

March
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

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The future of Russia and the EU

For Russia, Europe is a centuries-long magnet, which has had a strong influence on its cultural identity to this day. For Europe, Russia has always been both a shield and a threat. Russia defended Europe from the Mongols, Turks and Nazis; it has been the most reliable among a host of almost wholly unreliable major suppliers of energy, which Europe generates on a negligible scale. But defending Europe, Russia sometimes launched an offensive and gained control over some of its parts. Moreover, following the usual European road, Russia has never been fully European, nor has it been capable of it.

The past few years have made relations between Europe and Russia even more confusing than before. The former has built a post-European civilization based on a renunciation of violence, individualism, and partly sovereignty; has built a society where all its members can coexist in comfort; and, importantly, has overcome the curse of strife and hostility. But having made these spectacular achievements, Europe has lost its strategic loadstar. Having absorbed 27 countries, Europe does not know what to do next. Nor does it have any strategy as regards Russia.

Having overcome its communist past, Russia rushed to Europe just to find that it was not very welcome. Even more importantly, it transpired that Europe had changed beyond recognition, and was very different from what we yearned for. As a result, Russia also lost its old vector.

This mutual loss has become particularly clear in the past few years. Having quickly established a close dialogue in the early 1990s, the sides discovered that they did not have much to talk about. Their rapprochement produced shallow documents about four spaces. The situation was made worse by Europe's extension, which not only consolidated the traditionally anti-Russian forces but created the impression that in its domestic, and to some extent, foreign policies Moscow was following a non-European and even an anti-European road.

In turn, we came to the conclusion that the indecisive Europe was a weakling. In line with Russia's worst political tradition, coupled with our own humiliations of the past decade, we started talking to the Europeans with arrogance, if not disdain. In the past few months - after the fantastic polonium scandal and the European criticism of Russia's decision to export gas to Belarus at higher prices, we have come to think that Russia will be censured no matter what it does. Europe's moral and political influence has diminished.

In this situation, even mild criticism of truly hideous events in Russia cannot be perceived as a desire to help.

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The dialogue has been reduced to tough bargaining on energy. Pressure is becoming tougher. Europe demands that Russia give up its monopoly on oil and gas pipelines, although Norway, a de facto EU member, still has such monopoly. Although Europe insists that Russia should give foreign companies access to its resources, many countries all over the world do not do so. It is not clear whether this is good or not but Russia seems to have been chosen as a weak link. The Iranians and the Saudis will not even hear of it. It is possible to push Uzbeks, Turkmen, or Kazakhs, but the biggest part of their resources is transported through Russia.

Russia feels strong, and is not going to yield. It is not frightened by the threats to build oil and gas pipelines around it. Quite the contrary, they reinforce its resolve to build pipes to the East, thereby strengthening its grip on the market. The new Russia-EU Treaty, which should replace the 1994 partnership and cooperation agreement, is likely to become another bureaucratic sham.

We have come to what seems to be a deadlock. What can we do now? We should not be rude, but nor should we yield to pressure because concessions will only generate further demands. A strange promise by our officials at the Russia-EU summit in Lahti not to charge European airlines for transit over Siberia starting in 2007 has already led to demands for more benefits.

But the deadlock will be overcome in a couple of years when Russia gives up its patently ineffective political and economic model of the past two years, and when Europe gets its act together and adopts a clear-cut strategy for the future.

New members will melt in the pot, and will stop being a drag on Europe and playing up to its rivals.

A new generation of leaders will not care for the old socialist (albeit enlightened) model of European development. The newcomers with their renunciation of socialism could be helpful here.

Let's hope that European leaders will become younger and will move to the right. I'd like to hope for similar changes in Russia. We will then have a new round of rapprochement, which will not be based on the teacher-student model or tough rivalry. Russia cannot be pushed into playing a student's role.

Europe will define its future model. On March 25, a historic EU summit will celebrate 50 years since the Treaty of Rome created the European Economic Community. The best brains in Europe are working on a declaration designed to give a strategic vision of the future and take the EU out of the impasse.

For all my deep respect and sympathy for these people, I'm afraid they will not produce anything meaningful. Europe should proclaim a course towards a genuine political alliance and formation of a quasi-federative state. But the Europeans will not go for this. Another option is to move backwards and accept that political unification was a mistake, that the EU should not have pursued a common foreign and defense policy. But this will not be easy to do. There is one more option - to move towards a strategic super-alliance with Russia, its territory, armed forces, and resource potential. But the Europeans are not yet ready for this move at all.

