

Architecture of stability is important in reality rather than in draft form

The forthcoming elections were also high on the agenda at a meeting between Alexander Lukashenko and Viktor Yanukovich, Ukraine's President. Mr. Lukashenko noted that Belarus and Ukraine have many common issues, 'ensuring the economy and interests of our people'.

The Belarusian President also exchanged warm greetings with the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, behind the scenes at the Summit. Additionally, Mr. Lukashenko met Nursultan Nazarbayev, alongside his Azerbaijani colleague, Ilham Aliyev; the heads of state confirmed their commitment to developing partnerships and friendly relations between our countries.

The OSCE is a unique place for dialogue, simultaneously uniting members of NATO, the EU, the Council of Europe, the CIS and CSTO. Under major discussion is whether the OSCE should remain no more than a contact ground or whether it should become a fully-fledged organisation.

"I'm participating in my third OSCE Summit. We've taken good decisions at previous summits, and continue to do it here but, no matter what we say about the significance of

our work, we lack any tangible results to be proud of," Mr. Lukashenko asserted. Addressing those attending the Summit in Astana, the President of Belarus called for members not to allocate blame in this matter but to decide what should be done to move forward. He then answered the question himself, noting that Belarus advocates stronger pan-European architecture of stability and security, based on mutual respect, partnership and true solidarity.

Minsk is convinced that the OSCE could play a key role in shaping our modern, humanitarian society, but requires radical modernisation. Belarus primarily believes that the OSCE needs a fully-fledged charter, rather than purely fundamental principles. Russia shares the same view, but the idea isn't welcomed by everyone. OSCE General Secretary Marc Perrin de Brichambaut does not believe that the organisation needs a charter. However, without one, the OSCE may never become a fully-fledged international organisation.

Mr. Lukashenko has analysed three dimensions within the scope of the OSCE: political-military, economic-ecological and humani-



Alexander Lukashenko expresses his sincere opinions on the present and future of the organisation

tarian. According to Belarus, the humanitarian 'basket' (embracing human rights, the development of democratic institutes and election monitoring) is now at the forefront of the OSCE's activities, leading to a misbalance of dimensions. OSCE activities are primarily focusing on monitoring elections and stimulating democratic processes, with 'human rights' and 'democratic

Growing contacts between citizens is greatly contributing to improved mutual understanding and trust. However, since the OSCE Summit in Istanbul eleven years ago, visa procedures have become overly bureaucratic and costly. Belarus is observing some progress in its European partners' approaches, but a long way seems to be ahead until the practical removal of visa barriers.

ment and our lives have drastically changed. According to experts, over half of the document's regulations are very poorly connected to life today, requiring updating and improvement. Belarus presented a comprehensive proposal to renew the Vienna Document and hopes to see this supported.

Minsk is keen to see a single security system created within the zone of OSCE responsibility. "In particular, we believe that OSCE nuclear member states could provide unconditional and unambiguous guarantees of security, sovereignty and territorial integrity to OSCE non-nuclear member countries," stated the Belarusian President. He added that Belarus and the USA adopted a joint statement in Astana, embracing measures to prevent nuclear proliferation. Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that this is an important and definite contribution to a common cause in creating a secure Europe and a secure world.

The Belarusian President enjoyed enhanced attention from the foreign media; he told Kazakh journalists his views on the OSCE and the reasons for his marked statements at the Summit.

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elections' the most widely heard expressions during the Summit. The Belarusian President tackled this important problem, calling not just for democratic categories to be enumerated but to be seriously pondered. He believes that the standards of elections should be equal for all. According to Mr. Lukashenko, several states are using this sphere as a 'sticking point'.

Speaking of human rights and freedoms, the President of Belarus stressed the importance of such issues as freedom of movement.

As far as the military-political 'basket' is concerned, this year, the persistent efforts of Belarus and Russia have allowed changes for the better to take place. Work is afoot to renew the 1999 Vienna Document — adopted at the Istanbul Summit. Meanwhile, 56 OSCE member states are committing to share military information annually, conducting mutual inspections. The aim is to strengthen trust between states and ensure common security. Eleven years have passed since the adoption of the Vienna Docu-

Joint statement issued by the Republic of Belarus and the USA

Belarus' Foreign Minister, Sergei Martynov, and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have affirmed their two countries' commitment to nuclear security and non-proliferation. Belarus and the USA have proven their common views on seeing a world without nuclear weapons and pledged to work together to prevent their spread. The US Secretary of State recognises Belarus' historical decision to give up its nuclear weapons in 1994 as a considerable contribution to nuclear disarmament. Mrs. Clinton has again confirmed security guarantees for Belarus, fixed in the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances of December 5th, 1994.

The Belarusian Foreign Minister has announced that Belarus is to eliminate its

stockpiles of highly enriched uranium, with completion scheduled to be complete by the time the next Nuclear Security Summit is held, in 2012. The USA plans to provide technical and financial assistance to support the fulfilment of these measures as expeditiously as possible.

The US Secretary of State approvingly notes Belarus' decision as a sign of progress in efforts to advance nuclear security and non-proliferation and welcomes the Republic of Korea's intention to invite Belarus to take part in the Nuclear Security Summit in 2012. By adopting this decision, Belarus is joining the USA in its international efforts to convert nuclear facilities to the use of fuels containing low levels of uranium: a world standard of the 21st century. Both sides

have pledged to continue cooperation in ensuring energy security, including security upgrades at the Joint Institute for Power and Nuclear Research at Belarus' NAS.

Mr. Martynov and Mrs. Clinton have pledged to strengthen global collaboration in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, in line with international standards and other additional bilateral agreements, which may be reached between Belarus and the USA. Belarus has also announced its intention to diversify its energy supply by constructing its first nuclear power station for civil purposes. The USA supports this effort, which includes a competitive process for the design and construction of a safe, secure plant operating under IAEA safeguards. The USA

also supports Belarus' efforts to complete this commercial project as expeditiously as possible.

Welcoming progress regarding these global security issues, Belarus and the USA have acknowledged that enhanced respect for democracy and human rights in Belarus remains central to improving bilateral relations, and is essential to achieving progress in the country and for its citizens. The United States hopes to see substantial progress in these areas, particularly in the conduct of the December presidential elections in Belarus, with them meeting international standards. In this respect, Belarus' decision to invite a robust international monitoring presence to observe these elections is a positive step.

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