

Everyone is equal and important to the country

New law 'On Investments' recently replacing bulk Investment Code



Metal bridge construction plant in Mogilev Region obliged to investors

By Alexey Alexandrov

The developers are confident that the new amendments, reducing the volume of paperwork in favour of more meaningful laws, will come into force in January. The Ministry of Economics tells us that the new legislation aims to uphold the inadmissibility of arbitrary interference in private affairs, alongside equality for investors and the protection of rights from violation. Sergey Vaitekhovskiy,

the Head of the Chief Investment Department of the Ministry of Economy, explains that investors won't be limited in their sources of financing or amount of invested funds, and will gain the right to land leases and ownership. They will also be able to address not only the Belarusian judiciary but international arbitration courts, as necessary.

Tatiana Mantsevich, who heads the Department for State Policy on Foreign Investment Attraction,

emphasises, "In working on this draft law, we aimed to maximise advantages for foreign and domestic investors while equalising their conditions. We need to now make this principle clear to all government agencies involved.

While creating the draft law,

specialists from the Economy Ministry worked with foreign experts — such as the International Finance Corporation and the Austrian Ministry of Finance. The document is certainly timely but six months will be needed to see how it performs in practice.

The MT's reference:

According to the National Statistical Committee, from January to May this year, the Belarusian economy received \$1.5 billion of direct foreign investments; of these, about \$900 million came into Minsk.

Dump truck at copper mines

BelAZ delivers first batch of 130-tonne dump trucks to Serbia

In July 2013, the Belarusian Automobile Works won a tender to supply 130-tonne capacity dump trucks to RTB Bor Group (Serbia). The first have already now been delivered, with vehicles destined for use at Bor's copper mining and smelting complex. The mine opened in 1903, using underground and open-pit mining methods, and has so far yielded 90 million tonnes of ore. Copper reserves are thought to stand at 3 million tonnes (1.5 percent).

Our Belarusian dump trucks are designed to transport rock mass from open mining fields in the harshest of weather conditions. They can also be used at large industrial and hydraulic construction sites and in technological divisions of processing industries.

The BelAZ fleet in Serbia numbers several dozen vehicles and, by the end of the year, BelAZ plans to deliver 220-tonne capacity dump trucks to Serbia.

360 million transactions over six months

Number of bank payment cards in Belarus increases to 11 million

According to the National Bank of Belarus, on 1st July, there were 5 million 63,000 cards BelKart payment system cards in circulation and almost six million using international payment systems. In the second quarter of 2013, the number of cards issued increased by 300,000. Countrywide, there are about 3,500 kiosks and 4,000 ATMs, as well as over 42,000 outlets accepting card payments, boasting almost 65,000 payment terminals. As a result, over the first six months of this year, Belarus saw more than 360 million card transactions, worth about 108 trillion Roubles.

Geography alone little benefits business

Beshenkovichi District of Vitebsk Region boasts favourable climate for small enterprises

By Olga Krupko

Preferences and privileges encourage businesses to start up in rural areas, bringing not only local employment but benefitting local budgets and promoting wider economic and social wellbeing for Belarus. Importantly, new rural facilities support villages' stable development and attract young people into an area. Small and medium-sized enterprises can react more quickly to market needs, being focused on modern technologies.

Life improving

Beshenkovichi is a small town not far from Vitebsk: home to around 8,000 people. However, it has no major facilities and, until recently, local residents were inclined

to move to the regional centre to find well-paid jobs. The situation is changing thanks to the state programme promoting economic activity in rural areas. Investors are being successfully attracted; such are their demands for employees that workers are being brought in from Vitebsk.

Leonid Penkovskiy, the Chairman of the Beshenkovichi District Executive Committee, tells us, "Apart from privileged taxation rates, investors are attracted by our proximity to the regional centre; 65km of the M3 (Vitebsk-Minsk) highway passes through our district. Geography is not the key to success though; we do a great deal to support all those interested in running their own businesses. We process their



Beshenkovichi boilers before shipment to Russia

registration of unused buildings promptly, give help in finding loans and help with connection to gas and water. We've even found staff for the joint Belarusian-Lithuanian Akonit-Pharma enterprise (producing homeopathic medicines) — sending staff for re-training in necessary specialities via our Employment Centre."

Innovations come from provinces

One of two projects backed by the Belarusian Innovative Fund in the Vitebsk Region is being realised in Beshenkovichi, run by Belkotlomash scientific-production enterprise. Recently, PM Mikhail Myasnikov paid a visit, to inspect its modernisation.

The company's General Director, Victor Kravchenko, tells us that, last year, a loan of over Br22bn was allocated to Belkotlomash, for the expansion of innovative production. At present, it manufactures over 60 models of boiler, with a special design bureau set up at the enterprise. Among its latest developments is a boiler generating heat and electricity from wood chips and milled peat: already in use in the Dubrovno and Tolochin districts of Belarus and in Russia's Pskov Region. The Russian market is in great need of such equipment, having areas boasting huge milled peat reserves. The firm is also working jointly with an Italian company to produce boilers able to generate up to 50MW in heat power. The project aims to ensure import substi-

tution and the export of energy. No other such enterprise operates anywhere in Belarus or the CIS.

Deserted sites

Several import substitution enterprises have also begun their work in the district: among them Beshenkovichi Agroproduct (producing whole milk substitutes for feeding calves) and Viprotech machine building company (manufacturing a wide range of grouting-concrete equipment). Its staff have already received an order to produce grouting-concrete equipment for Olympic sites in Sochi and for the Belarusian nuclear power station (in Ostrovets). Meanwhile, Viprotech will supply Ostrovets with self-propelled crriages for cargo transportation.