

February  
2007

# East Inform

Chambre de Commerce Belgo-Luxembourgeoise pour la Russie et la Belarus, asbl  
Belgisch-Luxemburgse Kamer van Koophandel voor Rusland en Wit-Rusland, vzw

Chamber certified CCI Belgium

Avenue Louise,  
500 Louisalaan, 500  
B - 1050  
Bruxelles-Brussel

GSM: +32 473 94 86 55  
Fax: +32 2 353 13 11  
E-mail: a.arianoff@ccblr.org  
http://www.ccblr.org

For the activities and the conferences,  
please open our site [www.ccblr.org](http://www.ccblr.org)

## Table of contents

Economic and political Relations between EU and Russia .....	1
Banks with foreign capital proliferate in Russia .....	3
News from Russia .....	4
News from Belarus .....	8
Belgian businessmen miss investment opportunities in Russia .....	9
Rusland en de Europese energieveiligheid / La Russie, Gazprom et la sécurité énergétique de l'Europe .....	10
Conference on cooperation opportunities for Russian and Belgian software producers and distributors ..	13
The 10th Annual Russian Economic Forum in London ..	14
Over het jaarlijks concours van de Russische taal / Concours annuel de la langue russe .....	15
Petites annonces / kleine aankondigingen .....	16
Request for membership ..	18
Composition & fonctionnement / samenstelling & taakverdeling .....	19



## Economic and political Relations between EU and Russia

### Our conference on January 24, 2007

Attracting more than 103 enthusiastic participants to our first 2007 conference, **H. E. Mr Vladimir CHIZHOV** exposed brightly the relations between the European Union and Russia, revealing with much poise and judgment the great problems and respective interests of Russia and the EU in their closer and closer relationship.

He was, as presented by our vice-president Daniel Stevens, the perfect speaker for this subject, since as an ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, he is the permanent representative of the Russian Federation to the European Communities, and has been also extremely active for European matters at the OSCE, and at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (of which he was Vice-Minister), having conducted many analytical research works on the subject



H. E. Mr Vladimir A. CHIZHOV

Before the conference, Mr Dimitri de Heering, a director of the Chamber, had exposed the main **future activities of our Chamber:**

- Two big meeting days, organized with Agoria in Brussels and Antwerp, with a big and high level delegation from Russian and Chinese steel industries and intended to Belgian companies involved in the business, including steel processing, transport, port handling, etc.
- A big mission in the Ural (Yekaterinburg and Tiumen) in next June
- Another mission to join the fair of Nijni-Novgorod in September



A **cocktail** offered by our Chamber closed this nice event and allowed the participants to go on discussing with the subject of the conference, reminding such facts and ideas exposed during the conference, among which we point out the followings:

- The Russian language is the **5th in the world**, after Chinese, English, Hindi and Spanish. It is spoken by 300 millions peoples, twice the population of Russia.
- **The European Union is the 3rd trade partner of Russia**, after USA and China. The 1st Russian gas pipe-line has been built 40 years ago.
- A mere 20% of consumed energy in the EU comes from Russia, but 70 % of energy export from Russia goes to the EU ...
- H.E. Mr Chizhov felt very sure that **Russia will never be a member of the EU**. However, with the EU, while many countries have few (or no) bilateral agreements, the WTO agreements (that Russia will nearly respect) are completed by several common spaces and a "Treaty of Strategic Partnership", should be nearly agreed upon to succeed the former agreement dd. 2004. And a visa agreement between EU and Russia should nearly be entered. This all put **the relationship to an uncommon level**, compared with other countries.

Mr Chizhov, however, urges the EU to overcome its internal differences that are blocking agreements with Russia, namely the beginning of negotiations on a **new basic partnership and cooperation agreement** with Russia. Ahead of the Russia-EU summit in Helsinki on November 24, 2006, Poland indeed vetoed the start of talks on a new agreement (the existing one expires at the end of 2007) by demanding that Russia should lift its embargo on farm products from Poland.

Russia's principal partner in the negotiations is the European Commission, which should get a mandate to start negotiations from the Council of the European Union: this did not yet happen because of the stance taken by Poland. While the Russian side expected the negotiations to start at the end of 2006 at the latest, this did not yet occur. Mr. Chizhov expressed thus the hope that with the EU rotating presidency going to Germany, the situation could change for the better: "Germany's representatives, including the Chancellor herself, tell us that there is some hope that the negotiations will begin during the German presidency," he said.

He recalled that the current basic document, which came into effect on December 1, 1997, was concluded for 10 years, but with yearly extensions. The 10 years period may thus come to an end without causing any legal vacuum, as the existing relation between Russia and the EU will then merely be extended. "However, the agreement's termination was seen by both sides as a good opportunity to draw conclusions, assess the results achieved and improve many provisions of the existing agreement", he said.

In his view, a "facelift" improvement of the agreement could help remove some of the issues, but would not be the best way to solve the backlog of problems. "Russia and the EU have come to the conclusion that the optimum decision would be to conclude a new basic document which was given the working name of **"Agreement on Strategic Partnership"**.

To a question on the reason why Russia is expelling the western oil companies like Chevron, Exxon, or Total etc. by taking major shares in Yukos, or Gazprom, he replied that this is not true: On the contrary, the political change on energy did not affect badly the western interest.

With the Central Asia countries, Russia has of course also common interests: the fight against drugs, for example. Germany, that will take the presidency of EU in 2007, will also put Central Asia on priority.

*(We thank Mr Fedor Klimkin, RIA Novosti, Brussels for the notes he gave as a contribution to our article)*



## Banks with foreign capital proliferate in Russia

In late December 2006, Russia's parliament passed legislative amendments to simplify and encourage the flow of foreign capital into the Russian banking sector. The largest transactions completed in 2006 show that non-residents have not been active enough on the market.

Amendments to the law on the Central Bank and on banks and banking have simplified the procedure for lending organizations to raise capital from non-residents. From now on, non-residents will need a permit from the Central Bank only if they buy more than 10% of a lending organization. Smaller acquisitions require only a notification.

The amendments have not changed the way in which banks with foreign capital operate in the Russian financial system. Now, foreign banks may work in Russia only through subsidiaries opened with the permission of the Central Bank and have a limited opportunity to open branches. The Russian authorities restricted access to create equal conditions for foreign and Russian banks.

Although the restrictions have not been removed, the latest amendments point to the growing openness of the Russian banking sector and the Kremlin's intention to continue improving it. In addition, the rules do not prevent non-residents from working on the Russian market or developing specified banking services.

According to the Central Bank, 1,154 lending organizations operated in Russia as of December 1, 2006. Of them, 149 were banks with foreign capital, including 51 banks with 100% foreign capital and 12 with more than 50% foreign capital.

The Central Bank's efforts to cleanse the banking sector of mala fide operators and unviable organizations are increasing its transparency and improving the quality of services and management.

Gradual improvements in the macroeconomic situation in Russia and rapid growth in its banking sector in recent years have been making the Russian market more attractive to foreigners. The completion of bilateral talks on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization should boost the confidence of those foreign investors who had been wary of the Russian market.

The Central Bank reports that non-residents' share of the aggregate capital of the Russian banking sector has grown from 11.2% in early 2006 to 14.4% as of October 1. Between January and late September 2006, the number of private deposits with banks with foreign capital grew faster than the average for the sector.

At the same time, banks with foreign capital are changing their mode of operation. In the past, they mostly wanted to grab a foothold on the Russian market, while now some of them, primarily large network banks with a large amount of equity, are eager to buy Russian banks, mostly those that offer major retail programs and have large regional networks. Several such acquisitions were made in 2006.

The Austrian banking group Raiffeisen International bought 100% of Impexbank for \$550 million and is now merging it with its Russian subsidiary, Raiffeisenbank Austria.

The French group Societe Generale bought 20% of Rosbank for \$634 million with an option to buy another 30% for \$1.7 billion by the end of 2008. The group is operating in Russia through its 100% subsidiary Bank Societe Generale Vostok, Rusfinance (a leader on the retail loan market), and DeltaCredit, one of the largest mortgage loan banks in Russia. Impexbank and Rosbank are on the Central Bank list of Russia's top 30 banks and have large networks of regional offices.

Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin said those deals showed that the Russian banking sector was becoming more attractive and civilized.

In November 2006, the Swedish financial group Nordea announced the acquisition of 75.01% of Orgresbank for \$313.7 million. Like other foreign investors, it intends to use the bank's regional network to win over some segments of the Russian banking market.