So, we will have to wait instead of bargaining over trifles; we should not give concessions and should work for rapprochement at cultural level, taking small steps and working on minor projects.

We can achieve the goal if we do not fail as a civilization, or get bogged down in the quagmire of isolation. In several years the Europeans, who will inevitably become weaker compared with other centers in the world, may still come back to my third option.

In this case, Russia and Europe will be in for a new historical rapprochement, which will benefit all Europeans - from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

By Sergey Karaganov (Dean of the Faculty of World Economics and Politics, Higher School of Economics)

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the redaction

VRIJDAG 23 MAART 2007

RUSLAND

Economische informatie, juridische aspecten en bankzaken, praktisch advies

MIDDAG VAN DE EXPORT
VRIJDAG 23 MAART 2007- VAN 10.30 TOT 14.00 UUR

In het kader van **Brussel export** en met de steun van het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest en in samenwerking met de **Belgisch-Luxemburgse Kamer van Koophandel voor Rusland** organiseert de internationale afdeling van de **KHNB** en het **VOB** op **vrijdag 23 maart** een vergadering van de **Middagen van de export**, gewijd aan Rusland. Het doel is de Brusselse bedrijven, die geïnteresseerd zijn in deze markt, te informeren door hen concrete economische, juridische en bancaire informatie door te geven en hen te laten delen in de ervaring van Belgische ondernemingen die ter plaatse actief zijn.

De sprekers op deze middag van de export zijn:

- Dhr. **Ivan KORSAK**, economisch handelsattaché voor het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest in Moskou, "Rusland, mogelijkheden en gebruiksaanwijzing"
- Dhr. **Dimitri de HEERING** en dhr. **Arkady ARIANOFF**, van de Belgisch-Luxemburgse Kamer van Koophandel voor Rusland en Wit-Rusland, "Regionale missies in Rusland"
- Dhr. **Alexandre M. SEN**, adviseur bij de Russische, Belgische en Luxemburgse douane en bij de WCO (world Custom organisation) "Nieuwe invoer voorwaarden voor de Russische douane"
- Dhr. **Jozef SOMERS**, Russian Certification Manager Benelux, SGS BELGIUM nv, "Certificatie in Rusland"
- Mevrouw **Julia TCHERNOVA**, advocate bij het advocatenkantoor TIBERGHIEN, "Handelscontracten tussen Belgische en Russische ondernemers en hun fiscale gevolgen in België"
- Dhr. **Marcel VAN HOYWEGHEN**, ING Wholesale Banking, ING BANK, "Medium and long term export finance"
- Dhr. **Christian ZENNER**, Directeur, STEINWEG nv, "Ervaring met logistiek en transport op de Russische markt"
- Dhr. **Philippe MULPAS**, Sales Manager, LE FOUR INDUSTRIEL BELGE, "Ervaringen van de Four Industriel Belge in Rusland »"

Aan het einde van deze lezingen kunnen de deelnemers vragen stellen of praten over hun eigen ervaringen op deze markt. De vergadering wordt gevolgd door een lunchbuffet waarbij de gesprekken met de sprekers en de andere deelnemers kunnen worden voortgezet.

PLAATS: Huis van de Brusselse Ondernemingen – Louizalaan 500 -1050 Brussel
Deelnemerkosten: 30 euro - Uiterste inschrijvingsdatum: 20 maart 2007

Voor verdere inlichtingen: J.-Ph. Mergen, Tel.: 02 210 01 70 - Fax: 02 218.56.06
of A. Arianoff, Tel.: 0473 94 86 55 – e-mail: ccbbl@belgacom.net

MIDDAG VAN DE EXPORT



VRIJDAG 23 MAART 2007

MIDDAG VAN DE EXPORT: RUSLAND

VRIJDAG 23 MAART 2007

Inschrijvingsformulier

Voornaam:

Naam:

Functie:

Onderneming:

Adres:

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Tel.:

Fax:

E-mail:

Zal de middag van de export op 23 maart 2007 bijwonen en stort 30 euro op prk-nr. 000-0229722-26.

Antwoord ten laatste terug te sturen op 20 maart 2007 naar het Verbond van Ondernemingen te Brussel – fax: 02 218 56 06 of bevestiging via e-mail: international@ueb.be

VENDREDI 23 MARS 2007

LA RUSSIE

Informations économiques, aspects juridiques, bancaires, conseils pratiques

MIDI DE L'EXPORT

VENDREDI 23 MARS 2007 – 10H30 A 14H00

Le département international de la **CCIB** et de l'**UEB** organise, dans le cadre de **Bruxelles export**, et avec le soutien de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, et en collaboration avec la **Chambre de Commerce Belgo-Luxembourgeoise pour la Russie**, le **vendredi 23 mars 2007** une réunion des **midis de l'export**, consacrée à la Russie. L'objectif est d'informer les sociétés bruxelloises intéressées par ce marché, en leur donnant des informations concrètes aux niveaux économique, juridique, bancaire et en partageant l'expérience d'entreprises belges actives sur place.

