

The voice of Cape of Good Hope

By Dmitry Sokolov

Maite Nkoana Mashabane, RSA Deputy Minister for International Relations and Co-operation, makes official visit to Minsk

Belarus and the Republic of South Africa have enjoyed twenty years of diplomatic relations; political dialogue between Minsk and Pretoria is quite advanced and continues to go from strength to strength. Of course, our mutual turnover in goods of just over \$30 million can be improved upon, failing to reflect our full potential. We have a great deal to offer each other and interest in closer co-operation is evident at every level.

Recently, the RSA Deputy Minister for International Relations and Co-operation, Maite Nkoana Mashabane, paid an official visit to Minsk, in preparation for a meeting



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Maite Nkoana Mashabane

between our heads of state. Some time ago, Belarus sent an invitation to the President of the RSA to visit our country. As Ms. Nkoana Mashabane noted on meeting Mr. Lukashenko, after the next elections in the Republic of South Africa, the RSA President will make their official visit.

Welcoming the South African Minister, the President noted the

success of contacts between Minsk and Pretoria in the field of politics and diplomacy, saying, "Our senior ministers regularly visit the RSA and our businessmen are developing successful contacts, in terms of negotiating. We've studied your country closely, and are now familiar with the economy of the Republic of South Africa. Hence our interest in co-operation."

Our states' economies are not in direct competition; rather, they complement each other, to mutual benefit. Mr. Lukashenko noted that Belarus can help the RSA in mining its rich mineral deposits and in developing its agricultural sector, having great experience. Ms. Nkoana Mashabane agreed, saying that Belarus has the 'necessary experience and possesses the equipment needed'. She emphasised, "The agricultural sector has wide horizons for co-operation. Belarus can enjoy en-

try to the South African market, as well as access to the markets of other countries of the region. We are here to lay the foundations of co-operation and subsequently fulfil our true potential."

President Lukashenko has promised to create all necessary conditions for the South African delegation's work, noting, "We are very much counting on you becoming acquainted with our country more closely. We are interested in this because key people play an important role in our future co-operation."

Proposals on expansion of business interaction between our two countries are to be prepared in time for the planned visit by the President of the Republic of South Africa, to Belarus. According to Mr. Lukashenko, Belarus highly values this visit, as it will bring additional stimulus to the development of our relations.

Steady preparation for big event

Manufacture of World Ice Hockey Championship souvenirs offers excellent chance for Belarusian companies to promote themselves and earn revenue

The sale of souvenir products bearing the championship symbol began in the second half of 2012, with 230 Minsk shops offering such goods, explains Svetlana Guseva, the Head of the Non-food Trade Department, for Minsk City Executive Committee. She notes, "About 85 products currently bear the World Championship logo: items of haberdashery, stationery, sewn and knitted good, and sports equipment, as well as other souvenirs, printed editions, confectionery and dairy products." The capital is ready to provide visitors and participants of the event with a wide selection of souvenir goods. Meanwhile, Tamara Tikhonova, who heads the Department of Trade and Public Catering, for Minsk City Executive Committee, tells us that public catering outlets will be offering plenty of Belarusian cuisine, as well as menus written in English. Cafes, restaurants and bars will feature plasma screens broadcasting matches and major sites will use video surveillance, to promote public safety.

"Minsk-Arena and Chizhovka-Arena will have organised fan-zones, while hospitality areas will be organised in open areas near the Sports Palace, Minsk Ice Palace and the student village," notes Ms. Tikhonova.

International route is under scrutiny

Western Europe-Western China motor rally begins near Brest

By Yuri Ivanov

Taking part in the motor rally are 12 teams, from Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. The crews will be accompanied by mobile laboratories assessing road conditions. The Belarusian team comprises specialists from Belgiprodor and Beldort-sentr, as well as road construction trusts from Gomel and Mogilev.

The decision to hold the motor rally was made at the 33rd session of the Intergovernmental Council of Road Workers, in October 2012: upheld by the road administrations of our three states. The 5,500km route spans Brest, Minsk, Smolensk, Mozhaisk, Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Orenburg, Aktobe, Kyzylorda, Turkestan, Shymkent, Taraz and Almaty. Starting at the most western point of the Customs Union, the motor rally will finish near the Chinese border, in Kazakhstan's city of Khorgas, on September 7th.