There are other examples of both completed and planned transactions of this kind. Positive changes on the Russian market have not gone unnoticed, and foreign banks are now scrutinizing ways to develop retail banking in Russia. At the same time, Russian banks want to cooperate with foreigners because their progress depends on increasing owner equity. The need to compete with foreigners makes them increase business transparency and improve corporate governance.

Will such competition benefit or disable Russian banks?

Major foreign banks that are coming to Russia are so far more competitive than Russian banks. However, Kudrin said the share of foreign capital in the Russian banking system would grow very gradually to 30-35% within five to seven years. Foreign players will not dominate the Russian market, he said, and stiffer competition will benefit Russian clients.

The number of banks with foreign capital is growing in Russia, and foreigners are buying into Russian commercial banks with more and more enthusiasm. This is proof that the Russian banking system has become more open and mature.

*(The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and may not necessarily represent the opinions of the editorial board). (RIA Novosti economic commentator Nina Kulikova)*



## NEWS FROM RUSSIA

### \* New rules for foreign investors

On Wednesday, January 31, the government approved a draft law on foreign access to the capital of Russian companies in strategic sectors of the Russian economy.

The remaining issues will be finalized within a month. However, the essence of the bill is unlikely to change, and soon those foreign investors who will want to control more than 50% in a strategic company will have to apply to the Russian authorities for a special permit.

First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said all transactions involving foreign shareholders in Russian strategic organizations will be approved on four levels: by a relevant authorized federal agent, the governmental commission on foreign investment, the government and the president. The governmental commission will approve transactions within three months. The government will be responsible for official denials if it sees that an investor may pose a threat to national security. An investor can be vested with additional commitments related to the protection of state secrets.

The draft law includes a list of Russian strategic sectors. The bill imposes limitations on those investors whose activities are aimed at participation in the capital of national producers of armaments, and special and aviation equipment. In addition, there are limitations on foreign access to Russian natural monopolies, companies processing and using nuclear materials and federal mineral resources.

Although the Cabinet suggested that the Russian Industry and Energy Ministry finalize the document in a month, its underlying principles are unlikely to change. Among other things, the minimum purchasing limit for shares requiring an official approval and coordinating procedures may be altered.

The novelties related to the use of mineral resources coincide with amendments to the law on mineral resources. The amendments specify the fields where foreigners will not be able to gain control, such as uranium and diamond fields, and large gold and copper deposits. Nor will foreign investors be able to control the development of offshore deposits and oil and gas fields with reserves exceeding 70 million metric tons and 50 million cubic meters, respectively. These amendments are likely to be submitted to parliament in two weeks.

The draft law also stipulates other limitations. Foreign investors will have to obtain the government's approval for the resale or transfer of shares in a Russian company, and for the transfer of shares to beneficial owners.

The bill was initiated about two years ago, when Siemens was seeking a large stake in a Russian producer of electric equipment for the power sector. Although the two companies' executives unanimously approved the deal, legislators staged a protest suspecting that it may pose a threat to national interests. Parliament pointed to the fact that apart from civilian industry products, such as equipment for power plants, the company also produced electrical items for military hardware. As a result, the deal was never realized.

However, many national and foreign observers were convinced that what had prevented the Russian and foreign businessmen from working together were outdated stereotypes. The Russian company was allegedly deprived of developing through the participation of foreign partners.

Parliamentarians were evidently guided by patriotic considerations. However, a bitter aftertaste remained. To clear up the situation and prevent similar misunderstanding in the future, the Industry and Energy Ministry worked out a draft law to regulate the rights and responsibilities of foreign investors in Russia and those of the Russian authorities.

The bill submitted to the Cabinet on the whole serves the purpose. It is based on the so-called licensing concept, under which foreign investors have to coordinate their deals in advance. If the law is adopted, it will not be applied retroactively, and its provisions will only cover deals involving foreign investors and concluded after the law comes into effect.

Many foreign investors, active or planning to work in Russia, approve of the bill, which sets strict rules of the game. However, there was heated debate about the draft law at a government meeting. Russian Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref said that the bill would impede the influx of foreign investment in the Russian economy, as it sets specific limitations for investment in infrastructure facilities.

In turn, Russian Natural Resources Minister Yury Trutnev said that the lack of law hampered the holding of auctions to issue licenses for the development of strategic deposits. However, the minister stressed that if the Industry and Energy Ministry's draft law and amendments to the law on mineral resources were discussed separately, the work on the two documents could proceed faster.

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and may not necessarily represent the opinions of the editorial board.

*(RIA Novosti political commentator Alexander Yurov)*

### \* Draft law on foreign access to Russian strategic organizations

Russia's Industry and Energy Ministry said Saturday it had sent an updated draft law on foreigners' access to Russian strategic organizations to interested ministries and departments.



The Russian government approved in general terms January 31 draft laws on foreign investment in the country's strategic assets, which among other restrictions stipulate that foreigners should only be able to buy controlling stakes in energy, military-related and other enterprises classed as "strategic" with the permission of a government commission, and after approval from the Federal Security Service (FSB).

"The bill has been updated particularly optimizing levels of decision-making on foreign investors' applications," a ministry source said.

The source said the document was sent to the Economic Development and Trade Ministry, the Natural Resources Ministry, the Federal Security Service and the Defense Ministry. The bill suggests restricting foreign companies' access in 39 spheres, including production of arms, military hardware, nuclear materials, and construction of nuclear facilities.

Restrictions also apply to spheres having 2-3% share in the GDP.

Russian officials say the measures aim to make mechanisms of state control over energy deals more transparent and understandable to foreign investors, and ensure the country's security and interests in sensitive spheres. However, critics say the decisions could harm Russia's investment climate.

Last year, Russian authorities applied pressure to reduce foreign companies' shares in oil and gas projects being implemented under production-sharing agreements allowing for major tax and other privileges.

In December 2007, natural gas monopoly Gazprom acquired a 50% plus one share in the Sakhalin II liquefied natural gas project off Russia's Pacific coast for \$7.45 billion. Up until the deal, operator Royal Dutch Shell had come under months of intense pressure from environmental regulators for large-scale ecological destruction caused in the region.

### \* Foreign cars conquer Russia

The Russian car market has broken another record, reaching an all-time high of \$32 billion late last year, an increase of almost 50% against 2005, according to Pricewaterhouse Coopers.

The achievements of this market are interesting not only because of its dynamics. Remarkably, last year Russians spent as much on cars as the French, outrunning Spaniards and Belgians. Yet the Russian car market is still developing. By 2010, it is expected to outrun the British and Italian markets, which are Europe's No. 2 and No. 3, PwC analysts predict. Only the German market's performance remains unattainable so far.

As price characteristics of the Russian car market change, so does its structure. The data available at the end of 2006 show that the domestic car industry has ceded its leading position in monetary terms. 2006 was a year of foreign cars for Russians.

Russians spent only \$5.8 billion on domestic cars against \$18.2 billion on foreign makes. Foreign cars assembled in Russia as part of the government program of industrial assembly are gaining popularity. Their sales amounted to \$4.4 billion.

The domestic car manufacture grew by mere 5% in monetary terms last year, whereas sales of imported foreign cars soared by 78% and of foreign cars assembled in Russia by 100%. At the same time, sales of used cars fell by 13% in monetary terms.

However, foreign cars outran those made in Russia not only in monetary terms. For the first time in history, the number of sold foreign cars exceeded that of domestic cars. Sales of foreign cars grew significantly, while of Russian cars fell by 5%.

Experts believe that the share of foreign cars on the Russian market will continue growing in 2007. This prediction is substantiated by the announcement made in December that three more assembly plants are set to appear in Russia. Mitsubishi Jidosha announced its intention to build a car assembly plant near St. Petersburg, in cooperation with Peugeot-Citroen. The first car made by the plant, a Lancer, will appear on the Russian market in 2010. About the same time, it may start assembling two other C-class cars, Citroen C4 and Peugeot 308.

Some time earlier, Nissan and Suzuki announced their plans to set up a joint car assembly in Russia.

At present, Russia assembles Ford Focus and Renault Logan. Toyota and Volkswagen will complete the construction of their assembly plants in the near future. In addition, several GM cars and some South Korean makes, notably, Hyundai, Kia and Ssang Yong are assembled in Russia.