Les intervenants de ce midi de l'export sont :

- Monsieur **Ivan KORSAK**, Attaché Economique et Commercial de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale à Moscou, « Russie, opportunités et mode d'emploi »
- Monsieur **Dimitri de HEERING** et Monsieur **Arkady ARIANOFF**,
Chambre de Commerce Belgo-Luxembourgeoise pour la Russie et le Belarus,
« Missions régionales en Russie »
- Monsieur **Alexandre M. SEN**, Conseiller de la Douane de Russie, Belgique, Luxembourg et auprès du W.C.O (world Custom organisation)
« Nouvelles conditions d'importation au niveau des douanes russes »
- Monsieur **Jozef SOMERS**, Russian Certification Manager Benelux, SGS BELGIUM nv,
« La certification en Russie »
- Madame **Julia TCHERNOVA**, Avocat, Bureau Avocats TIBERGHIEN,
« Contrats commerciaux conclus par les entrepreneurs belges en Russie et leurs implications fiscales en Belgique »
- Monsieur **Marcel VAN HOYWEGHEN**, ING Wholesale Banking, ING BANK,
« Medium and long term export finance »
- Monsieur **Christian ZENNER**, Directeur, STEINWEG nv, « Expérience du marché russe en logistique et transport »
- Monsieur **Philippe Mulpas**, Sales Manager, LE FOUR INDUSTRIEL BELGE, « Expériences du Four Industriel Belge en Russie »

Au terme de ces exposés, les participants pourront poser des questions ou faire part de leur propre expérience sur ce marché. La réunion se poursuivra par un lunch buffet au cours duquel les discussions se poursuivront avec les orateurs et les autres participants.

LIEU: Maison des Entreprises de Bruxelles - Avenue Louise, 500 – 1050 Bruxelles
Frais de Participation : 30,- euros - Date limite d'inscription : 20 mars 2007

Renseignements complémentaires: J.-Ph. Mergen, Tél : 02 210.01.70 - Fax : 02 218.56.06
ou A. Arianoff, Tél : 0473.94.86.55 – e mail : ccblr@belgacom.net

MIDI DE L'EXPORT



VENDREDI 23 MARS 2007

**MIDI DE L'EXPORT:
RUSSIE**

VENDREDI 23 MARS 2007

Formulaire d'inscription

Prénom:

Nom:

Fonction:

Entreprise:

Adresse:

.....

Tél.:

Fax:

E-mail:

**Assistera au midi de l'export du 23 mars 2007 et verse 30,- euros
au CCP n° 000-0229722-26.**

**Réponse à renvoyer au plus tard le 20 mars 2007 à l'Union des Entreprises de Bruxelles –
fax : 02 218 56 06 ou confirmation par mail : international@ueb.be**



Mission to Ural: Ekaterinburg and Tyumen (Second half of June 2007)

URAL Federal District accounts today for almost 17% of the national industrial product of Russian Federation; it produces nearly 90% of all Russian gas. Iron and steel, machine building, metal working, chemical and agricultural industries are flourishing in the District.

Recently, The Belgian Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce for Russia and Belarus hosted a meeting with high ranking officials from Ural district.

As a result, we have decided to organise a business mission in this region, with the support of the embassies, the Russian Trade Delegation, and the local Chambers of Commerce. We have yet received the agreement for meetings with the Governor, the Ministry of Economy, and Regional officials. Contacts with and representatives from the industrial sectors of interest to their Belgian counterparts are foreseen. Business to business contacts with visits to the industrial sites will be organized, as well as cultural and tourist activities.

In order to organize B to B contacts with Russian's potential partners, your early mark of interest and specific wishes are kindly expected as soon as possible.

First day (in each city): reception of the Belgian delegation by the Administration and the Governor , or vice governor, minister of Economy and after the lunch: Business to Business.

The second day will be dedicated to visit the Russian manufactories of your choice.
The Belgian and the Luxembourg's Ambassadors will take part in the business trip.

