

Border should be locked

President Alexander Lukashenko notes concern at border leniency, allowing cases to go unpunished

"It's not because we don't see what's happening but we are being too sympathetic," said Mr. Lukashenko, on receiving a report from the Chairman of the State Border Committee of Belarus, Alexander Boechko. The Head of State is convinced that a tighter regime is necessary on the Belarusian border, especially as Belarus holds responsibility for part of the outer border of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. "It's no excuse to say that we protect our own border and land no worse than they do. We should not focus on the worst. The border should be locked," stressed the President.

Mr. Boechko has reported on moves to improve operations at the border and direct measures taken at checkpoints in response to border violations. Meanwhile, the President has tasked the border service with developing a programme of technical modernisation to create an integrated system of state border protection, including new border infrastructure; this work will be conducted by the State Border Committee jointly with the government.

Far arc markets

By Vasily Kharitonov

Belarus is looking for new export markets far abroad, inspiring President Lukashenko's recent visit to Indonesia, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates

Speaking of his recent visits, Mr. Lukashenko asserts that Belarusian products are in demand, as proven by the conclusion of relevant agreements. He stresses, "The main purpose of the visit is to create new windows in this far foreign arc, working with countries in the region."

The President notes that Belarus is liaising with Vietnam to gain entry to the markets of Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and other countries in the vicinity. Belarus is also co-operating with China and is making efforts to gain a foothold on the Indian market. As for Indonesia and Australia, Belarus is just launching itself in these countries; the President notes that both are showing keen interest in Belarusian goods.

"Why do I travel there? Because when the President heads a delegation of ministers and business leaders, they have access to any official or minister in the host country. I can take them by the hand and lead them into rooms straight away, rather than them having to build a relationship for a year or two," admits Mr. Lukashenko. He emphasises that the visits have produced specific contacts and project agreements.

As for Singapore, the President underlines its riches, saying, "We believe that investors from Singapore have enough money and are interested in Belarus. We simply need to introduce ourselves." Talking about the UAE, Mr. Lukashenko tells us that an agreement has been reached for Belarus to offer five or six projects (still to be chosen) for investment.

Stadler gains momentum

Stadler Rail Group is making a significant contribution to the development of relations between Belarus and Switzerland, noted President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, on meeting the company's CEO, Peter Spuhler



Swiss electric trains already admired by railway transport passengers

By Vladimir Khromov

He praised the latest joint investment project, which is producing Stadler passenger rail and urban electric transport in Belarus, in liaison with Belkommunmash over the next four years.

"I didn't expect us to so quickly agree and I'm surprised at your urgency to launch production in Belarus. We'll make sure that we promptly solve all issues set up before the Belarusian side," stressed the Head of State, emphasising that the trains and rolling stock produced will fulfil domestic needs and allow export.

Mr. Lukashenko notes the importance of the Stadler Rail Group, which is a leading European manufacturer of railway rolling stock, with goods sold within Europe and the USA. Its modern Swiss electric trains are already known in Belarus, as ten were purchased in 2010, following a tender, operating on city and regional lines.

"Accordingly to our agreement, we've already begun production of passenger rail and urban electric transport in the Minsk Region," stressed the President. "It's expected that, this year and next, we'll be manufacturing Belarusian electric trains and trams to rival those made in Switzerland. As

far as I know, we're on schedule but, if there are any questions, please let me know. I'm personally overseeing the construction of the plant."

Mr. Lukashenko stressed that he is ready to listen to offers from the Swiss regarding the acceleration of bilateral agreements and noted the importance of the project receiving no delay. "The sooner we launch the site, the faster it will bring benefits to the Swiss company and to Belarus," he said.

Mr. Lukashenko has ordered the Government and Belarusian Railways to create a line connecting the capital with Minsk National Airport. "We need to study existing railway lines

and branches without delay," he asserted, believing that this will significantly expand the airport's usefulness. He added, "More people will use the airport if it's easy to travel out from and reach. Currently, it's quite problematic." He also noted that existing railway lines should be taken into account and funds diverted from other state programmes if necessary, to ensure that the airport is catered for. He believes that an airport link can be achieved at reasonable cost if wise planning is undertaken and that a line could be operational by late 2014 — early 2015.

The Director General of the Swiss Stadler Rail Group, Mr. Spuhler, estimates that the new line making passenger rail and urban electric transport in Belarus will be ready to launch by October-November of this year. He notes that the first double-decker trains for Russian Railways are to be ready by December 2014 and thanked the President for the opportunity to discuss the project, which he believes is running well. He underlined, "I came not to reveal problems. We feel the active support of the Government and the Minsk Region's leadership and have managed to solve two or three small problems very quickly."

Mr. Spuhler also notes that winning the tender to supply Russia with trains has been significant and is delighted that they'll be assembled and produced in Belarus. "I think this project is of great importance for Minsk. At the Belarusian plant, we'll be able to produce not only electric trains but double-decker trains," he explains.

During the meeting, mutually beneficial expansion of co-operation between Belarus and Stadler Rail Group was discussed.

Most active rewarded



Partners find common ground at Italian-Belarusian forum

Entrepreneurs from Italy show interest in establishing joint ventures with Belarusian businessmen

"We're interested in selling Italian products on the Belarusian market, as well as organising a joint venture," emphasised the Vice President of the Salerno Province Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Antonio Ilardi, speaking at the recent Belarusian-Italian Investment Forum. Mr. Ilardi tells us that the joint project involves the agro-industrial complex and is at an advanced stage of implementation, relating to food production. In addition, a consortium of Italian manufacturers

has been formed, aiming to open retail outlets in Belarus. Mr. Ilardi noted that his organisation has established a prize for the most promising new Italian investment project in Belarus, offering funding to start up, including market research of local conditions.

At the Belarusian-Italian Forum, a tripartite memorandum on mutual understanding was signed between the National Agency for Investment and Privatisation, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Salerno Province and Intertrade Company. The parties intend to establish permanent co-operation to promote Italian investments in Belarus.



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