To be fair, the key domestic car manufacturer, AvtoVAZ, is preparing an adequate response. By 2010, it hopes to develop a series of modern C-class cars. It even plans to build a new plant with a capacity of 450,000 cars annually together with Magna. This cooperation can result in a high quality and modern car. But will it be able to join the ongoing competition between foreign producers for the Russian market? Russian carmakers with their outdated cars first ceded the market to used cars from Europe and are now losing the battle to foreign cars assembled in Russia.

### \* Russian diamond giant Alrosa's president resigns

The president of Russia's largest diamond producer Alrosa, Alexander Nichiporuk, is resigning from his post, the company said in a press release Friday.

Alrosa said Nichiporuk's decision "arises from the need to fulfill tasks set before him by the company's shareholders."

"These include, primarily, the group's efficient work to carry out the Russian president's instructions concerning the protection of state property in the diamond sector, including the purchase of a large stake from minority shareholders."

Russia's federal government, the largest single owner of Alrosa, is set to increase its current 37% stake in the world's No.2 rough diamond producer to a controlling interest. The government of Sakha (Yakutia), the Russian Far Eastern republic where most of



the company's operations are based, owns 32%. Eight percent belongs to Yakutia's provinces, and the remaining 23% is held by the company's staff.

The Kremlin is trying to raise its equity by redistributing the company's capital assets between itself and the Yakut government. It has promised Yakutia a larger share of federal tax revenue and more generous allocations for social and environmental programs. But the republic's government is reluctant to cede control over the company, which accounts for 23% of global raw diamond output.

Last September, Nichiporuk said Alrosa will be reorganized into an open joint stock company once the dispute with the republic's authorities is solved, and that its operations will be diversified from the diamond business into coal and gold mining and exploration of oil and natural gas.

### \* Russian steelmaker OMK reports 56% pipe output growth in 2006

Russian steel company OMK reported Friday that its pipe production in 2006 had increased by 56%, year-on-year, to 1.7 million tons.

The company said its estimated earnings rose 50% and totaled more than \$3 billion in the reporting period.

The steelmaker increased its share on the Russian pipe market from 22.1% to 35.6% in 2006, OMK said in a statement.

The company also said it will spend \$800 million on investment programs in 2007, 21% more than last year, and plans to increase pipe production output to 1.8 million tons.

Founded in 1992, OMK Group is one of Russia's leading producers of steel pipes for the oil and gas industry, railroads, metallurgical coke and other steel products. OMK comprises six large metallurgical plants.

The company said it had expanded its production of large-diameter pipes intended for the construction of large trunk pipelines, such as the Nord Stream pipeline and the Eastern Siberia-Pacific oil pipeline.

### \* Foreign vendors unwelcome at Russian markets

Sixty-eight percent of Russians support ideas to restrict the number of foreign retailers operating at Russian markets, down from 75 percent last year, shows an opinion survey conducted by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM) in January. Twelve percent said they were undecided, up from 7 percent.

Thirty-six percent of respondents said they regularly (at least once a week) purchased products from markets and street stalls. Another thirty-six percent said they bought products there from time to time (at least once a month). Thirteen percent said they did so rarely, and fourteen percent said they did not go to them at all. The highest percentage of market-goers lives in small towns.

Thirty-seven percent of those polled think the presence and activity of foreigners at Russian markets remain unchanged, while twenty-seven percent said the number of foreign vendors in Russia had gone down and eighteen percent think it has increased.

The withdrawal of foreigners from Russian markets was particularly noticeable in the Far East (44 percent of respondents think so). In the Ural region, the highest number of respondents (35 percent) are concerned about an increase in the number of foreign retailers. In the North-West Federal District, 49 percent think the level of foreign presence at the region's markets remains stable. Seventy-one percent of respondents see the reduction in the number of foreign traders as a positive factor, and twenty-two percent have the opposite opinion. Forty-eight percent believe that the removal of foreigners from domestic markets will not affect prices, up from 40 percent in November 2006. Sixty-two percent think this will not affect the number and quality of products (up from 49 percent) and fifty-eight percent think this will not improve the quality of service (up from 45 percent).

1,600 people in 153 locations across Russia took part in the survey, which was carried out by VTsIOM on 27 and 28 January 2006.

In November last year the government reduced the presence of foreigners among retailers operating at markets and on street stalls. Their number was set at 40 percent of the number of employees from 15 January to 1 April 2007, and at 0 percent from 1 April to 31 December 2007.

### \* Russian economy in speculative growth

The country's GDP grew 6.7 percent thanks to trade and stock exchange operations

Russia's GDP grew 6.7 percent in 2006, up from 6.4 percent in 2005, the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation has reported. Yet, the negative trends of the previous year continued into 2006. The most impressive growth was shown by the industries in which an important role is played by speculative activity.

The nominal GDP in 2006 amounted to RUR 26.62 trillion (approx. \$1 trillion). Manufacturing industries accounted for just 16.3 percent, mineral production made up 8.9 percent, while trade - nearly 17 percent.

Russia remains a country with a fast-growing economy. GDP growth was up 0.3 percent in 2006, thanks to investment, rising oil prices, and Russia's budget policy boosting personal incomes and consumption.

Imports grew quickly last year, unlike exports, says Anton Struchenevsky, an economist at Troika Dialog. As a result of reduced



net exports, GDP growth was much lower compared with an increase in domestic demand. "This trend appeared in 2005, and it continued into 2006. Growing domestic demand did not stimulate growth in manufacturing and the so-called traded sector (industries facing competition from foreign producers)," Struchenevsky said. He attributed this to the Central Bank's aggressive policy of supporting the ruble over the past two years. "This had a negative impact on domestic producers," he stressed.

The construction and transport sectors showed impressive growth in 2006 - 14 and 9.4 percent, respectively. And the traded sector was growing slower, Struchenevsky says. Agriculture rose by 1.7 percent, and manufacturing industries went up 4.9 percent. Manufacturing growth has been declining over the past few years. Growth in manufacturing is supported primarily by sectors oriented towards meeting consumer demand, says Igor Nikolayev, chief strategic analyst at FBK. He also criticized the structure of investment in the Russian economy. "Financial investment (acquisition of stock in the first place) is five times higher than capital investment," he said.

"A speculative growth model has taken shape. The quality of GDP growth is unsatisfactory. This model cannot ensure stable growth," Nikolayev said. The industrial sector grew slower last year, while industries in which speculative activities played an important role (trade and financial operations) grew faster. Nikolayev stressed the need for an industrial policy based on the understanding of fundamental changes.

### \* Russians getting rich

Personal incomes increased 10 percent in 2006

The Federal Statistics Service of the Russian Federation has published key indicators of the country's socio-economic development in 2006. The report shows that personal incomes increased by 10 percent in Russia in real terms.

Fighting poverty has been declared a priority by the government. In 2000 more than 30 percent of Russians lived below the poverty line, which means that their incomes were below the subsistence minimum. In 2006, their number dropped to below 15 percent. According to the Economy Ministry's estimates, it will stand at 14.5 percent in 2007, falling to 12.6 percent in 2007 and 11.3 percent in 2009.

Real disposable incomes increased by 10 percent in 2006 compared with 2005. The average monthly wage climbed 24.5 percent to RUR 10,736 (approx. \$404), up 13.5 percent in real terms.

In November, the highest average wage of RUR 26,000 (approx. \$978.5) or 2.3 times more than the country's average, was reported in the finance sector. In the raw materials sector, the average wage was RUR 23,000 (approx. \$865.6). In the manufacturing sector wages were 4 percent lower, in education - 30 percent lower, in healthcare and social services sector - 22 percent lower.

Igor Nikolayev, Director of the Strategic Analysis Department of FBK, pointed to the reduced gap between areas with traditionally high salaries and Russia's average level. According to Russia's Federal Statistics Service, in December 2005 the average salary in the raw materials sector was 2.7 times higher than the country's average and it was 2.9 times higher in the financial sector, while it was 39 percent lower in education and 36 percent lower in healthcare.

Growing incomes in the real sector do not surprise economists. And people themselves feel that their incomes are rising, says Julia Tsepilyaeva, **at ING Bank**. "This is a lot. Such growth rates are typical of growing economies exporting energy at a time of peak prices," she said. In Kazakhstan, where economic conditions are close to those in Russia, real personal incomes increased by 10.8 percent last year.

"Under the circumstances, we should have had better results," commented Igor Nikolayev. He criticized the government for its one-sided approach to curbing inflation through reducing the money supply. Another factor affecting inflation is low competition. "Measures aimed at boosting competition on commodities markets would allow us to leave more money in the economy, and public sector wages could be raised. In this case, real personal incomes could increase not by 10 percent but by 20 percent," Nikolayev said.

