukashenko notes that Belarus expects support for joint ventures, including

lations at the same rate, our neighbours will have reason to envy us,” noted the President of Belarus.

The President of Azerbaijan believes that our two states could expand trade turnover via power engineering and expansion of sales volumes of goods and services. He is convinced that enterprises set up in Azerbaijan jointly with Belarus have good prospects for development and for promoting their goods to third countries. He explained, “I think that our relationship is distinctive in having definite endeavours and in solving every issue which arises. We enjoy a high level of dynamism, content and predictability. Vivaly, our mechanism of fulfilling adopted decisions is of the highest quality. Everything agreed is seen through: new manufactures and expansion of existing production facilities, as well as new prospects and new ideas.” He applauds the dynamic character of our sci-tech and humanitarian liaisons and the long-term contracts signed by our two nations’ scientific circles. Collaboration continues to expand in medicine and education while the number of Azerbaijani students studying in Belarus is ever rising.

Belarus is to implement a pilot project to construct 45 houses, while collaboration in agriculture is also likely, since Azerbaijan is keen to learn from Belarusian experience in this area. Mr. Lukashenko has also offered to construct a dairy farm in Azerbaijan — like those in Belarus; accordingly,

dent of Azerbaijan. Mr. Aliyev has also invited Alexander Lukashenko to visit Azerbaijan at any convenient time, to which he has accepted. This will provide another opportunity to analyse achievements to date and outline further paths of development.

The negotiations resulted in the signing of a range of documents, which expand co-operation in the legal sphere, healthcare and justice. An intergovernmental agreement on the creation of favourable legal, economic and organi-

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