

# Entrepreneurs express readiness to come forward

## Business consolidation now clearly needed

By Tatiana Kozlovskaya

In recent years, leaders of business associations have often been reproached for defending the interests of a limited group of people. In fact, very few entrepreneurs are actually represented within such unions or associations, as they rarely seek out dialogue with the authorities. Most are leaders of unions which attract no more than a few thousand members — although around 340,000 such legal entities operate in Belarus today.

The country's integration into an international trading system has brought changes of late: via the Customs Union and the imminent Single Economic Space. Belarus will soon fall under the strict rules of the WTO, as our major trading partner — Russia — is expected to become a member before long. Domestic experts — includ-

ing business representatives — are concerned as to how they can become strong and respected market players. Of course, all seek to generate the greatest profit possible but, after recent turbulence on Belarus' currency market, businesses are far from being in peak condition.

Legislation may be adopted to oblige all entrepreneurs to join associations and unions: an approach used in countries such as Germany and Holland and advocated by the World Trade Organisation. Belarus currently boasts no more than a couple of such organisations which can help manufacturers lobby important decisions at state level. The development of state-private partnership is on the agenda, with a draft law ready for discussion. Moreover, our business community has joined experts from the International Finance

Corporation to prepare a draft law on self-regulating organisations. Similar structures already function in Russia.

Major business problems are being solved but more need attention. During a recent meeting, representatives of business associations expressed their firm belief that the state should not rely exclusively on foreign investors to develop the economy. Russian businesses have an investing advantage under the conditions of the Single Economic Space, but it would be dangerous to rely on them too heavily. Vladimir Karyagin, the Chairman of Minsk's Union of Entrepreneurs, is proposing that we create a layer of large Belarusian businesses by passing enterprises into the hands of efficient managers, who can buy shares in their company when sufficient profit is generated.



Dobrynya construction company applies new experience

## Opening investors' eyes

**Belarus to organise 2012 investment forum in Asia**

"We've already been working within the European region and now plan to unfold similar work in leading Asian capitals," stresses Belarus' Deputy Foreign Minister, Alexander Guryanov.

Previously, Belarus has organised investment forums in Frankfurt am Maine and London and, according to the official, will continue doing so. Such investment forums yield positive results, providing diverse information on our country's opportunities. Deals achieved at such events always enjoy wide business and public recognition.

Mr. Guryanov — who co-chairs the Working Group on Creating a Favourable Investment Image for Belarus Abroad (established at the Advisory Council on Foreign Investments under the Council of Ministers) — notes that foreign investors continue to show interest in Belarus, despite the financial crisis. This year, new foreign and joint ventures were set up.

Mr. Guryanov is confident that, in 2012, the economic situation in the country will allow us to assert that Belarus' investment image is improving.

# Market with great potential

## Minsk Automobile Works branch opens in Vietnam

By Olga Belyavskaya

The Hanoi opening ceremony for the new branch of Minsk's Automobile Works was attended by Belarusian Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikov. He noted prospects for the further expansion of MAZ, in collaboration with Vietnamese partners — including Veam. He asserted, "I think that projects dealing with the creation of factories, as discussed by us here, will be implemented, producing automobile machinery and engines."

The plants' goods are to be sold on the Vietnamese market, and exported across South-East Asia. "It's a huge market, worth around \$1.5 trillion annually," underlined Mr. Myasnikov. He stressed the necessity of expanding production of Belarusian machinery in Vietnam, developing partnerships with large international companies. In this respect, he is hopeful of forming a transnational corporation to produce automobile machinery, involving manufacturers from Belarus, Vietnam and Germany.



MAZ branch opening ceremony in Vietnam

"We should set up joint large transnational corporations, which would work on our markets and on those of third countries," stressed the Prime Minister of Belarus confidently. He asked the business circles of Vietnam to actively join such projects. "Only in

this way can we win under conditions of global competition," underlined Mr. Myasnikov.

Developing co-operation with Belarus, Vietnam is entering our domestic market, as well as those of the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space.

"Actually, you're gaining duty-free trade with our countries," the PM added. A unique opportunity is being created to form a zone of free trade between the Customs Union and Vietnam and, in future, between the Customs Union and South-East Asian countries.

## Minsk and Ho Chi Minh to deepen co-operation

By Oksana Nemolyaeva

**Programme to implement Minsk-Ho Chi Minh co-operative agreement signed for coming five years**

The Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee, Nikolai Ladutko, signed the agreement on the Belarusian side; the document aims to expand our two cities' level of co-operation. It continues from an agreement signed in 2008. "It's symbolic that this programme was signed

by the largest industrial and financial centre of Vietnam — Ho Chi Minh. It's a whole new stage of co-operation for Belarus and Vietnam," Mr. Ladutko stresses, explaining that manufacturing companies and businessmen from our two cities and countries will have more opportunities for liaising as a result.

The move is expected to inspire the development of educational and scientific links. "Mutually beneficial partnership is envisaged," the Minsk Mayor tells us.

## Acquaintance with region's opportunities takes place in Italy

**Brest Region's investment opportunities presented in Milan**

The Chairman of the Brest Regional Executive Committee, Konstantin Sumar, has led a delegation to the *Belarus: Brest FEZ and the Growing Economic Market* conference, organised by the Italian Assolombarda Industrial Association, with assistance from the Belarusian Embassy to Italy and

the Italy-Belarus Chamber of Commerce (an Italian public organisation).

The Belarusian delegation included the Head of the Brest FEZ, Victor Nevdakh, and heads of Belarusian companies — all keen to develop co-operation with Italy. Mr. Nevdakh, who is also the Governor of the Brest Region, reported on investment projects and other opportunities for foreign companies.