In 2007 personal incomes will rise by 9.8 percent in real terms, in the estimation of the Economy Ministry. Julia Tsepilyakova expects a more modest growth of 8.5 percent. "Incomes will rise significantly this year, partly thanks to higher budget spending," forecasts Anton Struchenevsky, an economist at Troika Dialog brokerage. Oil prices remain high, which will also have a positive impact on personal incomes.

Analytical department of RIA RosBusinessConsulting



## NEWS FROM BELARUS

### \* In 2006, Belarus Increases Foreign Trade in Goods by 28.7% up to \$42.0 Billion

In 2006, Belarus increased the foreign trade in goods by 28.7% as against 2005 up to \$42.06 billion, according to the Ministry of Statistics and Analysis.

Last year the exports of Belarusian goods surged by 23.5% up to \$19.74 billion, imports – by 33.6% up to \$22.32 billion. Belarus had a foreign trade deficit to the tune of \$2.58 billion.

More than a half of the trade accounted for the CIS countries. In 2006, Belarus' foreign trade in goods with the CIS member states soared by 27% as against 2005 and reached \$23.11 billion. Exports came to \$8.61 billion, imports – to \$14.5 billion, or 22% and 30.1% up over 2005 respectively. Exports of goods to Russia totalled \$6.85 billion (19.8% growth), imports - \$13.08 billion (29.3% up). On the whole, in 2006 the foreign trade with Russia increased by 25.9% to make up \$19.93 billion.

In 2006, Belarus built up foreign trade with the non-CIS countries by 30.8%, up to \$18.95 billion. Exports reached \$11.12 billion, imports - \$7.83 billion, or 24.7% and 40.6% up from 2005 respectively.

### \* In 2007 Belarus plans to produce 2 thousand cars for domestic market

The document features the list of the import-replacing goods, which should be started to be produced by the national companies in 2007. The list was determined in line with the state import replacing program for 2006-2010. The production of consumer goods will be carried out in the framework of the sectoral and regional import replacing programs. The list includes almost 130 nonfoods and 11 food products. The Belarusian industry ministry was entrusted with producing cars. In 2006, the assembly production of cars of the Iranian company Iran Khodro was launched in Minsk at the production facilities of the Unison company.

Moreover, in 2007 the industry ministry should start to produce a number of other goods including domestic welding apparatuses, exercise bicycles, scales, woodworking equipment, baby carriages, motor boats, DVD- players, air-conditioners and others.

According to the Resolution of the Council of Ministers, the import-replacing goods should meet the best imported analogues in terms of technical requirements, design, packaging and price.

### \* This year's housing construction funding set at br4.2 trillion

This year Belarus housing construction funding is to total Br4.192 trillion. In addition, Br545.5 billion will be spent on building engineering and transport infrastructure for residential areas in 2007. Bank loans issued for housing construction are expected to total Br2.194 trillion, with preferential loans as large as Br2.035 trillion. Individuals' investments in housing construction are supposed to reach Br1.641 trillion, investments of the consolidated state budget — Br254 billion, corporations — Br103.5 billion.

On the whole, in 2007 Belarusian builders are to commission 4.7 million square meters of housing, including at least 15% of the total figure to be commissioned in Q1 2007, 50% — in H1 2007, 75% — in Q1-Q3 2007. A reserve as large as 30% at least is supposed to be laid down for the 2008 housing construction programme.

This year 3.333 million square meters of housing, or 71% of the total figure, will be built for Belarusians in need of better homes.

Specialists of the architecture and construction ministry noted, "Reaching this year's goal will be very complicated and difficult". "2006 saw 4.136 million square meters of housing commissioned. Therefore, this year we have to increase the housing commissioning by over 560,000 square meters. The increase has not been witnessed in the last 11 years", they added.

In 2007 Belarusian builders are supposed to commission 1.52 million square meters of housing in rural settlements and small townships. In agricultural companies 8,135 apartments with the total area of 620,300 square meters will have to be built. This year will be the first one to have a housing construction task for small and medium townships — 541,100 square meters.

In 2007 the government plans to provide 868 families with social security homes. Another 546 families will be resettled from dilapidated and repair houses. Besides, 1,694 large families will be provided with housing.

### \* Belarus government okays regulations to salvage scrap metal

Belarus Government has approved a resolution, which regulates the acquisition of ferrous and non-ferrous scrap metal from individuals. According to the economy ministry, the document was designed following Belarus President Decree No. 179 "Measures to step up fight against thefts of precious, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, scrap and waste metal, gems" in order to regulate the acquisition of scrap metal from individuals.

According to the document, Belresursy concern (Belarusian resources) along with the Belarusian Consumer Cooperatives Union and the state association Belvtormet will be engaged in the activity in compliance with special permissions (licences).

The source noted, the scrap metal sold by individuals will be accepted strictly in line with the official register of articles that are made of ferrous and non-ferrous metals and that Belarusians can sell. The register lists cars and trucks, motorbikes, bicycles, trailers, their parts, components and nodes, haberdashery, tools for garages and repairs, office stationery, kitchenware, and furnace tools, household items, sanitary engineering, water supply and heating equipment. Besides, Belarusians can sell agricultural machines, their parts and components, ironmongery and cutlery, sporting, hunting and fishing tools, woodworking and metalworking instruments, cobbler's instruments, small size river vessels, their parts and components, including outboard motors, as well as pieces of art, clocks and watches, electric appliances, their parts and components.

The source underlined, procurement agencies will buy certain kinds of the articles and will register the name of the seller, his address and the names of the sold articles. The procedure will be applied to citizens willing to sell trucks and trailers, agricultural machines as well as their parts and components.

### \* Investment in Belarus - offers :Click on: <http://minprom.gov.by/eng/inves.htm>



## Belgian businessmen miss investment opportunities in Russia

Belgian businessmen are missing numerous investment opportunities in Russia, said Russian Ambassador to Belgium Vadim Lukov, at a news conference for local journalists on Friday, January 13.

Belgian investment in the Russian economy totals about €2 billion, he said. "Compared to the €15 billion invested by the neighbouring Netherlands, this is a very modest sum," he said.

The ambassador lamented the lack of Belgian entrepreneurs' initiative, especially on the Russian banking software market, estimated at €50-60 million annually.

"Belgian businesses have missed opportunities on the Russian construction market as well, although it is now the most dynamically developing in Europe," he said. The sector grew by 11% last year, and foreign investment soared by 300% in 2004-2006, he said.

Belgium risks being left out of the Russian market of car parts, Lukov warned. Its capacity is 35 million cars in use in the country. "Production of foreign cars in Russia grew by 41% in 2006," he said.

Belgian businesses could be involved in the construction of infrastructure and sports facilities – hotels, restaurants, sports centres and downhill skiing sites in Sochi, which will be competing for the right to host the Winter Olympic Games in 2014, he suggested.

"The government is planning to invest up to \$12 billion in the project, with the first construction tenders to be held in the first half of 2007," he said. "I hope that flagships of the Belgian construction industry, known for its quality and advanced technology, will not miss this opportunity."

The Belgian pharmaceutical industry also has a great potential for development in Russia, he said.

Among the reasons for the low activity of Belgian capital in Russia, the ambassador named historical factors and the unfairly negative image of the Russian economy Belgian entrepreneurs formed from reports in the local press, which often portrays only negative aspects of Russian life.

"It is necessary to de-ideologise attitudes towards Russia in the Belgian press. It is wrong primarily for Belgian entrepreneurs, who are artificially limiting their scope of activities because of that," the ambassador concluded.

**Fedor Klimkin**, RIA Novosti, Brussels

## Rusland en de Europese energieveiligheid

Vadim Loukov, Ambassadeur van Rusland in België ("De Tijd", 11.01.2007)

De Belgische pers besteedt sinds de 'gascrisis' tussen Rusland en Oekraïne in januari 2006 meer aandacht aan de problemen in de relaties tussen de landen van de Europese Unie en de Russische regering en Gazprom. Terecht, vindt de ambassadeur van Rusland in België. Maar voor een beter begrip van het Russische standpunt houdt hij de hoofdargumenten van de Belgische kranten graag eens tegen het licht.

1. "De gasleveringen zijn een ideale hefboom voor het 'disciplineren' van de landen van de voormalige invloedssfeer van Moskou, zoals Oekraïne, waarvoor het bedrijf de prijs voor de aardgas heeft verviervoudigd."