Your counterpart from CCBLR staff will be Arkady Arianoff and Daniel Stevens. They are ready and willing to provide you with all information. Please send an e-mail together to dstevensric@skynet.be , arkarian@yahoo.fr , cblr@belgacom.net

TYUMEN:

2,144 km east of Moscow

History

Tyumen was the first Russian town in Siberia, founded in 1586 on the site of the Siberian Tatar town of Chimgi-Tura . The region of Tyumen, part of Siberia Khanate, was annexed to Russia by Yermak Timofeyevich in 1585 and the next year the town of Tyumen was founded as a Russian fort post. Originally Streltsy and Cossacks made up majority of Tyumen population.

In the 17th–18th centuries, Tyumen became an important trade center on the routes to Central Asia, China and Persia as well as an important leather goods and handcraft making town.

In 1836, the first steam boat of Siberia was built in Tyumen and in 1885 the town was reached by Trans-Siberian railway. During the 1930s Tyumen became a major Siberian industrial city of the Soviet Union. Steam-boats, cargo ships, furniture, fur and leather clothing were produced in Tyumen.

In 1948, oil was discovered in Tyumen region, and in the 1960s and 1970s the oil industry became a vital component of the city's economy.

Modern city

Today Tyumen is an important center for the gas and oil industries in Russia. The living standards of Tyumen residents are second only to those of Moscow in Russia. Companies such as Gazprom, LUKoil and Yukos have much of their activities centered in Tyumen. UTair Airlines also based in Tyumen.

Resources

Tyumen Region is rightly known as the "energy center of Russia" because of its huge hydrocarbon resources. A major part of the



country's oil and gas reserves are concentrated here in the extraordinary Samotlor, Kholmogorsk, Krasnoleninsk, and Fedorov oil fields and the Urengoi, Medvezhye, and Yamburg gas fields. In the estimation of specialists, high-grade hydrocarbon zones are present on the Gydan Peninsula and in the Karsk Shelf area of Yamalo. There are also great prospects associated with development of the Uvatsk project in the southern part of the region.

In addition to oil and gas, the region produces peat, sapropel (aquatic ooze), quartz sand, brick and ceramic clays, limestone, and building stone. Nearly 400 deposits of raw stock for manufacturing building materials have been identified and explored to various extents.

Tyumen Region has abundant freshwater reserves and large mineral water resources. The region's subsurface waters contain more than half of Russia's iodine and bromine reserves.

Economy

Tyumen Region ranks first in Russia in industrial output. The main industrial centers are located in Tyumen, Surgut, Nizhnevartovsk, Tobolsk, Novy Urengoi, Nadym, Noyabrsk, Nefteyugansk, Kogalym, and Ishim.

The oil and gas industry is the foundation of the regional economy, accounting for 87% of the region's industrial output. The region produces a large part of the country's oil, gas, and gas condensate. Production figures for 2001 were 231.2 million tons of oil and gas condensate and 526.4 billion m3 of natural gas. Oil production is increasing in Uvatsky District in the southern part of the region.

A well-developed oil refining industry supplies light hydrocarbon feedstock to the country's petrochemical industry.

The chemical and petrochemical industries produce butadiene, synthetic resins, plastics, polyethylene tubing, and polymer film. Nearly one-third of the country's liquefied household gas is produced in the region. An industrial complex for producing vehicle fuel is developing in the north, and mini-plants producing motor oil for the local market are in operation.

Engineering plants manufacture such in-demand products as oilfield, drilling, exploration, and oil refining equipment; tractor trailers; woodworking machinery; concrete mixers; storage batteries; automatic devices; medical equipment and spare parts; medical needles; and single-use syringes.

The building material industry manufactures precast reinforced concrete structures and components, elements for large-panel housing construction, bricks, building blocks, environmentally friendly insulating materials, ceramic roof tiles, and facing tiles.

The forest and woodworking industries play an important role in the region's development. Companies in this sector manufacture a wide range of furniture; chipboard; plywood; wooden houses; heat insulation, finishing, and other materials; and woodwork.

Socially oriented sectors are represented by the light and food industries. Light industry manufactures woolen fabrics, yarn, fur items, fishing nets, leather and felt footwear, and clothing. The food industry produces a wide assortment of meat, fish, and dairy products; bread, baked goods, and confectionery; canned foods; and other food products.

The main economic, geographic, and political conditions for investment in Tyumen Region include the following: abundant natural resources; predominance of sectors of the fuel and energy complex; the increasing share of the processing industry, including hydrocarbon processing; a skilled workforce; high effective demand for consumer goods and services; political stability; investment legislation providing a system of government guarantees and tax concessions for investors.

Tyumen Region is among the regions with the highest level of investment activity and is in a leading position in Russia in terms of fixed capital investments. The largest volume of fixed capital investments is directed to industry and transport.

