

# Bilateral movement strengthening

President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, pays official visit to Kazakhstan

Astana has hosted talks between Alexander Lukashenko and Nursultan Nazarbayev, crowning a three-day visit of the Belarusian state delegation — headed by the President — to Kazakhstan. Mr. Lukashenko outlined tasks, saying, “We’d like to join Kazakhstan’s grand plans [regarding industrialisation — author] and are ready to come and co-operate. We’ve almost no rival productions.”

At the moment, joint projects worth over \$100m are being realised in Kazakhstan. Mr. Nazarbayev expressed the readiness of Kazakhstan to participate in the privatisation of Belarusian enterprises. He is interested in machine building, petro-chemistry and agriculture. Evidently, the potential of our two states is much greater than that currently observed. New prospects would be possible within the Single Economic Space. Belarus hopes to receive Kazakhstan’s oil for processing and expects that all obstacles to transportation via Russia will soon be lifted.

Over the past few years, the two heads of state have often met at various international summits, including in Astana. Last December, it hosted the OSCE Summit. “I can’t help but come to the man who has always supported the Belarusian nation in difficult times, and who continues to support us now,” Mr. Lukashenko said on meeting the President of Kazakhstan. “On those December days, you were the first

to congratulate us on the results of the presidential campaign.” The Belarusian President also congratulated his Kazakhstani colleague on ‘his convincing win at the elections.’

The talks took place at the Ak Orda Palace, in Astana’s new centre. The majestic building, made from monolithic concrete, is surrounded by a tall forged fence. Everyone in Kazakhstan knows it — not because the Presidential Residence is situated there, but because the local 10,000 Tenge banknote (equivalent to \$65) features its image. “You’ve come to us just in time,” noted Mr. Nazarbayev. “In 2009 [during the President of Kazakhstan’s official visit to Belarus], we adopted a ‘Road Map,’

co-operation laid out by our ‘Road Map’ of collaboration. According to Mr. Nazarbayev, 27 joint ventures are planned. In addition, another strong catalyst exists to Minsk-Astana co-operation: the economic integration processes which are gradually being realised jointly with Moscow. These take the form of the Customs Union, the Single Economic Space and a future Eurasian Economic Union. We can assert that Kazakhstan is more than just a strategic partner; it is an ally. “We have unique allied relations,” stressed Mr. Lukashenko.

Russia has always been viewed as Belarus’ ally. Our countries have achieved the highest level of economic in-



Meeting between Alexander Lukashenko and Nursultan Nazarbayev in Astana

— to reach \$870m. Walking through Astana, I came across a shop selling Belarusian furniture — called proudly ‘a salon’. Moreover, Belarus-made tractors, tyres, trucks and milk products are well known in this country. Trade of services

— in your interests — to promote oil products to European markets... We can also offer Kazakhstan several promising avenues of co-operation in the petrochemical industry. You know this topic well.”

A joint declaration by the two presidents summed up the talks, stating that the priority is ‘to develop energy dialogue between Belarus and Kazakhstan, filled with practical contents — including preparations for signing a bilateral intergovernmental agreement on trade-economic co-operation in the field of oil and oil product supply to Belarus’

Certain progress is obvious in this branch. In 2010, Belarusian oil refineries processed 615,000 tonnes of Kazakhstan’s oil products and residual oil. Around 8m tonnes of raw oil was pumped to the West, with Kazakhstan helping Belarus move towards greater energy independence.

During his visit to Astana,

Mr. Lukashenko also gave a lecture at the Eurasian National University, to students and teachers. He spoke of the present economic situation in Belarus and of its foreign policy, focusing on relations with the European Union in particular. He explained that Belarus’ strategy embraces equal proximity to the West, East, Russia and the EU. “Of course, the eastern direction is much closer to us and more understandable; Russia has been and will remain our strategic ally,” he noted.

Mr. Lukashenko added that ‘co-operation with EU states is among the priorities of our foreign policy’ since the EU is the largest trading partner and investor. “It has much money — loans and so on — so there is no escape and no way round,” he said. Apart from the provision of a real multi-vector policy, the strengthening of energy security is another priority for Belarus. Minsk has confirmed its interest in processing Kazakhstan’s oil.

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unfolding our active co-operation. This should be developed further.” Mr. Lukashenko asserted that several dozen projects — outlined two years ago — are now being realised. Depending on how successful they prove to be, more should be added.

At present, eleven assembly facilities making Belarusian machinery operate in Kazakhstan. Three were launched this year, being real fruits of the

interaction. Kazakhstan’s car traders at Minsk’s car markets are the first signs of the Customs Union. However, our two states have every right to hope that greater advantages are to follow. For example, this year, a regular flight is being launched between our two capitals.

Kazakhstan accounts for just 2 percent of Belarus’ total exports but the trend is positive. In 2010, our bilateral turnover more than doubled (on 2009)

brings in another \$145m, with mutual trade exceeding \$1bn. In the first quarter of 2011, a 1.5-fold rise was registered.

Energy co-operation also seems promising. Minsk hopes to agree a transport policy with Russia. “The Single Economic Space ensures not only major possibilities but, also, obligations,” noted Mr. Lukashenko, adding, “We are very much interested in the diversification of oil supplies. We are ready

## Searching for ways to unite neighbourhood

Belarusian experts take part in discussing new programmes of trans-boundary co-operation with EU

The session in Brussels saw an exchange of opinions on the implementation of current programmes of trans-boundary collaboration. Moreover, it was discussed how best to improve management and control schemes between the European Commission and EU neighbours, covering new programmes. The session also studied proposals regarding the revision of national programme co-ordinators’ obligations, alongside common issues regarding the granting of international technical assistance.

## Good opportunity to assess prospects

**Belarusian delegation, headed by Belarusian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Aleinik, takes part in Ministerial Meeting of Non-Aligned Movement, in Indonesia**

The head of the Belarusian delegation delivered an introductory speech at the plenary session of the meeting from the NAM European Group, while making a national report on Belarus’ views on the role and place of the NAM for the future.

Additionally, Mr. Aleinik met heads of several delegations to discuss issues of bilateral co-operation and prospects for expanding trade-economic ties. Future joint actions aimed at implementing NAM strategic documents were high on the agenda.

It has been 50 years since the founding of the NAM, with the meeting providing

a good opportunity to assess prospects for further development of the organisation. Preparations for the meeting were held as part of a session of the NAM Co-ordinating Bureau in New York, where the agenda for the meeting and the draft final document were agreed upon. Belarus took an active part in this work, with Belarusian experts making proposals regarding the international combating of human trafficking and the setting up of an effective mechanism to distribute renewable and alternative energy sources. The latest document also secures Belarus’ principles of international collaboration, envisaging recognition for diversity of progressive development and strengthening of liaisons between the NAM and world centres of power.

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