Diegenen die Moskou van verhoging van gasprijzen beschuldigen, vergeten om welke reden dan ook de specifieke prijscategorieën te noemen. Intussen liggen de prijzen waarvoor Gazprom in de loop van 15 jaar (!) het aardgas aan de GOS-landen, waaronder Oekraïne, leverde, enkele keren lager dan de prijzen die in de handel tussen Rusland en de EU-landen van toepassing zijn. Tussen 2000 en 2005 stegen de gasprijzen voor de EU-landen van 103,20 dollar tot 192,50 dollar per duizend kubieke meter, terwijl voor de GOS-landen de stijging van 53,30 tot 60,70... dollar ging. Het gaat dus om een onbekende - in de economische geschiedenis van Europa - subsidiëring van de economieën van enkele landen door maar een 'donor'. Zulke transfers zijn qua omvang groter dan de middelen die ooit voor het Marshallplan werden uitgereikt. De subsidiëring van alleen al de Oekraïense economie heeft Rusland jaarlijks 3 tot 5 miljard dollar gekost. Dat Rusland de gasleveringen aan de GOS-landen geenszins als politiek instrument gebruikt, wordt bevestigd door het feit dat het aandeel van deze regio in de uitvoer van Gazprom de jongste jaren met bijna twee keer verminderd is. Er komt dan een vraag: Als Gazprom echt een politiek instrument van het Russisch buitenlands beleid was, zou het dan de uitvoer naar de GOS-landen verminderen? Wordt dan het draagvlak van de Russische invloed op zijn bureaus op het gebied van energie toch niet minder? Gazprom wordt verweten dat het "onverwacht Oekraïne en daarna Georgië een prijsultimatum heeft gesteld". Dat is niet waar. De voormalige Sovjet-landen hebben 15 jaar de tijd gehad zich aan te passen aan de realiteit van de markteconomie.

2. "Het is vreemd om te zien dat alle landen een verschillende aanpak krijgen. Zo kan het trouwe Wit-Rusland bijvoorbeeld van vrij gesubsidieerde tarieven genieten". Het is waar dat in overeenstemming met het contract van 31 december van vorig jaar Minsk voor het Russische aardgas

## La Russie, Gazprom et la sécurité énergétique de l'Europe

Vadim Loukov, l'Ambassadeur de la Russie en Belgique (« L'Echo », 12.01.2007)



Les problèmes de relations des pays de l'Union Européenne avec la Russie dans le domaine de l'énergie attirent beaucoup l'attention de «L'Echo»<sup>1)</sup>. Afin d'établir un bilan équilibré de ce problème, je souhaite apporter les précisions suivantes.

Est-ce vrai que la Russie utilise les hausses des prix de gaz comme la pression politique contre ses voisins? Si le prix moyen de gaz destiné au pays de l'Union Européenne a augmenté entre l'an 2000 et 2005 de 103,2 dollars à 192,5 dollars pour mille mètres cubes, il est resté presque inchangé pour les ex-républiques soviétiques et les pays baltes, en augmentant de 53,3 dollar à ... 60,7 dollars. Début 2006, le prix de détail

pour le gaz en Ukraine a été 14 fois moindre qu'en Europe Occidentale: 36 dollars contre 523 dollars pour mille mètres cubes.

Il s'agissait donc, pendant une décennie et demie, de la subvention des économies de plusieurs pays par un seul «sponsor», ce qui était sans précédent dans l'histoire économique de l'Europe. Le chiffre de ces transferts dépasse le montant des fonds octroyés à l'époque par le gouvernement des Etats-Unis dans le cadre du plan Marshall. Les seules subventions pour l'économie ukrainienne coûtaient à la Russie de 3 à 5 milliards de dollars par an. Les pays post-soviétiques ont eu 15 ans pour s'adapter aux réalités de l'économie de marché - c'est plus que ce que les pays d'Europe de l'Est ont eu pour se préparer à leur adhésion à l'UE. Il est impossible d'encore tolérer l'existence de l'enclave socialiste dans nos liens économiques extérieurs.

« Belarus: traitement favorisé d'un fidèle? »

Selon l'accord décidé entre Gazprom et le gouvernement du Belarus le 31 décembre 2006, Minsk va payer pour le gaz russe plus qu'avant, mais quand même moins que l'Ukraine. Et pour cause: le gouvernement de ce pays a donné son feu vert à l'achat de 50% d'actions de «Beltransgaz» par Gazprom (l'Ukraine a refusé pareille transaction). Mais la progression vers les prix du marché va continuer: en 2011, Minsk va payer pour le gaz russe le même prix que nos partenaires en Union Européenne.

Certains de nos voisins s'élèvent, notamment, contre les prix de marché pour le gaz en insistant sur la préservation des anciennes relations politisées avec la Russie dans le domaine du gaz. L'application des prix du marché utilisés dans les règlements entre Gazprom et les consommateurs en UE

minder betaalt dan Oekraïne. De verklaring zit in het feit dat de Wit-Russische zijde tegemoetkwam aan het Russische voorstel over de verkoop aan Gazprom van 50 procent aandelen van het nutsbedrijf dat de gaspijpleidingen beheert. Wij hebben hetzelfde aan Oekraïne voorgesteld, maar dat weigerde. Maar ook voor Wit-Rusland zal de gasprijs tegen het jaar 2011 tot het Europees niveau opgetrokken worden.

3. "Door de gasleveringen aan Oekraïne te onderbreken bracht Rusland de leveringen aan het aantal Europese landen in het gevaar."

Die werden in gevaar gebracht door diegenen die de zogenaamde 'technische afname' van het doorgevoerde aardgas verrichtten. Rusland hield zich altijd strikt aan de contractverplichtingen door onder andere eigen opslagreserves te gebruiken. De afsluiting van de aardgastoevoer naar Oekraïne, die drie dagen duurde, was veroorzaakt door het feit dat Kiev weigerde de facturen te betalen. 'We sluiten de toevoer aan niemand af. We leveren gewoon alleen aan wie betaalt', aldus Anatoly Tsjobais, voorzitter van de Jedinaya Energetihsjeskaya Sistema (Verenigd Energiesysteem van Rusland). Tot onze spijt durfden onze partners in de EU (of wilden ze het niet) de stellingen van het Energy Charter Treaty toe te passen om de inmenging van de Oekraïense zijde in het transit van de Russische aardgas naar de Europese Unie te stoppen. Dit is nog een andere reden van het Russische scepticisme ten opzichte van het Verdrag (bovenop degenen die voor iedereen bekend zijn).

4. "Het is van uiterst belang de globale gevolgen van het gedrag van lokale politici die hun eigen doeleinden nastreven, die niets met energie te maken hebben of gewoon zelfzuchtig van aard zijn, in te perken"

Het is beter de doelstellingen te verduidelijken van 'lokale politici' - bedoeld worden de Russische regering en de leiding van Gazprom - alvorens het probleem proberen op te lossen. De doelstellingen zijn in de strategie van de ontwikkeling van de gasindustrie van Rusland verankerd. De belangrijkste daarvan zijn het behouden van het systeem van energiebetrekkingen met EU-lidstaten op basis van langetermijncontracten en het handhaven van het aandeel van het Russische gas in de structuur van het Europese gasgebruik ten minste op het niveau van vandaag. Kan dat als 'persoonlijke belangen van de lokale politici' worden beschouwd? Persoonlijke belangen moeten eerder gezocht worden bij wie het Russische gas heruitvoert naar derde landen - in schending van intergouvernementele overeenkomsten - en de winst van die onwettige praktijken in eigen zak steekt. Helaas bloeiden zulke praktijken juist lange tijd in Oekraïne. Premier Joelia Timosjenko is daarvan goed op de hoogte. In 2004 bedroeg de winst van de bemiddelingsbedrijf ven naar schatting meer dan 1 miljard dollar (0,78 miljard euro).

5. "Voor Europeanen is het ontoelaatbaar dat Gazprom de controle heeft over de eigen gastransit via Rusland en dat het zijn zakken met bijkomende winst vult."

Diegenen die zich ergeren aan het feit dat Gazprom de controle over de gastransit via Rusland behoudt, raken in een paradoxale positie. Door aan te dringen op het stopzetten van het monopolie van Gazprom smeren zij Rusland letterlijk

aurait pour résultat que les voisins de la Russie parleraient à nouveau de « pression politique du côté de la Russie».