The goal of the rally is to detect possible administrative barriers to international road haulage along the Western Europe-Western China transport corridor and to survey road infrastructure. Customs procedures, traffic safety and environmental protection during road construction and exploitation will



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Participants of motor rally are ready to start

all come under scrutiny.

The Belarusian route takes in the M1/E30 motorway, which has four lanes along its whole length and which complies with European standards. Traffic intensity on several sections reaches 6,000 vehicles daily, about a third being transit transport. Road maintenance, the toll system and roadside services

are all assessed.

Around 50 people are starting from Brest, being joined by others as the rally continues East. Up to 200 people are expected to arrive in Kazakhstan, with a summary report then prepared. This will outline the major problems of international road travel and will offer recommendations for improvement.

Big brother's ever-watchful eye

American intelligence agencies watching headquarters of United Nations and EU mission, located in New York, reports German Spiegel, referring to materials submitted by former CIA and NSA employee Edward Snowden

Spiegel magazine reports that, last summer, the NSA intruded on an internal UN video-conference

call, hacking its system to intercept HQ traffic at the organisation headed by Ban Ki-moon.

The NSA discovered that UN diplomats are also being watched by the Chinese, as interceptions were traced. Unpleasant news for Europeans is that the NSA has also been watching the office of the EU mission (under the United Nations), helped by a plan of the building on

New York's Third Avenue: showing the location of offices, network infrastructure and servers. The NSA named the NY EU Embassy 'Apalachee' and that in Washington 'Magothy'.

The interception involved copying hard disks in NY and intruding into the computer network in Washington. Such spying presented little difficulty, as computers are connect-

ed through a private server VPN. In fact, the NSA has been tapping more than 80 embassies and consulates worldwide to gather information, with centres for electronic spying operating at the US consulates in Frankfurt on the Main and Vienna. Snowden's 'big brother' revelations may not come as a surprise to many of us but who knows what else he may reveal...

New prospects for co-operation

Belarus and Mongolia sign intergovernmental agreement on visa abolition

The document was signed during an official visit by a Belarusian governmental delegation, headed by Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikov, to Mongolia. In addition, the heads of government of the two countries have signed a joint communiqué, alongside intergovernmental agreements on co-operation on military and technical co-operation, education, and mutual assistance regarding customs issues.

The Belarusian PM also met his Mongolian counterpart, Norovyn Altankhuyag. It was the first visit by a head of government since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries in 1992. Our PMs assert that the visit should expand horizons for bilateral interaction in all spheres, while contributing to the development of friendly relations between our two states.

"Today, thanks to the efforts of the governments of our two countries, as well as commercial organisations, economic contacts and projects are developing quite successfully between Belarus and Mongolia. Moreover, our potential is much higher than the current level of trade turnover," noted Mr. Myasnikov. "We'd like to propose a strategy of co-operation somewhat different from the traditional, as we believe that trade collaboration should be complemented by investment. We need to ensure appropriate financing mechanisms, investment, export credit and project financing." He believes that this will allow partners to make strides in developing trade-economic and investment projects.

Frontier melodies

Belovezhskaya Pushcha new gates connect Customs Union with Union State

After modernisation of Belarus-Poland border checkpoints, the Belarusian part of the Pererov-Bialowieza international border checkpoint has launched, offering entry to pedestrians and cyclists. The border guards' two-storey building is equipped with the latest technology, including networked computers and closed circuit TV.

The Brest Region has an excellent opportunity to attract Polish visitors to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, as well as those from the Union State. If 150,000 tourists can be attracted annually to our side of the reserve, the National Park should earn 2-3 million Euros. The new entry point can process up to 400 people daily.

Alexander Boechko, Chairman of the State Border Committee, tells us, "Its infrastructure will make it easier for residents of border territories to cross, helping increase the export of tourist services and promote co-operation between European nature reserves."

The new border complex cost over Br17 billion to set up, with the expenditure shared with Poland. Belarus plans to spend a further 10 million Euros on constructing the new Tomashovka-Wlodawa border crossing, on the border with Poland, by 2020.