

# Efficient level of co-operation

## Astana hosts Supreme Eurasian Economic Council session

Alongside the presidents of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan, the session also involved the heads of Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, both of which are eager to join in Eurasian integration. Various decisions were adopted by Belarus and its existing two partners, aiming to support the building of the Eurasian Economic Union. Before the heads of state began their work, Alexander Lukashenko held a bilateral meeting with the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev.

“Our bilateral relations have been developing dynamically, with various obstacles and issues promptly addressed at presidential level. Our experts and governments work well too,” noted the Head of the Belarusian state.

Mr. Lukashenko also noted the success of the recent visit by Kazakhstan’s Prime Minister to Belarus. “I met him and we discussed a range of issues. Moreover, his delegation travelled to all corners of Belarus. The Prime Minister stayed a little longer in our country, due to his interest in separate issues, which we appreciated greatly,” underlined the Belarusian leader.

The President assured his Kazakh colleague that, “Kazakhstan is a most attractive and promising partner for Belarus, planning many projects to which we can contribute. We know that you welcome our involvement in modernising your country. We’re ready to take part, helping with this modernisation. We have quite a few projects and almost no problems regarding their implementation, which indicates the level of our co-operation.”

Speaking about the summit in Astana, which was held within the framework of the Single Economic Space, the Belarusian President noted that the parties should take several steps aiming to push forward this integration association, which is not



Presidents of Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Kyrgyzstan at Supreme Eurasian Economic Council meeting, in Astana

only talked about but which is reckoned with. “We very much hope that, sharing similar positions on major issues, we’ll be able to reach a consensus,” he emphasised.

Mr. Nazarbayev agrees with such assessment of the summit. The President of Kazakhstan noted that bilateral trade is showing an upward trend, with joint projects being realised. He views our two economies as complementary and has invited Mr. Lukashenko to pay an official visit to discuss the development of bilateral relations in more detail.

The presidents of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan were joined by the presidents of Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, welcomed by the Chairman, Mr. Nazarbayev, who recalled that, in December 2012, it was agreed to hold three meetings this year, to promote the pace of document adoption. Further

integration and the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union is a priority for our three states.

“Today is our first top level meeting within the framework of this agreement. The most important aspect is our common aspiration to integrate further. Foremost, we agree that integration should be beneficial for everyone. States integrate in order to receive that which is inaccessible individually. Integration should be evolutionary so we need to unite efforts and search for points of coincidence, gradually,” noted Mr. Nazarbayev.

The President of Kazakhstan told journalists about the results of the meeting, including the major news that Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine are being given observer status in the new Eurasian Economic Union. Mr. Nazarbayev asserted, “We’ve discussed enlargement prospects for the Customs Union and the Single Customs Space.

As you know, Kyrgyzstan has already submitted an application to join the Customs Union, which we are considering. A task force has been set up to develop a roadmap for Kyrgyzstan’s accession to the Customs Union. Meanwhile, Ukraine is keen to have observer status within the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space and within the future Eurasian Economic Union. The President of Ukraine and the President of Kyrgyzstan were invited to attend the current session to take part in our discussions. We upheld their intentions and made a corresponding decision: by autumn, the necessary documents will have been prepared, enabling us to approve them at the next session of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council.”

A member of the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission, Sergei Rumas, explains, “The Chairman of

the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission, Victor Khristenko, has been given the necessary authority to sign a memoranda which should be concluded at the next meeting of the CIS Heads of Government, in Minsk. This will allow representatives of Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan to attend sessions at the invitation of the Chairman of the Council or the Chairman of the EEC Board. They won’t be able to vote but will have the opportunity to take part in discussions and voice their views. Moreover, they’ll be able to put forward their proposals, to be discussed by the Eurasian Economic Commission.”

Draft documents on the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union are to be submitted to the heads of state by next May. Mr. Nazarbayev explained, “We plan to launch this from January 1st, 2015, so draft documents should be submitted for

consideration to the heads of state by May 1st, 2014. Now, our major goal is to eliminate all obstacles to the Customs Union and the final formation of the Single Economic Space. On the basis of this work we’ll decide how to strengthen our integration processes.”

As expected, the Astana summit reaped results; the heads of state approved the idea of sharing an agro-industrial policy within the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space. An agreement was also adopted on information sharing in the sphere of statistics. Eurasian integration is only just gaining momentum yet is attracting great attention worldwide. The presidents finished their work by visiting Astana’s new Opera and Ballet Theatre (currently under construction) and Mr. Lukashenko attended a working dinner on behalf of Mr. Nazarbayev.

## Positive mood is to assist

### Prime Ministers of Belarus and Russia discuss new approaches towards implementing joint projects

Mikhail Myasnikov and Dmitry Medvedev have met in the Russian capital, with the Head of the Belarusian Government stressing that Belarus assesses its co-operation with Russia as dynamically developing. “Of course, life doesn’t stand still and new approaches are required,” adds Mr. Myasnikov. This primarily concerns joint projects and new areas of activity, including in the sphere of high technologies. According to BELTA, the two PMs discussed all aspects of Russian-Belarusian socio-economic collaboration and interaction within the Union State, in addition to joint integration projects.

## More ‘flowers of life’ blossom in the country

### Belarus ranked first within CIS and 33rd worldwide as most favourable country in which to be born

“State support for families has played a significant role in the development of demographic processes in the Republic; Belarus is now ranked as the best place to be born within the CIS and 33rd worldwide (out of 160 countries),” notes Yelena Nevero, Chief Paediatrician for the Healthcare Ministry.

In recent years, natural population loss has been falling, due to people living longer lives. “Last year, the crude birth rate was 12.2 births per 1,000 people while the crude mortality rate was 13.3 deaths per 1,000. Births were up

21,000 in 2012,” she adds.

Ms. Nevero underlines that Belarus can be justifiably proud of its paediatric healthcare provision; the infant mortality rate in 2012 was 3.4 deaths per thousand — the best figure in the CIS. In Russia, the figure stands at 8.7 per thousand. Belarus’ child mortality rate (children under 5 years) was 4.4 deaths per 1,000 while the total child mortality rate amounted to 46.2 per 100,000 children — also extremely low.

“This is the result of stable financing of childbirth services, the constant improvement of qualifications for healthcare personnel and enhancing the affordability of all kinds of healthcare services, including high-tech,” Ms. Nevero emphasises.

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