«*En coupant les robinets du gaz destiné à l'Ukraine, la Russie a provoqué une baisse générale de gaz à nombre de pays européens* » («l'Echo», 03.01.2006).

Cette baisse a été provoquée par ceux qui pratiquaient «la prise technique» du gaz destiné au transit. Or, la Russie s'acquittait toujours de ses engagements, y compris en utilisant ses propres réserves. La coupure du gaz en Ukraine pour trois jours était la conséquence du refus de Kiev de solder les comptes. « Nous ne coupons (les livraisons de l'énergie) à personne. Nous la livrons à ceux qui paient. » (Anatoli Tchoubais, président de la société RAO ES).

Malheureusement, nos partenaires dans l'UE n'ont pas osé (ou n'ont pas voulu) appliquer les dispositions du Traité sur la Charte de l'Énergie à l'Ukraine, pourtant signataire de ce traité. Celui-ci stipule dans son article 7 qu'un état membre n'a pas le droit d'interrompre le transit des sources de l'énergie par son territoire en cas de conflit avec une partie tiers concernant cette source d'énergie. Cela contribue à expliquer l'attitude sceptique de la Russie à l'égard du Traité. Il faut chercher les «indisciplinés» là où on croit possible - en violation des conventions intergouvernementales - de réexporter le gaz russe dans les pays tiers et d'empocher un profit provenant de ces opérations illégales. Hélas, pendant longtemps, cette pratique prospérait en Ukraine. En 2004 elle a rapporté, selon certaines estimations, plus d'un milliard de dollars.

#### *Ouverture des marchés ?*

Pour le moment, «l'ouverture croissante des marchés en Europe» dont parle l'Echo se réduit principalement à la consolidation des sociétés européennes et à la hausse des prix. Sur les marchés les plus «libéralisés», les prix ont augmenté de 20% en moyenne en 1992-2002, et de 33% en 2005.

Cette tendance se reflète dans la structure des prix du gaz russe sur le marché de l'UE. Ainsi, en 2005 le prix de détail moyen du gaz en Italie était de 468 dollars pour un mètre cube, tandis que le fournisseur russe - « Gazprom » - le vendait à l'intermédiaire italien au prix de 180-200 dollars à la frontière italienne. La situation est la même dans les autres pays de l'UE.

La réputation de fournisseur fiable du marché européen dont jouit « Gazprom » est méritée par des décennies de travail. Il serait utile pour ceux qui collent à la Russie l'étiquette d'un « fournisseur peu fiable prêt à partir pour l'Asie » de se voir de l'extérieur. Quelle sera l'image de l'UE dans les yeux des hommes politiques russes et du monde d'affaires si nos partenaires dans certains pays de l'Union continuent de discriminer "Gazprom" dans le secteur gazier européen, d'insister sur la nécessité de réduire la dépendance de l'UE vis-à-vis des livraisons du gaz russe et de trouver rapidement les voies de transit en détour de la Russie? L'UE finira par avoir en Russie l'image d'un partenaire peu fiable. Peut-être est-ce le calcul des concurrents de « Gazprom » qui comptent diminuer les ventes du gaz russe à l'UE. Mais qu'est-ce qu'ils



monopolie - 'gastransiteurs' - Oekraïne en Polen - aan. En als Rusland een gaspijpleiding naar hoofdconsumenten van 'blauwe brandstof' aanlegt, beschuldigen zij mijn land van druk op Warschau. Maar zijn Oekraïne en Polen bereid het gastransportnetwerk samen met Rusland te beheren?

6. "Verdere asymmetrie tussen toenemende leveringsmonopolisering (van de gasmarkt) en een vooruitstrevende opening van Europese markten."

Op de meest geliberaliseerde markten zijn de prijzen in 1999-2002 met gemiddeld 20 procent gestegen, en in 2005 met 33 procent. Die trends wegen ook op de eindprijs voor het Russische aardgas voor de Europese verbruikers. In 2005 bedroeg de gemiddelde gaskleinhandelsprijs in Italië 468 dollar per kubieke meter, terwijl de Russische leverancier Gazexport die hoeveelheid aan de Italiaanse grens aan de Italiaanse bemiddelaar voor 180-200 dollar verkocht. Dezelfde situatie heerst ook in de andere EU-lidstaten. En waar zijn de kenmerken van de 'toenemende monopolisering van de gasmarkt op het vlak van leveringen'? Als bewijs verwijst men naar de overeenkomst tussen Gazprom en het Algerijnse Sonatrach. Maar voorziet die overeenkomst ook in de oprichting van een prijskartel of een marktverdeling? Neen.

7. "Gazprom dreigt de EU met heroriëntatie van zijn gasexport richting Noord-Amerika of Azië als Europa in de weg zal staan van zijn expansieprojecten op het vasteland." Dat verwijt wordt gemaakt aan het verkeerde adres. Gazprom heeft zijn reputatie als betrouwbare leverancier op de Europese markt verdiend dankzij decennialang werk.

Maar wie Rusland een etiket als 'onbetrouwbare gasleverancier' opplakt, kijkt beter vanop een afstand naar zichzelf. Wat zullen de Russische politici en het bedrijfsleven over de EU denken als onze partners in de EU-lidstaten doorgaan met te herhalen dat het noodzakelijk is de afhankelijkheid van de EU van het Russische gas af te bouwen en zo spoedig mogelijk extra gastransitwegen buiten Rusland te vinden, of als Russische bedrijven om politieke redenen niet worden toegelaten tot de Europese gas-sector? Men kan met overtuiging zeggen dat dit in Rusland een imago creëert van de Europese Unie als onbetrouwbare partner.

Daarop rekenen waarschijnlijk de concurrenten van Gazprom, die ernaar streven de gashandel tussen Rusland en EU te verminderen. Maar wat kunnen zij zelf op de Europese gasmarkt voorstellen? Dalende gaswinning in de Noordzee? Levering van het dure vloeibaar gas uit politiek onstabiele regio's van het Nabije Oosten? Of uit Australië?

Men moet duidelijk beseffen dat een vermindering van het Russische aandeel in de gasinvoer naar de Europese Unie een verdere verhoging van de gasprijs voor de Europese kopers betekent. Het imago van betrouwbare partner is niet alleen voor de leverancier maar ook voor de koper belangrijk, in het bijzonder in een periode van een toenemend tekort aan energiebronnen. De bovenvermelde feiten wijzen erop dat men alleen een basis vindt voor langdurige energierelaties tussen Rusland en de EU door eikaars belangen te respecteren, waarbij men van een reële en niet-gepolitiseerde beoordeling van de situatie in deze levensbelangrijke sfeer van de economie op ons continent uitgaat.

peuvent proposer en échange sur marché européen du gaz? Les exploitations de la Mer du Nord qui déclinent? La livraison de gaz liquéfié cher en provenance des régions instables du Proche-Orient ? Ou de l'Australie ?

*Il faut bien se rendre compte que la diminution de la part russe dans les importations du gaz par l'UE équivaut à l'augmentation des prix du gaz aux consommateurs européens. L'image d'un partenaire fiable est importante non seulement pour le fournisseur, mais aussi pour l'acheteur surtout à l'époque du déficit grandissant des ressources énergétiques.*

Une base acceptable de relations à long terme dans le domaine énergétique pour la Russie et l'UE ne peut être construite que sur le respect des intérêts mutuels des parties et des appréciations réelles et non politisées de la situation dans cette sphère d'importance vitale de l'économie sur notre continent.

<sup>11</sup> Voir « L'Echo » du 30 décembre 2005, 3 janvier 2006, 2 mai 2006, 24 mai 2006, 14 juillet 2006, 26 septembre 2006.



RUSSIA-EU SOFT: 21.03.2007

## Conference on cooperation opportunities for Russian and Belgian software producers and distributors

**21 March 2007 - Embassy of Russia in Belgium  
(Avenue de Fré, 66, 1180 Brussels)**

The Embassy of the Russian Federation in Belgium in cooperation with RUSSOFT, the Russian non-commercial Association of software producers, AGORIA and other interested Belgian companies prepare an investment conference on cooperation opportunities for Russian and Belgian producers and distributors of software.

**The conference will take place at the Embassy of Russia in Belgium  
(Avenue de Fré, 66, 1180 Brussels) on 21 March 2007.**

The topicality of the conference is determined by the boom in the software production in Russia on the one hand, and by the growing interest of Belgian producers of software to the Russian market - on the other hand. The Russian software market is one of the most dynamically growing markets in the world with \$ 1 billion export in 2005 and 30%-40% annual growth rate. Russia also has the fastest growing internal IT-market with 25%-30% annual growth rate.

