



Head of states take part in Ashgabat CIS Heads of State Council session

Belarus takes on CIS chair

Ashgabat hosts session of Commonwealth of Independent States Heads of State Council

By Vasily Kharitonov

On the eve of the session, foreign ministers met to discuss humanitarian issues and collaboration in the field of culture, sports, tourism and environmental protection. Security matters were also in the spotlight. Practical aspects were on the agenda of the CIS Heads of State Council session; these included preparations for the 70th anniversary of the Soviet People's Victory in the Great Patriotic War. An international CIS programme of solemn commemorative events is planned, while an honorary order and medal devoted to the anniversary is to be created.

Some issues of economic collaboration were tackled, with heads of state discussing the formation of an integrated currency market and interaction in the field of communication and informatisation. Several agreements relating

to security were prepared for signing: the establishment of a council of heads of subdivisions of financial reconnaissance; training for anti-terrorist sub-divisions; and material provision for those involved in battling terrorism and extremism. A united CIS anti-missile defence system was also discussed. The heads of state worked energetically and in high spirits, agreeing all issues.

Alexander Lukashenko's working schedule began with bilateral talks with the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov. The two heads of state are happy with existing inter-state co-operation and the wonderful relations between our two nations but are convinced that further development is possible, extending current business and artistic projects. Mr. Lukashenko thanked Mr. Berdimukhamedov for the recent performance of Akhal-Teke

horses in Minsk, assuring his colleague that Belarus is a reliable and responsible partner, whose specialists will fulfil all obligations to construct a potassium facility at the Garlyk mining facility.

Before the launch of the summit, Mr. Lukashenko also met his Ukrainian colleague,

The presidents agreed to jointly celebrate the 70th anniversary of Victory, within a plan of national programmes. The CIS Cultural Capitals inter-state programme is to be continued, as approved by a corresponding decree. The CIS will devote 2013 to ecological awareness and envi-

ronmental protection, while creating an integrated foreign currency market, aiming to open a wider financial space to foreign operators. A package of documents was accepted to ensure security. The presidents listened to reports from the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and agreed that this useful avenue needs further development. Importantly, a decision was made on major procedural issues, with Belarus taking over the CIS presidency from Turkmenistan next year. Mr. Lukashenko assured his colleagues that Belarus will work tirelessly to the benefit of the CIS community. He noted that Belarus has always supported integration — in various forms — and reminded everyone that Belarus has been a steady supporter of the CIS and its further strengthening. Mr. Lukashenko voiced a slogan for his country's presiding over the organisation next year: 'Integration for the benefit of all people: strengthening of good neighbourly relations; development of ecological co-operation; and expansion of cultural dialogue.'

By the end of 2012, Belarus will have prepared a con-

cept for its chairmanship and a plan for its realisation. The President voiced its major directions: the development of our common information space; the strengthening of inter-cultural and inter-ethnic co-operation; the expansion of contacts between scientists, artistic circles, veterans and young people; and the realisation of projects in the field of ecology and environmental protection. He emphasised, "We'll proceed from the interests of all CIS member states. The presidency of the CIS was approved by all states, showing that CIS heads of state support Belarus' position. The Council adopted a declaration on the further development of the CIS' multi-sided co-operation, as proposed by Turkmenistan. All sides agreed that this has worked efficiently to date and that fruitful work is expected from Belarus, fulfilling our policy of integration within the post-Soviet space."

Alexander Lukashenko:

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Viktor Yanukovich, discussing our two states' interaction and Ukraine's liaisons with the Customs Union. An extended session of the CIS Heads of State Council then followed, organised promptly owing to preliminary preparation of the agenda.

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Good school for law makers

House of Representative deputies and Council of the Republic members recently gathered at the Oval Hall for a seminar entitled 'Law Making Processes in the Republic of Belarus'



Live discussion helps studies

By Ignaty Alexeevsky

It aimed to inspire the new convocation in its work and, of course, 'new' deputies benefit especially. Naturally, the Constitution describes all details of legislation and can be learnt by heart but discussion is always a more effective method.

Addressing all present, the Chairman of the House of Representatives, Vladimir An-

dreichenko, noted that voters expect laws to be useful and well-considered, reflecting the modern needs of our innovative economy. Dialogue between the law making institutions and, importantly, between deputies and voters, needs to become more efficient. Mr. Andreichenko specified, "In practice, we are yet to reveal the potential of such avenues as parliamentary hearings and

extended sessions of standing commissions (including with participation of scientists and public figures). We need to use the Internet more widely, placing the most important laws on our sites and organising public discussion."

The Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Valery Mitskevich, believes that Parliament is responsible for the topicality of adopted

laws and their viability. Deputies need to think creatively in response to our changing society, with the law reflecting the needs of today's complicated public relations.

Around 60 draft laws are currently being studied, with work beginning on another 30 next year. The Director of the National Centre for Legislation and Legal Research, Vadim Ipatov, notes that most are initiated by the President and the Council of Ministers, with only a few initiatives received from deputies. A shift in this ratio would add authority to Parliament, so standing commissions should give this some thought.

Importantly, Parliament plans to ensure that all draft laws are passed within a year of their first hearing, to avoid them becoming outdated and needing almost immediate amendment; naturally, this wastes time.