

Co-operation driven by mutual interest

By Vladimir Khromov

Belarus ready to discuss expansion of Russian oil and gas supply

On meeting the President of NK Rosneft JSC, Igor Sechin, and the President of NK Russ-Neft JSC, Mikhail Gutseriev, President Lukashenko notes that Belarus is ready to discuss expanding supplies of Russian oil and gas.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, no obstacles exist in developing co-operation with these companies. He emphasised, "If terms are favourable, better than other companies are offering, we'll take a bigger volume of oil for processing. We have no problems at all. As for supplies of oil products, let's negotiate these issues together. You're aware of our oil refineries, which are unlikely to have any problems."

Mr. Lukashenko has proposed that the Russian enterprises join in chemical industry ventures. "We have a good range of petrochemical products, alongside experience and traditions in the production of nitrogen fertilisers. You have 50bn cubic metres of gas which you don't sell overseas. I think, here, within the Union State, we could reach an agreement. You could have some 3bn cubic metres processed if we build a new plant. A site has already been prepared, so you could supply gas. We could agree on corporatisation of the plant and on exports, which would benefit us economically," said the Belarusian leader, adding that, if necessary, he is ready to discuss this topic with the Russian President.

"There are plenty of other projects too," stressed the Head of State. "We're ready to open the door for you. We want you to work here efficiently and, of course, lucratively. Importantly, we should enjoy slightly better terms than other companies. I think you'll be able to interest Belarus as you produce such large volumes of oil and gas. Moreover, major development projects are in the pipeline."

Mr. Sechin thanked the Belarusian President for his personal attention in the projects and noted that Rosneft is already working in Belarus, supplying around half of the oil being processed at Belarusian oil refineries. "I absolutely confirm that the principles guiding us in our work with strategic Belarusian partners are trust, mutual respect and consideration of mutual interests. We are ready to fully share profits with our partners and create long-term projects," Mr. Sechin asserted.

Future reinforced by past

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko pays official visit to Armenia

During his visit, Mr. Lukashenko negotiated with his Armenian colleague, Serzh Sargsyan, discussing a range of bilateral relations and agreeing to activate co-operation in various directions. The presidents primarily focused their attention on development of economic contacts and expansion of bilateral trade, as well as the implementation of joint industrial and infrastructure projects involving investments and the launch of contemporary technologies.

"Belarus and Armenia are interested in deepening relations across all areas. We have no closed areas of co-operation — from agriculture to military-political issues. However, at the current stage, our main priority is the development of economic contacts and the expansion of bilateral trade. We need to jointly search for new forms of economic interaction, including the implementation of joint industrial and infrastructure projects involving investments, to launch contemporary technologies," Mr. Lukashenko explained.

He continued, "Belarus is ready to offer the most favourable conditions to Armenian partners placing capital and opening businesses. Such areas as machine building, IT, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, energy saving and the production of food products have good prospects. We hope for dialogue with Armenian businessmen, as well as representatives of the Armenian diaspora."

During the visit, a package of documents was signed, tackling collaboration in the



Alexander Lukashenko and Serzh Sargsyan discuss promising areas of bilateral co-operation

spheres of nuclear security, agriculture, sports and humanitarianism. Moreover, an inter-governmental agreement was signed on information sharing and co-operation regarding nuclear security and radiation protection. The National Olympic Committee of Belarus and that of Armenia also have plans to liaise.

Mr. Lukashenko visited Armenia's nuclear power station and noted that the experience of Armenia in the sphere of nuclear power is interesting to Belarus. "You're aware that Belarus is constructing its first nuclear power station, so we're interested in information sharing on secure operation and new approaches towards the construction of reactors."

Mr. Lukashenko notes that

Armenia has accumulated significant experience in the exploitation of such sites. "We hope that Armenia will be able to send at least a dozen qualified specialists to help us in the initial stages of operation," emphasised Mr. Lukashenko.

He also attended the opening of St. Hovhannes's Church in the Armenian town of Abovyan. The Belarusian President underlines that friendly Armenia is an important and close partner of Belarus in the Transcaucasia region.

The President of Armenia commented that the official visit of the Belarusian President took place just ahead of the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between our two countries. "Approaching this date, we can boast a high

level of bilateral co-operation and solid understanding gained through positive interstate collaboration over a period of time: our main asset," he said.

According to Mr. Sargsyan, a wide range of economic, geopolitical and humanitarian activities were discussed, including the activity of the Inter-governmental Commission for Trade and Economic Co-operation, which is due to meet this summer. Definite plans for trade-economic and investment collaboration were tackled, as was the provision of mutual access for goods and services to the markets of Belarus and Armenia.

According to Mr. Sargsyan, special attention was paid to strengthening Belarus-Armenia interaction within international organisations. The two sides exchanged opinions on the development of co-operation within the CSTO, while discussing current processes within the CIS. The President of Armenia underlined that our two nations enjoy especially friendly relations. "We're united in wishing the future of our relations to be harmonious, following from our historical past; we've overcome the past century's obstacles side by side, fighting shoulder to shoulder through the Great Patriotic War. Thousands of Armenians died on Belarusian fronts so our friendship is sealed with the blood of perished heroes. We need to preserve that and build upon it," emphasised Mr. Sargsyan.

Important relations of strategic character



Xu Qiliang

Belarus keen to reinforce military-technical co-operation with PRC

"We have several interesting joint projects. I'm ready, if necessary, to discuss these today and our progress in implementing them. Frankly, we have strong expectations regarding tighter military and technical co-operation between Belarus and the PRC for the sake of enhancing our defensive capability," noted President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, on meeting Colonel-General Xu Qiliang, a member of the Political

Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China.

During the Minsk meeting, Mr. Lukashenko remarked that visits by China's top military testify to trusting collaboration between our two countries in this sphere. "Our trade-economic and political interaction, manifested as the exchange of very high level visits, indicates that we've established close relations of a strategic character and Belarus appreciates these greatly," stressed the Head of the Belarusian state.

Xu Qiliang noted that the goal of his visit is to bolster strategic trust between Belarus and the PRC and to enhance co-operation in civil and military areas, alongside traditionally friendly relations. He also underlined that both Belarus and China are eager to advance strategic co-operation.

Xu Qiliang also extended greetings to Mr. Lukashenko on behalf of PRC President Xi Jinping.

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