The Russian side will be represented at the conference by the management of RUSSOFT which unites more than 80 software companies in Russia (total annual turnover \$ 500 million), Ukraine and Belarus with 17000 software engineers as well as by representatives of leading Russian producers and distributors of software.

The Belgian side will be represented by AGORIA, federations of entrepreneurs, regional export agencies and companies active in the software industry.

The idea of the conference was actively supported by Russian and Belgian entrepreneurs and business associations during the talks that took place in the framework of HRH Prince Philippe economic mission to Russia on 26 June, 1st July 2006.

The program of the conference will include presentation of the Russian market of software as well as the potential of Russian software producers, presentations of Russian business associations and companies highlighting specific opportunities for cooperation with Belgian companies on Russian and EU markets in the field of production, distribution and outsourcing, and presentation of the potential of Belgian software producers and distributors.

The Embassy will be glad to organize bilateral contacts between Russian and Belgian entrepreneurs.

The working language of the conference will be English.

**The conference is planned for 10.00 - 13.00, followed by a buffet lunch at the Embassy and bilateral contacts.**

**Detailed program will be available later.**

The Embassy invites you to take part in this conference.

**Contact person for the conference is Mr. A. Milyutin, Economic Attaché of the Embassy**  
(tel. 02 3743400 , fax. 02 3742613, e-mail : alex-milyutin@yandex.ru)

CONFERENCE



22-24 April 2007

## The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Russian Economic Forum in London

**The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London,  
22-24 April 2007**

The Forum is the largest business event in the world specialising in Russia. Each year, it brings over 2000 leading industry CEOs, bankers, investors, journalists, politicians and other key opinion formers to London from Russia, Europe, the Americas and elsewhere, to discuss and debate the business and investment climate of the world's most exciting emerging market.

For 2007, the conference enters its 10th anniversary year. Its' history presents an eye-opening snapshot of the last decade of Russia's business development, including an economic crisis that many feared would take as long as a generation to overcome, followed by historic economic growth in recent years that has put Russia amongst the fastest growing economies in the world.

A recent theme at the Forum has been the growing global interests of leading Russian companies, and this will be reflected once again in the programme for 2007. Through foreign acquisitions, and IPOs, Russian firms are making their presence felt around the world in ways that would have been difficult to imagine just a few short years ago. Many are developing into strong international brands.

As always, the conference venue will be The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, in the heart of Westminster. Just a few minutes walk from Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, it offers a unique central location and state-of-the-art conference facilities.

The Forum runs over two main days but is accompanied by many other networking and social events. At the conference itself, there are over 25 plenary and 'breakout' sessions on a variety of themes.

Preparations for the 2007 programme are well underway. Companies interested in speaking or sponsorship opportunities are urged to contact the organisers as soon as possible.

**Preparations for the 2007 programme are well underway. Companies interested in speaking or sponsorship opportunities are urged to contact the organisers as soon as possible.**

Further details about the event can be found at [www.eventica.co.uk](http://www.eventica.co.uk)

Email: [sk@eventica.co.uk](mailto:sk@eventica.co.uk) or call +44 (0) 20 7183 2560



## Over het jaarlijks concours van de Russische taal

De Ambassade van Rusland in België wil graag mee te delen dat er vanaf 2007 in België jaarlijks het concours wordt gehouden voor studenten en doctorandi die de Russische taal, letterkunde en cultuur studeren.

Op basis van de resultaten van het concours krijgen de deelnemers die het grootste aantal punten halen de Prijzen van de Ambassadeur van de Russische Federatie toegekend.

Hoofdprijs is een gratis toeristische reis naar Rusland (1 week);

Tweede Prijs is gratis internationale zomercursus van de Russische taal dat jaarlijks in Deurne wordt gehouden door het Russisch Centrum van Cultuur en Wetenschappen (10 dagen);

Derde Prijs is uitnodiging voor het orthodoxe Russische feest (Maslennitsa) dat door de Ambassade van Rusland elk voorjaar wordt gehouden.

De Prijs voor de doctorandi is een beurs voor publicatie van proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor.

Het concours wordt door het Russisch Centrum van Cultuur en Wetenschappen in Brussel tijdens 1 dag in de lente gehouden: in de voormiddag – schriftelijk examen, in de namiddag – mondeling examen.

Schriftelijk gedeelte van het concours voor studenten bestaat uit vertaling uit het Frans of Nederlands in het Russisch en een opstel in de Russische taal over een bepaald onderwerp. Mondeling examen bestaat uit het opzeggen van een gedicht of een fragment uit het proza, antwoorden in de Russische taal op 3 vragen over de Russische letterkunde en cultuur.

Aan het concours deelnemende doctorandi moeten hun proefschriften ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor over de Russische taal, letterkunde en cultuur (met recensie van wetenschappelijke begeleider) bij de Concourscommissie voor te leggen. De ontwerp-proefschriften moeten aan de Concourscommissie 2 weken vóór het concours voor studenten aangeboden worden. De ontwerp-proefschriften moeten in de loop van het lopend jaar of het jaar daarvoor voorbereid zijn. Op basis van de beoordeling van de concourswerken wordt een Prijs toegekend – een beurs voor 1000 euro voor publicatie van proefschrift ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor.

De Prijzen worden door de Ambassadeur van de Russische Federatie in feestelijke sfeer uitgereikt.

In 2007 zal het concours op 31 maart in het Russisch Centrum van Cultuur en Wetenschappen plaatsvinden (om 10.00). Deelnemers aan het concours krijgen gratis lunch aangeboden. Deelnemers worden verzocht zich bij het organisatorisch comité tot 22 februari in te schrijven.

## Concours annuel de la langue russe

L'Ambassade de Russie en Belgique a le plaisir d'informer qu'à partir de 2007 elle organisera en Belgique les concours annuels parmi les étudiants et les chercheurs en doctorat qui apprennent la langue, la littérature et la culture russes.

A l'issue des concours, les Prix de l'Ambassadeur de la Fédération de Russie seront accordés aux participants qui auront les meilleurs résultats.

Le Premier (grand) prix – un voyage touristique gratuit en Russie (1 semaine),

Le Deuxième prix – les études gratuites aux Cours internationaux d'été de la langue russe organisés annuellement à Deurne par le Centre Culturel et Scientifique de Russie (10 jours),

Le Troisième prix – l'invitation à la fête de Maslennitsa organisée annuellement au printemps par l'Ambassade de Russie.

Le prix pour les chercheurs en doctorat - la prime pour la publication d'une thèse.

Les concours seront organisés au mois de mars au Centre Culturel et Scientifique de Russie à Bruxelles au cours d'une journée : la partie écrite - dans la première moitié de la journée ; la partie orale - dans la deuxième moitié.

La partie écrite du concours pour les étudiants comprend la traduction du français / néerlandais en russe et la composition en russe sur un sujet fixé. La partie orale est composée de la récitation par cœur d'une poésie ou d'un extrait de la prose, ainsi que de la réponse en russe à trois questions sur la littérature et la culture russes.

Deux semaines avant la tenue du concours pour les étudiants, les chercheurs en doctorat sont invités à présenter au Jury du concours les projets de leurs thèses consacrées à la langue, à la littérature et à la culture russes (avec le compte rendu du patron de thèse) et préparées dans l'année courante où dans l'année qui précède le concours. A l'issue de l'examen des ouvrages la Commission accordera une prime de 1000 euros pour la publication de la thèse.

Les prix seront remis aux vainqueurs personnellement par l'Ambassadeur de la Fédération de Russie dans une ambiance solennelle.

En 2007 le concours aura lieu le 31 mars au Centre Culturel et Scientifique de Russie (le début à 10.00). Un déjeuner sera offert aux participants. Prière aux participants de se faire enregistrer au Comité d'organisation avant le 22 février 2007.

**Les coordonnées du Comité d'organisation : Centre Culturel et Scientifique de Russie**

Rue du Méridien 21, 1210 Bruxelles

Tél.: 02-219-01-33 - Fax: 02-219-01-33

E-mail [centculrus@skynet.be](mailto:centculrus@skynet.be) - Contact : M. Marc Neimark, Directeur.



