

Integration in all variety of forms

By Yevgeny Vetrov

Eurasian Parliament could be formed on basis of Customs Union and Single Economic Space

This was just one of the topics discussed by the inter-parliamentary assemblies of the CIS, EurAsEC and CSTO; delegates from 11 countries debated urgent issues in the sphere of politics, economy and military co-operation, meeting in St. Petersburg's Tauride Palace.

The head of the Belarusian delegation, the Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus, Vladimir Andreichenko, commented on the results of the meeting of the speakers of the parliaments of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia and mentioned that the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union is impossible without a parliamentary dimension. "Agreements within the scope of SES control are oriented towards trade but legislation in other spheres also needs attention — such as that dealing with foreign policy," he noted. A work team has been created to develop a 'road map' for the parliamentary dimension of Eurasian economic integration.

Current areas of bilateral relations were discussed by Mr. Andreichenko in meetings with colleagues from Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan — including exchange visits. Speaking at the meeting of the Council of the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly, he added that the Belarusian Parliament is 'paying attention to the country's coming election campaign and will endeavour to ensure that the parliamentary elections are held according to the Constitution of the country, while corresponding to national legislation and international standards.'

Readiness to co-operate convincingly proven

What connects Belarus and Cambodia? The first thing which comes to mind is 17 years of diplomatic relations and constructive political dialogue. We share a close position in the international arena on many issues, yet our business interaction lags behind.



Alexander Lukashenko and Heng Samir

By Denis Dronov

On meeting the Chairman of the National Assembly of Cambodia's Parliament, Heng Samrin, the Belarusian President noted that it's a little awkward to speak of trade turnover, which stands at just \$2m. The potential for greater collaboration is clearly

far greater, as proven by several recent events.

This March, Cambodia was visited by a delegation from the Belarusian Industry Ministry, which agreed expansion of co-operation in the spheres of industry, power engineering and extraction of mineral resources. MAZ and BELAZ signed memorandums on

co-operation with Vietnamese-Cambodian Vinacommin-Reththy Company, also agreeing to supply heavy duty dump trucks and quarry machinery. Amkodor has established similar contacts with local Jos Sovann Sokntearos, while MTZ has agreed to sell 350-400 tractors to Mekong Machinery this year.

Other preliminary agreements have been agreed, so we can certainly view the current visit by the Cambodian parliamentary delegation as a move to strengthen and expand liaisons. Mr. Lukashenko is delighted, noting, "We're ready to co-operate with you in all areas and are ready to expand our collaboration to the full extent you desire. We can raise trade turnover several fold but need to set up direct trade-economic ties, enabling us to act without intermediaries."

Political dialogue continues at a high level, with the President of Belarus noting, "We don't have any contradictions or disagreements regarding the global international political agenda."

Mr. Lukashenko also thanked his guest for the assistance provided by Cambodia in helping Belarus gain observer status at the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Cambodia currently presides over this organisation and our interest in this region is well known. Friendly mutual relations have been established with a range of states, while business interaction is gaining momentum with some countries. This is a promising foreign political and economic direction, as the ASEAN unites ten states, with a total population of around 602m and total GDP of \$1.8 trillion. Clearly, there is solid potential for developing mutually beneficial collaboration.

Heng Samrin thanked Belarus for a warm welcome and underlined Cambodia's desire to further strengthen and reinforce relations.

Through prism of mutual interests

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko gives interview to Venezolana de Televisión on eve of upcoming visit to Venezuela

The Presidential Press Service told BELTA that the President chatted for an hour and a half, discussing bilateral co-operation between Belarus and Venezuela, politics in Latin America and the wider international situation.

Mr. Lukashenko noted that, in a very short period, major projects have been implemented in Venezuela, with enterprises and homes built with the participation of Belarusian specialists.

"Initially, we agreed with Hugo Chávez that we'd buy and extract your mineral resources according to your laws, while helping you to create an industrial base for your state. We're ready to participate in developing Venezuela, protecting you from dependence on raw materi-

als and creating powerful industrial and agro-industrial complexes in your country," asserted Mr. Lukashenko. He also emphasised that Belarus is ready to participate in new projects in Venezuela.

"We're ready to develop further the construction of chemical, petrochemical and household appliance enterprises, including those making televisions. In future, we'll be building heat power plants, gas pipelines and a huge number of residential houses in Venezuela," he added.

Mr. Lukashenko notes that extraction of natural resources is planned with the participation of Belarus, in particular phosphates (for the production of nitrogen fertilisers). Belarus produces huge volumes of potash fertilisers and is ready to establish a major centre in Venezuela to blend and sell fertilisers to the whole Latin American region, where demand is great. In addition, Mr. Lukashenko



drew attention to the fact that a wide range of joint commercial enterprises are being set up in Venezuela for onward sale of goods to Latin America.

We're carrying out Mr. Chávez's ideas regarding the diversification of the economy. I'm sure that, over a five-year period, we'll see striking results, which will further transform Venezuela," said the Belarusian leader.

Mr. Lukashenko stressed that Belarus views Venezuela as a hub from which to liaise with all Latin America. He commented, "I see Venezuela as a great base from which we can work with all Latin America. I've also suggested to my friend Mr. Chávez that he consider Belarus as a base, in a good sense, for economic

expansion in Europe."

"The objective basis for our co-operation rests with the economy; we need each other," said Mr. Lukashenko. "Our mutual need comes from our complementary economies, which inspire us to objectively co-operate."

The President noted that Belarus, while co-operating with Venezuela, also relies on the abilities of major world players such as Russia, China, Iran and countries in Asia and Africa. "This is why we are co-operating with other powerful states; this support gives us confidence for the future," said the Head of State.

At the same time, Mr. Lukashenko stressed that other states should not feel threatened by close ties between any two countries. "We're not allying ourselves against anyone. We plan no conflict or war; we simply wish to ensure the independence and prosperity of our states and peoples," he admitted.

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