

Integration orients towards regions

Belarus and Yaroslavl Region agree to strengthen co-operation during Minsk meeting

By Vladimir Khromov

The meeting between President Alexander Lukashenko and the Governor of the Yaroslavl Region tackled the problem of expanding mutual ties across all areas.

“Industrial co-operation is one of the most promising areas. It opens up great opportunities for ambitious joint projects. Belarus is ready to continue further expansion of the scales of such interaction,” noted the Head of State.

He suggested focusing on projects that would make the most of the industrial, scientific, technological and human potential of Belarus and the

Yaroslavl Region. Yaroslavl is home to a number of Research and Development centres engaged in applied research. Therefore, the President of Belarus deems it necessary to consider options of interaction in science and education, while implementing high-tech projects and launching innovative solutions.

“We need to understand that Belarus isn’t so rich that it can hand out its property, especially its key assets. Belarus aims at integration, and this integration shouldn’t only be words. There should be definite projects of particular enterprises,” emphasised the Belarusian leader.

Mr. Lukashenko said that if, for example, MAZ wanted to have closer ties with the Yaroslavl plant, including the exchange of assets, it would be understandable. “If some senior official shows an interest in our company, and says that we must get together to fight... Fight against whom? We have a single market. We can divide it without the exchange of shares,” explained Mr. Lukashenko.

The Belarusian President noted that, since Soviet times, Belarus and Russia have had close ties, and called the announcements about Belarus’ reluctance to implement joint integration projects, stupid. “We have never

given up on deep integration with the Russian Federation, with any region of Russia. We would find common ground with the regions and governors much faster than with the Russian Government,” said the President.

In his turn, Sergei Yastrebov, said that the Yaroslavl Region already co-operates with Belarus on a number of programmes and areas. The major area, however, is the construction of diesel engines. “For us, the notion of integration turned into real co-operation a long time ago,” underlined the Governor. “We would like to continue such interaction, and develop it on the basis of new financial and economic

relations by offering your country our new competitive produce.”

Moreover, the Governor is convinced that the Yaroslavl Region is ready to step up co-operation in such areas as petrochemicals, oil processing and agro-industrial complex.

Addressing his Russian guests, Alexander Lukashenko noted, “You’ve chosen a good moment, because now we can do a lot together. It is a pleasure for us to work with Yaroslavl, and I would like us to find such connections in order to bring us closer together. I refer to a deep co-operation between Belarusian and Yaroslavl enterprises.”

Strong border will bring benefits for everyone

By Vasily Kharitonov

The President arrived in the State Border Committee for an expanded session, which seriously tackled the results of the border service and plans for the nearest future. Mr. Lukashenko pointed out that there was nothing extraordinary about such form of work. However, the border guards should perceive the fact of the President’s arrival as a very clear signal. Mr. Lukashenko personally attends those structures and organisations from which he expects greater efficiency and return benefits.

“The situation in the Border Committee is not what I, as the Head of State, would like it to be,” the Belarusian leader stressed. “We’ve discussed much with the last two heads of the border agency, yet there are still many tasks that are not addressed now,” noted Mr. Lukashenko.

Now, this is the sphere of responsibility of the new Chairman of the State Border Committee. Moreover, the Belarusian leader explained why Leonid Maltsev was appointed to this position. Mr. Lukashenko reminded that some time ago he had a face-to-face talk after the incident connected with order violation at the border. The President partially disclosed the essence of that conversation, “It was all too much. I told Leonid Maltsev back then, ‘if another incident like that happens, either you or I will have to go there and deal with it’. He told me that it was not a thing that the President should do, so he would go. After another incident occurred, Leonid Maltsev kept his promise. That is the reason why Colonel General Leonid Maltsev took charge of the border agency. He went there in order to identify the challenges and flaws and to remove them. He will fulfil the task of the President whatever the cost.”

The President also informed those in attendance to the following, “Border

troops are special. They act under battle conditions. Border troops are already fulfilling their combat tasks, and this is their peculiarity. Most important, is that your failures and flaws on the last metre of our land can lead to far-reaching consequences for the entire country.”

The Commander-in-Chief was also interested in the development of border services, and wondered how his instructions are fulfilled, how the border troops are doing, what problems persist and how they should be tackled. These are vital issues, taking into account that they made the basis for the draft law on the provision of border security and this doesn’t mean that there’s no need to improve the service before its adoption.

“We need to admit that not all our plans are duly fulfilled. It is obvious, even at a glance, that the border agency has not always been able to provide an adequate response to new challenges or to the changes in the operational situation at the border. Everybody should realise that border security is not a gift from above. It is not a matter of course. The border troops play a central role here. However, it is impossible to do without the well-coordinated and coherent efforts of all involved state-run agencies,” underlined the President.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, overall, the State Border Committee is fulfilling its duties. However, “the current situation prompts us to ramp up our efforts to respond to modern-day challenges and threats.”

Moreover, the purpose of the Belarusian border guards has also changed in recent time, and the President paid special attention to this saying that, “We’re always in the forefront, and here we defend our interests, as well as the interests of Russia and Kazakhstan. You need to perform responsibly, as you are also in contact with the West and NATO.”

Leonid Maltsev then reported



On patrol

on the results of activity of the State Border Committee in 2013, the major approaches for border protection in 2014, as well as on the interaction of border guards with other state agencies and the use of contemporary technical means. The Chairman of the State Border Committee particularly expanded on the topic of the preparation for the Ice Hockey World Championship.

The session also tackled the work of border guards on the Lithuanian border, the development of railway and aviation checkpoints and the activity of border commissions. Finishing the conversation, the Commander-in-Chief reminded everyone of the necessity to optimise forces and resources, “We need to remove non-essential services from the State Border Committee, and use this as an example for other agencies. Optimisation is necessary. All these maintenance services, departments, military units, and groups need to be removed in the interests,

and for the benefit of the state border.”

According to the President, the World Championship is an important event but ‘the tournament will end, and we have to use what we have created for the benefit of our people and our state’.

Mr. Lukashenko also gave separate instructions regarding measures to strengthen Belarus’ weight as a guarantor of stability and security on the common border with the European Union. “We need to make better use of the EU’s interest in a strong border with Belarus. We need to carry out a number of events in this direction. They should see that we combat illegal migration, smuggling and the transportation of radioactive substances. We need to show them our importance,” emphasised the Belarusian leader.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lukashenko revealed that inspections of the Armed Forces will be followed by a large-scale inspection of the border agency.

Reference points in information field

By Marina Zubovich

“The country will not have any unprofitable enterprise in the media scene,” said the Minister, Oleg Proleskovsky, defining the immediate task at the final collegium of the Ministry of Information

Last year’s results give grounds for this supposition. In comparison with 2012, more than Br30 billion has been saved in the media sector, and the state subsidy for printing mass media outlets has also been reduced from Br12 to Br4 billion. Belarus has become a strong media platform for carrying out of large international activities. The reformation strategy, the creation of media holdings: the Publishing House Zvyazda of cultural and social-political direction, on the basis of the newspaper *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*, was successfully recognised.

In the long term, the minister said, that FM-broadcasting may appear under the information platform of *Sovetskaya Belorussiya*. It is also planned to transfer the portal Media of Belarus to media holding, in order to make it, not only a uniform point of entry for all state mass-media, but also a methodical assistant for the regional press in the development of their web resources. The plans for the future also include the creation of a virtual reception room. The President has ordered that it should be ready in the first quarter in the form of an Internet portal where citizens can address any question, and that the resource will become a uniform point of entry on the site of any state body or organisation.