**KLEINE AANKONDIGINGEN:**

**Voorstellen voor samenwerking**

**PETITES ANNONCES:**

**Propositions de collaboration**

**The CCBLR can in no way be held responsible for the content of these ads.**

***New Visa Application Procedure at the Embassy of Belgium in Moscow*** - 1st February 2007

The Embassy of Belgium, Moscow is pleased to introduce a new facility to meet the ever-increasing demand for Belgian Visa among Russians. It is our constant effort to provide greater comfort and convenience to our visa applicants. Applications can now be submitted at the Belgium Visa Application Centres at Moscow:

127030, Moscow, Borba Square, 15/1,

Saint Petersburg:

191028, Gagarinskaya Street

34, Liter "A"

A visa application can be submitted by the following:

- 1) Applicant himself.
- 2) Travel Agents.
- 3) Representative.

*Note:*

Applicants applying for a tourist visa or a visa to visit family or friends in Belgium and who do not come personally to the Visa Application Centre should provide a letter of authority to the representative (relative, friend, travel agency).

Applications accepted at Belgium Visa Application Centre, Moscow will be submitted to the Embassy on the next working day. Applications accepted at the Belgium Visa Application Centre, Saint Petersburg will be submitted on the third working day from the date of acceptance.

Applicants who have applied at the Belgium Visa Application Centre, Moscow can check the status of the visa application on the third working day from the date of acceptance between 1130hrs - 1600hrs. Applicants who have applied at the Belgium Visa Application Centre, Saint Petersburg can check the status of the visa application on the fourth working day from the date of acceptance between 1500hrs - 1600hrs.

Applicants can also track the status of their application by logging on to

**[www.belgiumvac-ru.com](http://www.belgiumvac-ru.com)**

In case a Representative or Travel Agent is coming to collect the application he/she needs to carry a Photo ID of himself/herself and an authority letter from the applicant.

Schengen visa has to be obtained from the Consulate of the country where the MAIN PURPOSE OF TRAVEL lies. Therefore, please check your travel plans before making your application to the Embassy of Belgium. In case of travel to multiple Schengen countries, please make your application to the Embassy where you will be staying for the maximum number of days.

Schengen visa is valid for

Austria / Belgium / Denmark / Finland / France / Germany / Greece / Iceland / Italy / Luxembourg / Netherlands / Norway / Portugal / Spain / Sweden



**JOB :**

**Sorokina Tatyana**

Education: Certified Auditor.

Experience: secretary at the Public Administration 7 years, Financial Auditing at the Tax Police Department 7 years in Russia.

Languages: Russian, I speak English , and I am learning French.

I am skilled in data processing (Word, Excel, Internet). I am 38 years old, I live in Brussels, I have a legal Residence Permit, and a valid Work Permit. I am motivated and serious

Contact: TatyanaVikt@yandex.ru

**Cloostermans Sophie**

Education: Master in translation Dutch-French-Russian (Lessius Hogeschool). Fluency in Dutch (mother tongue), French, Russian and English (bothwriting and speaking).

Four years of experience as a specialist of internal/external communications in an established international company collaborating with the Russian Federation.

I am looking for a position (either administration, communication or translation) in an international company related to Eastern Europe.

gsm: +32 476 27 60 40 - e-mail: sophie@sotro.eu

**JONART Sophie**

If you need a translator from Russian, for commercial or legal translations, or from German, for technical translations, into French, I can work free for your company. Being a student at ISTI in last year, I have to perform a training course between the 2nd of April and the 12th of May 2007, for a period of 4 weeks at full time anywhere in Belgium. Interested? Contact me at [missionart@hotmail.com](mailto:missionart@hotmail.com) or at +32 474 422 427.

**DAVIDTS Tanguy, 25 years old**

Assistant Manager in logistic and administration for a Canadian mining company in Venezuela.

I speak fluently french, english and spanish. Looking for a position in an international environment.(Belgium or Overseas). Free immediately.

CV at your disposal. e-mail : [tdavidts@hotmail.com](mailto:tdavidts@hotmail.com) gsm: +32 478 57 09 85



# Request for Membership

**BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER of COMMERCE  
for RUSSIA and BELARUS  
Certified CCI**

Avenue Louise, 500 1050 Brussels - [www.ccbler.org](http://www.ccbler.org)  
Tél : 0473 94 86 55 - e-mail : [ccbler@belgacom.net](mailto:ccbler@belgacom.net) [arkarian@yahoo.fr](mailto:arkarian@yahoo.fr)

- **REQUEST for MEMBERSHIP ( 12 months )**  
Company: 250€ - Honorary membership: 1.250€
- **Banner in our Web Site [www.ccbler.org](http://www.ccbler.org):**  
1.200€/First Year (1.000€ next)
- **Logo in "EAST INFORM" first page**  
1 year, 10 n°s: 1.000 €/year  
(East inform is received by 1.350 Belgian Enterprises,  
300 Russians and 200 Administrations)
- **"Combi": Honorary member + Banner**  
12 months: 2.000€
- **"Combi": Honorary member+ Sponsor EAST**  
12 months: 1.800€
- **"Combi": Honorary member + Banner + Sponsor EAST**  
12 months: 2.500€

PS : Banner : please in .swf format

Company: .....

Address: .....

Postal code & city: .....

General Manager: .....

Contact person: .....

Position: .....

Phone (general): ..... Mobile: .....

Phone (direct line): ..... Fax: .....

E-mail: .....

Website: .....

Number of employees: .....

Activity: .....

**I WANT TO BECOME MEMBER** for 12 months and  
transfer ..... euro on the account number: **210-0559990-61**  
IBAN: BE622100559990-61 - BIC: GEBABB36A

Date: ..... Signature: .....



## COMPOSITION & FONCTIONNEMENT SAMENSTELLING EN TAAKVERDELING

### CONTACT : CONSEILLER GENERAL / ALGEMENE RAADGEVER :

Arkady Arianoff, +32 473 948 655 [ccblr@belgacom.net](mailto:ccblr@belgacom.net) or [a.arianoff@ccblr.org](mailto:a.arianoff@ccblr.org) - Fax: +32.2 353 13 11

WEB SITE : <http://www.ccblr.org>

### PRESIDENT/VOORZITTER :

Luc Willame, former senior executive vice-president, Asahi Glass Group

### COMITE DE DIRECTION / DIRECTIE COMITE :

Daniel Stevens, *vice-président et secrétaire général / vice-voorzitter en generaal-secretaris*, consultant, secteur bancaire / raadgever voor de banksector +32 474 69 07 97 [dstevensric@skynet.be](mailto:dstevensric@skynet.be)

Paul Scheynen, *vice-président et trésorier / vice-voorzitter en penningmeester*, administrateur, Fédération des Chambres de Commerce et d'Industrie de Belgique / bestuurder, Federatie der Kamers voor Handel en Nijverheid van België. +32 495 82 96 60 [pscheynen@yahoo.com](mailto:pscheynen@yahoo.com)

Chamber of Commerce of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, *administrateur / bestuurder*: représentée par/ vertegenwoordig door : Sabrina Sagramola + (352) 423939-316 [comex@cc.lu](mailto:comex@cc.lu)

Alain Caris-Reynders, *administrateur / bestuurder* - Russian Travel Agency (RTA), +32 2 502 44 40

François de Hemptinne, *administrateur / bestuurder* - Area Manager, Agoria, +32 2 706 79 39 [francois.dehemptinne@agoria.be](mailto:francois.dehemptinne@agoria.be)

Dimitri de Heering, *administrateur / bestuurder*, consultant, energy sector, [dimitri.deheering@skynet.be](mailto:dimitri.deheering@skynet.be), +32 2 733 82 56

Olivier Pêtre, Asiatex, +32 477 22 60 73

Christian Zenner, *administrateur / bestuurder* - T.R.S nv Antwerpen - [christian@trseurope.com](mailto:christian@trseurope.com), +32 3 213 95 40

### AUTRES ADMINISTRATEURS / ANDERE BESTUURDERS :

Nina Carree, *vice-présidente/vice-voorzitter*, human resources consultant, Altedia-Drouot

Georgi Chochitaichvili, area manager, Corman S.A.

Guy Deconinck, vice Chairman SIBELCO Ramenskyi Unit - gsm: 0474 98 71 03 - e-mail: [guydeco.axia@skynet.be](mailto:guydeco.axia@skynet.be)

Victor V. Kouznetsov, representative for Benelux and France, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation

Koen Schoors, Professor economics, Ghent University

Jozef Somers, Certification Manager Benelux, SGS Belgium NV.

Axel Van der Stappen, Art dealer, Galerie De Jonckheere