

Great yet achievable plans

On meeting Gazprom Chairman Alexey Miller, in Minsk, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko states that co-operation between Belarus and Gazprom JSC has reached new heights

By Veniamin Mikhailovsky

"I'm delighted to note that we no longer need to start a new year awaiting an agreement on volumes or natural gas prices. I think we won't see any more acute problems in this sphere," Mr. Lukashenko noted to Mr. Miller, who confirmed, "In fact, we're focusing on plans for the future and these plans are great."

According to the President, Belarus-Gazprom co-operation has reached a new level. "We've been discussing several joint projects with Gazprom and you may have some new suggestions. Regarding earlier projects of co-operation, mutually satisfying avenues have been found, which we can discuss further as needed, although no problems exist," he said.

"We're really pleased with Gazprom's more daring investments into Belarus, which we support fully, as they're profitable for us," stressed Mr. Lukashenko, adding that such liaisons are also profitable for Gazprom. "Let's talk about these projects and outline our future collaboration in this field," he emphasised.

Mr. Miller thanked the Belarusian Head of State for the opportunity to visit the Belovezhskaya Pushcha and Brest Fortress this August. "I was greatly impressed by Brest Fortress; we've decided to restore its south-eastern barracks, performing major repairs and organising an



Gazprom Chairman Alexei Miller at meeting with President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko

exhibition there. We'll help Brest Fortress, providing finance and all possible aid," he stressed.

Sharing his impressions of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Mr. Miller said, "I'm lost for words. Everything is magnificent. I love picking mushrooms and enjoyed myself greatly, collecting a basket of king bolete within half an hour. The environment there is just fantastic. It has a special energy, with

air pure enough to drink. You can breathe freely, with total pleasure."

After meeting with Mr. Lukashenko, Mr. Miller told journalists that Gazprom is eager to build a multi-functional centre in Minsk, uniting its ventures operating in Belarus under a single roof. "In particular, we've spoken of building a very large modern multi-functional business centre, to include health and fitness facili-

ties and a hotel — available to residents of Minsk and Belarus," Mr. Miller noted. Jointly with Minsk City Executive Committee, work is due to commence on architectural plans, with Mr. Miller stressing that the building would be designed to add to the beauty of Minsk, while meeting modern requirements.

Mr. Miller also spoke of an agreement to fund the construction of a block of

flats suitable for large families. In co-operation with Minsk City Executive Committee, the company is also to finance the construction of an interchange on Nezavisimosti Avenue. "We've mapped out some major plans relating to all areas of co-operation — including the development of Belarus' gas transmission system, increased transit through the country's territory and joint social projects," Mr. Miller

added.

He notes that co-operation in using gas-engine fuel has been discussed. "We've already signed a protocol with the Belarusian Government on joint work in this field, with the President's full support. I think, jointly with the Belarusian Government, we'll create a joint action programme very soon," he stressed. "Gazprom will provide investments and natural gas while the Belarusian Government and municipal authorities will ensure consumption. Certainly, transport should use gas-engine fuel," Mr. Miller remarked. He believes that MAZ and KamAZ could liaise in this area, saying, "KamAZ has a very good line-up of vehicles which use gas-engine fuel."

Importantly, Gazprom also plans to increase its transit of gas via Belarus, as Mr. Miller noted, "At present, we consider it possible to increase Russian gas transit via Belarus by 30 percent. Corresponding instructions for a feasibility study will be given and a document developed jointly with the Belarusian Government. I think we'll begin work in 2013." According to Mr. Miller, the entire forecast workload for Belarus' transit facilities should be fulfilled this year. "We'll transit 44.5bn cubic metres of gas. At today's meeting with the President, we discussed co-operation in this area."

New technologies save time

Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikovich opens logistics centre in Kolyadichi industrial zone that will improve cargo deliveries

By Yury Beregov

By 2015, the existing ten logistics sites in the Republic will have been joined by another thirty. The first stage of a major site, being constructed using Azerbaijani investments, is to open by the end of this year.

According to Mr. Myasnikovich, trade and logistics centres use the latest technologies to significantly simplify processing and dispatch. Conveniently, clients can also load several different types of goods simultaneously. Such centres are to become an indispensable part of domestic industry, helping enterprises export goods promptly, responding quickly to orders.

According to the PM, importers are spoilt for choice



Kristall trade and logistics centre already operational

so Belarus needs to offer superb service and convenience to provoke interest. Naturally, quality must also be offered at

good value for money to ensure success on foreign markets. Mr. Myasnikovich notes, "Belarus should build export

chains via logistics networks here and abroad. It's vital that we use our geographical opportunities, as well as our production potential, to join foreign trade chains, actively promoting our goods."

Taking into account market trends, the PM has asked enterprises to double their exports in 2013; a positive foreign trade balance is sought by next summer. Stanislav Iodis, Director General of Minsk Kristall, notes that unique storage conditions are allowing loading time to be reduced. Goods can be stored to 16m (compared with the usual 8-12m) and at least 250 vehicles can be loaded daily, with each taking no more than half an hour to load (compared to 3-4 hours previously).

NEW DIMENSION

www.belarus-magazine.by