The region is also a promising location for profitable investment of foreign capital.

Business cooperation is being carried out with partner companies and organizations in 87 countries, including the United States, Great Britain, and Cyprus. The most attractive sectors for investment are oil refining and gas processing, oil production, machinery equipment, wood, construction and material for building, petrochemical sector, ecologia, medical instruments and trade. Tyumen Region is one of three leading regions in foreign trade turnover, which amounted to 13% of Russia's total foreign trade turnover.

Foreign trade operations are carried out with companies in many countries.



EKATERINBURG:

1,667 km east of Moscow

Ekaterinburg is a major city in the central part of Russia, the administrative center of Sverdlovsk Oblast. Situated on the eastern side of the Ural mountain range, it is the main industrial and cultural center of the Urals Federal District. Its population of 1,500,000 which makes it Russia's fifth largest city. Between 1924 and 1991, the city was known as **Sverdlovsk**.

History

The city was founded in 1721 by Vasily Tatischev and named after Saint Catherine, the namesake of Tsar Peter the Great's wife Empress Catherine I (Yekaterina). The official date of the city foundation, however, is November 18, 1723. The city was named Sverdlovsk after the Bolshevik party leader from 1924 to 1991. Soon after the Russian Revolution, on July 17, 1918, Tsar Nicholas II, his wife, Alexandra, and their 4 children were executed by Bolsheviks at the Ipatiev House in this city. In 1977 the Ipatiev House was destroyed by order of Boris Yeltsin.

The city produces heavy machinery, steel, chemicals, tires, and petroleum. Gem cutting is a well-developed light industry.

Resources

Region has reserves of iron, copper, nickel, and manganese ores, bauxite, fluxing agents, coal, and peat used in the metallurgical and power industries. Raw material resources for the construction industry, e.g., asbestos, kaolin and brick clays, building sand, marble, and talc, completely satisfy the region's requirements and are supplied to neighboring regions.

There are 24 explored iron ore deposits in Sverdlovsk Region with proven reserves of 7.9 billion tons;

The region's oil and gas fields are located in the southwest and northeast. They were explored nearly 30 years ago. Specialists estimate their reserves at 240 million tons of oil and 390 billion m³ of gas.

Forests cover 12.6 million hectares, or 65.6% of the region's territory; coniferous forests make up 63.5% of the forested area. Logging has been going on here for more than 300 years, and the southern and central districts are into their fourth cutting cycle.. Therefore, mature timber reserves have decreased from 877 to 600 million m³ over the past 20 years. Actual reserves suitable for industrial use are estimated at 290-310 million m³.

Economy

The region ranks 2nd and 3rd among other Russian republics and regions in industrial output, availability of fixed capital assets, and number of industrial production personnel. In recent years, its share in Russia's total GDP has been 2.6-2.7%. Transportation, communications, trade, and catering have the largest market share in the service sector. Industry has the largest share in the GDP in the area of commodity production and also generates more than 60% of the region's national income, while agriculture and construction generate about 7% and 8%, respectively.

The leading economic sectors are heavy, power, and transport engineering. More than 70% of all facilities in the heavy and electrical engineering sectors are concentrated in Ekaterinburg. The fuel and energy complex plays a crucial role in ensuring stable operation of the region's businesses. Power producers include large and small electric power plants, thermal power plants, and the Beloyarsk Nuclear Power Plant (Beloyarskaya AES).

Foreign economic ties are strengthening. During the time of the economic crisis and production slumps, foreign trade was the one sector that showed significant growth. Exports surpass imports, and foreign trade turnover is steadily increasing. The primary export items are ferrous and nonferrous metals and petrochemical products. Sverdlovsk Region has high investment potential and substantial financial resources consisting of company funds and budgetary and extrabudgetary funds. The region ranks 7th in Russia in the number of banks and branches.

Sverdlovsk Region's mining and metallurgical complex is made up of 50 integrated plants, factories, repair companies, and more than ten research and design institutes. Mining and metallurgy account for nearly half of all industrial output. Companies in the ferrous metallurgy sector produce metal for railway transport and the transport engineering industry (rails, coach wheels, axles, wheel rims, and locomotives) and structural bars, including H-girders and other shaped products made of carbon and alloy steels.

Three large plants in the region manufacture hot- and cold-rolled welded metal pipe, oxygen cylinders, and cast iron pipe. Unique precision alloys in the form of strips and wire are produced for the electronics industry, and cold-rolled magnetic sheets are manufactured for the power industry.



