

Business circles prepare for extensive expansion

Since 2009, Belarus and Serbia have been united by an agreement on free trade, allowing Belarus to enter other Balkan and Southern European states through this country. In return, the Serbian economy receives direct access to the market of the Customs Union, including Russia and Kazakhstan, with a population of 170m people.

By Vladimir Khromov

Of course, we can always build upon existing opportunities and the shift from trade to high-tech production is natural. Our presidents recently discussed these issues, with Mr. Lukashenko also meeting a Serbian delegation the next day, accompanied by Belarusian business circles, headed by Belarus' Trade Minister Valentin Chekanov, who co-chairs the Belarusian side of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Serbian Commission for Trade-Economic Cooperation. Also in attendance was the Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mikhail Myatlikov.

President Tomislav Nikolić invited Belarusians to take part in joint projects, saying, "Friendship between the presidents of our states is a guarantee



MAZ plans to deliver over 100 vehicles to Serbia this year, worth 10m Euros

for success. We'll do everything to reliably protect your investments. Let our collaboration cross all areas of the economy, setting an example for the rest of the world. Come to Serbia!"

What avenues of interaction are possible? Serbia is rich in fruit, so juice production in Belarus could be an option. Meanwhile, joint production of automobile tyres at Bobruisk's Belshina could

prove profitable, using Serbian press tools. Minsk Automobile Works (MAZ) plans to supply over 100 vehicles to Serbia in 2013 — worth over 10m Euros. The President of Serbia has toured the MAZ plant to see production first hand, viewing the major assembly line for trucks, including those meeting EURO-4 and EURO-5 standards. Mr. Nikolić inspected a wide range of machinery, including buses, crane

trucks, grain carriers and trailers, after which he wrote in the visitor's book.

Speaking to journalists, MAZ's Acting Deputy Director General for Foreign Economic Ties, Vitaly Goncharik, noted that the Balkan market holds great potential. Over the past eight years, almost \$20m of goods have been dispatched to Serbia, including over 200 trucks (road and construction), alongside buses. Since 2010,

MAZ assembly facilities have been successfully operating in Serbian Kragujevac and, this year, the Belarusian enterprise plans to expand its model range.

Real opportunities exist for co-operation with Belkommunmash enterprise in Minsk. In 2010, it delivered over 80 trolley buses to Belgrade. Its Director General, Yury Klemyato, notes, "We're ready to continue these supplies and to organise joint as-

sembly of trolley buses in Serbia. We'll also offer our trams and are ready to begin construction of infrastructure for electric transport. I'll soon be flying to Belgrade to discuss these issues."

Meanwhile, the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is soon to organise a trip to Belgrade for a group of Belarusian entrepreneurs, at the invitation of the Economic Chamber of Serbia.

Mr. Nikolić also laid a capsule into the foundations of the Mayak Minska (Minsk Lighthouse) trade centre, containing a message for our descendants; Serbian businessmen are injecting around \$400m into this joint project.

In addition, apartment buildings are being built, covering 600,000 sq.m along Nezavisimosti Avenue, at the Moscow-Minsk end. A multi-storey business centre is also to appear nearby, in addition to other community facilities. This is the new face of Minsk and of Belarusian-Serbian friendship. Mr. Nikolić underlines, "The construction branch plays a significant role in strengthening relations between Belarus and Serbia. Serbian companies need to take more advantage of the opportunities offered by our free trade treaty."

During his visit, the Serbian President discussed prospects for economic co-operation with the Prime Minister of the Belarusian Government, Mikhail Myasnikovich.

Energy of light to be reflected in megawatts

First solar electric power plants being built in town of Bragin in Gomel Region

By Tatiana Pastukhova

Solar power has been viewed as no more than a gimmick by Belarusians for a long time. Nevertheless, Canada, Japan and Germany have long been using solar power to generate electricity and, in fact, our first solar electric power plant will launch this August.

In Bragin — the sunniest region of Belarus — the first megawatts of electricity are to be produced from sunlight, thanks to an Irish

investor providing 15 million Euros for the project. Originally, it was planned to construct generators near the town of Komarin, 50km from Bragin, but the construction site had to be changed. "There are two electrical substations, so we planned to set up everything there," explains the Deputy Chairman of Bragin District Executive Committee, Piotr Romanyuk. "However, it was prohibited to generate energy there; due to its proximity to Ukraine."

How will the plant look? An area of nearly 20 hecta-



tares will be fully fenced and have a video surveillance system. High columns will be fitted with

solar panels, with many mirrors set around them to maximise the reflected sunlight. According to Mr.

Romanyuk, it will actually emphasise the most beautiful landscapes of the Bragin District.