

High level of co-operation

Chairman of JSC Gazprom Board, Alexei Miller, visits Minsk

By Andrey Fiodorov

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko has met with the Head of the Russian Holding, Alexei Miller, noting, "In preparing for this meeting, I was surprised to discover that, perhaps for the first time in many years, strangely, I have nothing with which to reproach Gazprom. We've paid for everything we have bought from you while you have paid for everything you've transported via Belarus. You've done everything promised, starting with supporting children."

He added, "New projects and programmes offered for today's discussion are certainly of interest to us. Therefore, once again, I can only thank you for your co-operation."

Mr. Miller praised the present level of collaboration and mentioned plans to advance it, asserting, "There are good trends in our main business concerning natural gas supplies and transit. This year, the volume of supplies to Belarus will rise. The volume of transit will rise, too, primarily via the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline."

Discussions covered prospects for developing gas transportation across Belarus, including through the construction of the Yamal-Europe-2 gas pipeline. Mr. Miller expressed interest in seeing this project implemented, adding that investments into reconstruction and modernisation of the gas transportation system will also increase. He explained, "The volume of investments should rise by 20 percent on last year. We've already worked out a precise programme with the Belarusian Presidential Administration and the Belarusian Government, determining priorities and steps. The same applies to raising the ca-



Alexander Lukashenko and Alexei Miller discuss promising new projects

capacity of underground gas storage facilities and the reconstruction of gas distribution stations."

He continued, "This year, the volume of gas stored in underground reservoirs in Belarus is already higher than last year. A new step will be made next year, raising the volume of maximum daily extraction in winter, as well as the volume of gas stored in underground facilities. As you want us to do, it will increase the reliability and stability of natural gas supplies to Belarusian consumers through autumn and winter."

The meeting also touched upon the implementation of social programmes in Belarus, with Gazprom's assistance. Their fund-

ing will increase five-fold on past amounts, with most projects focusing on the care of children in the spheres of sports and healthcare. "Today, we're going to sign a new agreement to sponsor a programme for the early diagnostics of hearing disorders in children. Later on, we plan to continue our work, financing a programme for the early diagnosis of sight disorders," emphasises Mr. Miller. Gazprom Transgaz Belarus plans to allocate 3bn Roubles for this programme.

Several hours later, an agreement on co-operation between the Health Ministry of Belarus and Chance International Children's Charity Foundation (founded by Belgazprombank) was signed. This

envisages the implementation of a nationwide programme on early diagnosis of hearing disorders in children. In 2013, Gazprom Transgaz Belarus plans to allocate 5bn Roubles as gratuitous assistance for the realisation of this project.

"Our criteria in selecting projects are based on social importance. We determine projects with the Belarusian Government and the Presidential Administration, reflecting public needs," Gazprom's Head told journalists after the signing of the agreement. Mr. Miller underlined that Gazprom has promised the Belarusian President and Government to work in the same way as it does in other countries: i.e. socially oriented. Additionally, the company is

sponsoring restoration work at Brest Hero Fortress Memorial, giving 15bn Roubles for the financing of the major overhaul of the south-eastern barracks and the setting up of an exhibition. Work should be complete in time for the 70th anniversary of Belarus' liberation from the Nazis: 5bn Roubles will have been given by the end of the year. Mr. Miller remarks that his visit to Brest Fortress moved him emotionally.

Moreover, Gazprom provides aid to the Orthodox Christian Church. In particular, considerable funds have been allocated for the construction of an Orthodox church building in Polotsk. Mr. Miller is confident that such co-operation will continue in the future.

Promising possibilities of joint-development projects

By Sergey Sokolov

President of Russian oil company Rosneft, Igor Sechin, visits Minsk

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko recently met his distinguished guest, noting, "First of all, I'd like to thank you publicly for adhering to certain principles regarding Russian obligations for deliveries of oil to our plants. Of course, today, Rosneft owns nearly half of Mozyr Oil Refinery's shares; it has its own markets, which are sizeable. In addition, in honesty, I've ordered the First Deputy Premier of Belarus, Vladimir Semashko, to sign contracts on the delivery of oil from the world market at world prices. We had no choice, because we couldn't stop the refinery, it would have caused huge damages. Therefore, your statement was opportune. I've also ordered the Government and Belneftekhim to work on the delivery of your oil for processing to our refineries. I think,



Igor Sechin

we'll agree terms."

The President added, "I'm sure that you don't want any other oil products, processed from somebody else's oil, to enter your traditional market. I don't think that we should do so. We benefit from working with you, as is obvious."

Mr. Lukashenko noted that world oil prices are very high at present, so alternative deliveries would reduce processors' profits. "Losses, of course, are high, if we take into consideration that the crisis storming the world to-

day is also connected with that potash mess. We don't need any disputes." He suggested discussing other promising directions of co-operation with Rosneft, saying, "We're extremely interested in co-operation with Rosneft, which has a huge empire. We don't want to be limited to just oil refining and selling of oil products. Such an empire needs support, starting from foodstuffs and finishing with equipment. Therefore, we ask you to consider us as suppliers of goods needed for your manufactures and the support of your company's operation. I've asked the Government to work on this direction of co-operation."

The President reminded that, several years ago, Belarus enjoyed successful similar co-operation with Lukoil. "We agreed, seven years ago, for them to process oil in our country. I asked them to consider what equipment, foodstuffs, and special clothes we could make for them and our trade volumes expanded considerably."

NEW DIMENSION



www.belarus-magazine.by