The nonferrous metallurgy industry produces blister and refined copper. Six large aluminum companies produce 53% of all Russian alumina, 15% of all rolled aluminum, about 10% of all primary aluminum, and a major portion of the aluminum foil and fluoride salts.

There is also large-scale production of rolled titanium, which is used in aircraft construction.

The mining and metallurgical complex exports more than 30% of its production.

The construction industry complex in Sverdlovsk Region has facilities to produce 1.25 million tons of asbestos, 5.8 million tons of cement, 3.0 million m³ of precast reinforced concrete structures, and about 750 building bricks. The product range also includes crushed rock, roofing slate, asbestos cement pipes and unions, window glass, linoleum, construction lime, and other building materials.

The largest construction and building material companies are mainly located in major industrial centers, such as Ekaterinburg, Nizhny Tagil, Pervouralsk, and Kamensk-Uralsky.

The forest and chemical industry complex of the Central Urals is one of the region's leaders in industrial potential. The forest utilization rate is 22.2 million m³ per year out of useful mature and overmature timber reserves of 657.5 million m³. The Central Urals produce 5.7% of the commercial timber in Russia, 6.2% of the lumber, 6.7% of the plywood, 4.8% of the chipboard and fiberboard, and 0.9% of the paper.

The region's wood processing industry consists of a number of sectors, including timber sawing and processing and plywood, board, furniture, pulp and paper, match, hydrolytic, and wood chemical production.

Production of synthetic resins, plastics, general rubber and asbestos goods, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals is also well developed in the region.

Engineering is one of Sverdlovsk Region's leading diversified industrial sectors, and in many respects determines the technical level of other industries. The engineering industry accounts for more than 20% of the region's industrial output.

The industry manufactures a wide range of engineering products, such as equipment for the chemical, oil, metallurgical, and electrical industries; excavators with various bucket capacities; steam and gas turbines; farm machinery; railway freight cars; diesel engines and generators; trucks; press-forging machines; metal-cutting and woodworking machine tools; continuous billet casting machines; blast furnace, steel smelting, and rolling equipment; motorcycles; and electronics. (Kommersant & AA)



NEWS FROM RUSSIA

* ALROSA

President Sergei Vybornov and Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt discussed the prospects of future cooperation on the global diamond market in Moscow today, the Russian company's press office reported. The sides expressed mutual desire to develop partnership not only within the framework of the agreement signed between ALROSA, the Diamond Chamber of Russia, the Association of Diamond Manufacturers of Russia, and the **Diamond High Council** of Belgium in October 2002. The Belgian PM noted that the existing cooperation between ALROSA and the Antwerp World Diamond Center held good prospects. Belgium would like to expand this cooperation, especially now that the country's government has passed a number of bills, which simplify operations within the diamond sector in the area of legislation and taxation, Verhofstadt said. The Belgian PM invited the ALROSA chief executive to take part in an international diamond conference, which will be held in Antwerp in October. The talks were also attended by Belgium's Foreign **Minister Karel De Gucht**. *RBC*

* Putin promotes Sochi's bid for 2014 Olympics

Russia will allocate about **\$12 billion** to build sports and other facilities in the Black Sea resort of Sochi to host the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday. Putin expressed confidence that Russia would be able to prepare properly for the 2014 Winter Games.

He pointed to the unique climate and natural landscape of southern Russia. Whether or not it wins the Olympic bid, Sochi will be developed as a mountain resort, Putin stressed.

If Sochi loses its bid to host the 2014 Winter Games, allocations for sports facilities will be reduced to RUR 124.29 billion (approx. \$4.7bn).

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) Evaluation Commission is visiting the city to examine the proposed projects and offer its recommendations ahead of the final vote to choose the host city, which will be held in Guatemala on 4 July 2007.

State support is crucial. The government will offer financial guarantees for all the projects connected with Olympic preparations. Sochi is competing with South Korea's Pyeongchang and the Austrian city Salzburg.

* Putin calls for visa-free travel to Europe

Moscow is prepared to introduce visa-free travel between Russia and Europe, Russian President Vladimir Putin told reporters in Krasnaya Polyana in southern Russia, which is bidding to host the 2014 Olympic Games, Mayak radio has reported. Krasnaya Polyana's sports facilities are being examined by an international commission.

Russia's European partners are not yet prepared to cancel visas, Putin believes. Yet, he said that Russia and other European countries "are moving in the right direction" and this cooperation could lead to visa-free travel in future.

Last week the State Duma ratified a visa facilitation agreement between Russia and the European Union, which was signed back in May 2006. The agreement will apply to single-entry visas of up to three months and multiple-entry visas for certain groups of travelers.

