

Preferences in sight

According to a CIS public poll, demand for Belarusian products is ever growing

By Tatiana Velikhova

The Eurasian Development Bank has prepared an annual study of the mood and hopes of 11 CIS member states, along with Georgia. Its *Integration Barometer EDB-2013* focuses also on the analysis of their economic life. The poll involved 14,000 people across different social groups, different regions and towns. Researchers studied their wishes on the basis of several fundamental questions: 'What products are you buying?', 'Where would you love to live?' and 'Where would you like to work?'

The first question indicated an increasing trust in Belarusian produce, with CIS citizens highlighting their moderate prices and high quality. Russia buys most of our products, and has no plans to change these already established preferences. Its citizens place products under the 'Made in Belarus' brand at the top of the list of CIS manufacture (regarding their competitiveness). A major part of Ukraine also prefers Belarusian quality. According to experts, such an attitude towards Belarusian products is the best argument for our domestic manufacturers to more actively work in the neighbouring markets.

In addition, CIS citizens highly appreciate Russian industrial produce; since last year, these are much popular in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Ka-



Belarusian light industry goods enjoy demand, both inside the country and abroad

zakhstan.

As for the question about the best country to live in, the former USSR states attract citizens of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The EU is more popular among Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians and Georgians, while 'the remaining world' is chosen solely by Azerbaijan.

Interestingly, the poll indicates that a great number of respondents are wishing to work outside their country, with Russia being the most attractive post-Soviet territory. Citizens from Central Asia are eager to find jobs here, with Kyrgyzstan and

Uzbekistan showing the greatest interest (54 percent and 43 percent respectively). Meanwhile, 45 percent of Ukrainians would love to work domestically, as do 47 percent of Russians and 40 percent of Belarusians.

In general, Russians, Belarusians, Kazakhs, Ukrainians and Azerbaijani consider their states to be relatively economically safe and stable.

The attitude of ordinary people towards their countries' joining the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space occupied a special place in the poll's economic section and, according to the results, it's

positive. Specialists note that these results — already achieved by Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan — add to this positive view of the SES and the Customs Union activity. Over 50 percent of Turkmen, Ukrainians, Moldovans, Georgians, Armenians, Kyrgyz, Tajiks and Uzbeks consider that their states should join the union. Unexpectedly, 59 percent of Georgian respondents advocate joining compared to 37 percent in 2012.

Regarding the CIS and Customs Union member states, 65 percent of Belarusians, 67 percent of Russians and 73 percent of Kazakhs ardently support their participation.

Obvious convenience of modern technology

By Victor Lepeshev

Minsk public transport introduces a new automated fare system

As the Director of the Technological Department of the International Business Alliance (IBA) Vadim Smotryaev noted, one of the main objectives of the creation of an automated payment system for public transport is its economic attractiveness and convenience for passengers. "The fare system uses modern technologies, so it will catch Minsk residents' fancy," he stated.

According to a representative of IBA, which realised this project, the official start of the system is expected in less than a year — July 2014. However, it is planned to be put into action on the underground even earlier.

The system requires the fitting out of above-ground transport and underground turnstiles with validators (information readers) for the 'contactless smart cards'. These cards will be available at the processing-issuing centre of Minsktrans. When passengers buy a card, the amount is recorded on the device. It is also possible to reload a card by using the self-service terminals.

According to Mr. Smotryaev, the automated fare system covers all current ticket options, including single-ride tickets. The system also works with two kinds of tariffs: fares that are based on trip distance, and reduced rates with the use of personalised cards.

The cost of the system will be covered by the decrease in expenses. Namely ticket sales, staffing reductions, increased numbers of payments on single-ride trips and the introduction of the differential fare, based on distance travelled.

Where there are established contacts there are profitable contracts, or big business forum in action

Around 120 companies from 12 countries of the world present samples of their latest equipment at the *Woodworking-2013* international exhibition

By Yuri Chernyakevich

In early October, it was crowded at the Football Manege in Minsk's Pobediteley Avenue, the venue for the 20th International *Woodworking-2013* Specialised Exhibition. And again, confirmed their status as the country's largest forum in this branch.

In my opinion, the unusual number of exhibits was the peculiar feature of the forum. The exhibition hall was almost transformed into a true production workshop, with various mechanisms 'running the show' — from remotely control-

led machines to manual chainsaws. The many visitors to the exhibition had a good opportunity to see the exhibits working, while independently assessing the real potential of equipment from various brands and models.

Of course, the exposition wasn't limited solely to the inside of the pavilion's walls. Minsk Tractor Works, alongside other Belarusian and foreign enterprises, demonstrated loaders and tractors, as well as various logging equipment on the open ground near the Football Manege. Visitors could see the work of different timber processing technique



Progressive forms of woodworking on display

'in action'. Pine logs converted into chips, the drilling of holes in timber and techniques to dry wet timber.

Around 20 companies from Germany, including Homag, Weing and Siempelkamp, presented their products as part of the exposition. "For many years, Belarus

has been one of the largest export markets for German companies," notes an officer of the German Engineering Association (VDMA), Dominik Wolfschütz. "Your country continues to be attractive for investments."

Many Italian firms, considered

to be acknowledged 'trendsetters' in the timber processing industry, were also present at the exhibition, and it was very crowded around their stands. In 2011, Belarus was among the world's top ten importers of timber processing equipment from this European country, so Italian specialists are keen to sign contracts with Belarusian companies.

A specialised room — *Bioenergy-2013* — was organised at the exhibition, which demonstrated technologies and equipment for the production and burning of various types of bio-fuel. Moreover, a scientific and practical seminar was held — *The Condition and Prospects of Technology of Wood Waste Processing*. Undoubtedly, these and the many other events held as part of the international forum, promoted the establishment of business relations between representatives of Belarusian and foreign business. As they say, where there are contacts, there will be contracts.