The State Duma has also ratified a Russian-EU readmission agreement, aimed at creating effective procedures for finding and expelling persons not in compliance with the requirements for entry, stay or residence in Russia or any EU country.

Readmission was one of key controversial issues between Russia and the EU. Another problem is Russia's agreements on visa-free travel with countries that do not have such agreements with the EU. European officials fear that Asian migrants would use Russia as a transit territory on the way to Europe.

The volume of direct investments in Russia grew 2.5 times to \$31bn in 2006 compared to a year earlier, told Russian Economy Minister German Gref. The minister pointed out that the most important development of 2006 was an investment boom, which included all economy spheres. Gref said that investments in the main capital surged 13.7 percent to \$4.6bn and investments in the oil and gas sector soared 28 percent. *RBC*

* Bekaert strengthen its position in URAL (Russia-Magnitogorsk)

Given the increasing importance of the steel industry and market demand for advanced wire products, Bekaert have strengthened position in Russia. The company has been active there for years and has built up an extensive customer portfolio. The most important products supplied are steel cord products for tire reinforcement, steel fibres for reinforcing concrete and other specialized wire products. In advanced materials the company sells textile products for the production of car windscreens and environment-friendly combustion systems, both of which are manufactured from Bekaert ultra fine metal fibres. Based on the



growth potential in tire manufacturing for both passenger cars and trucks, Bekaert expects a significant increase in demand for steel cord products, Bekaert have signed in february a protocol of investment in Magnitogorsk – URAL Region (1 700 km, or 1 050 miles, east of Moscow).

* 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.

* **IVC group** is planning to invest EUR 50 million in the building of a vinyl factory in Russia. Russia was chosen for a third plant because that country is the fastest growing market for vinyl. Last year IVC recorded a turnover of EUR 165 million and growth of 20%.

* **Unilin Flooring**, known for the laminate floor brand QuickStep, also wants to invest in Russia. Unilin has plants in Flanders and the USA and now wants to start up a plant in the Russian town of Klin, where Inbev and Glaverbel already have subsidiaries. Unilin was recently acquired by the American company Mohawk.

* **The carpet groups Beaulieu International and Balta Industries**, have investment plans Beaulieu, which recorded a turnover last year of EUR 1.46 billion, is involved in a complex merger process and is investing EUR 55 million this year in optimisation.

Balta, the world's number one in the field of rugs, increased its turnover in 2006 from EUR 639 million to EUR 728 million. This year the company will be investing EUR 36 million in the new applications and developments and in a Turkish plant for the production of acrylic carpet.

Both Balta and Beaulieu are having to deal with a shortage on the labour market. Many of their vacancies are not being filled. After all, the first generation of over-50s who worked the carpet industry has to be replaced.

* **Pharmaceuticals maker Solvay S.A. (SOLB.BT)** has signed a licensing deal enabling it to launch production in Russia, news agency Prime-Tass reported Thursday, citing the Belgian company's local partner **Sotex**. Under the deal, Sotex will receive the exclusive rights to produce Solvay products.

Sotex is a subsidiary of Protek, Russia's largest distributor of pharmaceuticals.

* Le groupe belge de chimie et de pharmacie **Solvay SA (SOLB.BT)** en est à la dernière étape des discussions en vue de la formation d'une coentreprise dans le PVC en Russie, a déclaré le président de son comité exécutif, C.Jourquin a indiqué que le projet portait sur la création d'une usine à l'échelle mondiale, dotée des dernières technologies pour produire deux types de PVC destinés à couvrir toutes les principales applications en Russie. L'usine aurait une capacité de production d'environ 350.000 tonnes de PVC par an. Elle serait gérée sous la forme d'une coentreprise avec un partenaire russe encore non identifié. Si nous réalisons ce projet, nous savons où le faire et avec qui, a déclaré C.Jourquin. La décision définitive de mener à bien ou non ce projet devrait être prise cette année.

* **Guy Verhofstadt suggère que la Belgique devienne la plaque-tournante de la distribution du gaz russe en Europe**

- Le patron de Gazprom Alexei Miller et le premier ministre belge Guy Verhofstadt ont évoqué, vendredi 3 mars, lors d'une rencontre la question des livraisons de gaz russe en Belgique et son transit vers des pays tiers, rapporte le service de presse du géant gazier russe.



Les deux parties ont examiné les perspectives de coopération en matière énergétique et les possibilités de participation conjointe dans le projet de dépôt de gaz souterrain à Poederlee (Belgique).

Les participants à la rencontre ont confirmé l'intérêt mutuel pour le développement d'une coopération durable entre Gazprom et les compagnies énergétiques belges.

La Belgique ne dispose pas de réserves de gaz naturel propres. La totalité du gaz naturel consommé en Belgique (16,4 milliards de mètres cubes) est importée.

En 2006, Gazprom a fourni à la Belgique près de 300 millions de mètres cubes de gaz.

La compagnie belge de transport de gaz Fluxys possède son réseau de transit pour les flux de gaz transnationaux à l'ouest de l'Europe, elle assure des opérations de transit et de stockage de gaz, notamment liquéfié (GNL). Le gouvernement belge détient "l'action d'or" de la compagnie. Ria Novosti

- Le premier ministre belge, Guy Verhofstadt, a proposé de faire de la Belgique la plaque-tournante de la distribution du gaz russe en Europe.

Nous pourrions aller plus loin et transformer la Belgique en centre de distribution du gaz russe en Europe, écrit le quotidien *Le Soir* en reprenant la déclaration faite vendredi par Guy Verhofstadt pendant sa visite de travail en Russie.

D'après le journal, la Belgique entend accroître ses achats de gaz russe qui actuellement ne représentent que 5% de ce type de combustible consommé dans le pays.

Nous devons diversifier nos approvisionnements (en gaz) de manière à réduire notre dépendance, a dit le chef du gouvernement belge qui s'entretenait avec des journalistes.

A ce jour le principal fournisseur de gaz naturel de la Belgique est le Qatar, auparavant c'était l'Algérie. La Belgique achète aussi du gaz à la Norvège.

Pendant la rencontre qu'il a eue avec le premier ministre belge, le président Vladimir Poutine avait déclaré que la Russie et la Belgique pourraient aménager un dépôt de gaz pour approvisionner des pays tiers. "Nous pourrions réaliser ensemble un grand projet utile pour nos pays et aussi pour l'Europe tout entière", avait dit le chef de l'Etat russe.

"Il s'agit de la construction d'un dépôt assez grand pour l'Europe, destiné à l'approvisionnement de pays tiers, y compris la Grande-Bretagne, en utilisant les systèmes de transport sous-marin existants et qui partent naturellement de Belgique", avait déclaré Vladimir Poutine.

Comme l'écrit le quotidien *La Libre Belgique*, il est question de la construction par la société belge Fluxis d'un entrepôt géant dans le nord de la Belgique. Il serait situé à 1.000 mètres sous terre. La partie belge s'est engagée à faire connaître d'ici à la fin de l'année les résultats des études de faisabilité

*** Russia and Belgium may build a major gas storage depot to transport gas to third countries, President Vladimir Putin said.**

Russia and Belgium may build a major gas storage depot to transport gas to third countries, President Vladimir Putin said Friday.

The project would be "useful not only for this country, but for Europe as a whole," Putin said during a meeting with Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt.

He said Russian and Belgian companies "have taken the first steps to work on the markets of third countries, including the U.S. and South Korea."

Putin said that cooperation could be considerably extended.

"Nous pouvons mettre en oeuvre un projet d'envergure utile non seulement à notre pays, mais aussi à toute l'Europe", a déclaré le président russe au cours de sa rencontre avec le premier ministre belge Guy Verhofstadt.

"Il s'agit de la construction d'un dépôt de gaz assez grand pour l'Europe, destiné à l'approvisionnement de pays tiers, y compris la Grande-Bretagne, en utilisant les systèmes de transport sous-marins existants et qui partent naturellement de Belgique", a déclaré Vladimir Poutine.

Selon lui les compagnies des deux pays accomplissent déjà des opérations de swap (accord permettant temporairement d'échanger certains actifs ou engagements contre d'autres actifs ou engagements).

"Les premiers pas ont déjà été faits en vue de travailler sur les marchés des pays tiers : l'Amérique du Nord, la Corée du Sud. Bien entendu, cette coopération peut être considérablement étendue", a ajouté le président. *RIAN*

*** Investment projects in Russia to top \$400bn by 2015**

304 investment projects worth \$400.5 billion will be implemented in Russia by 2015, Alexander Khloponin, Governor of the Krasnoyarsk region, told reporters at an economic forum in Krasnoyarsk.

"In fact, all these projects are applications for private-public partnership. Ninety percent of them lack infrastructure. We have the tool of government investment – the Investment Fund. But \$2.5 billion is too little," he said.



The Far East Federal District is leading in terms of investment projects. Fifty-nine projects could be implemented there. "Apparently, industrialization will move eastwards. The future of Siberia and the Far East is connected with the industrial development of Russia," Khloponin said.

The oil and gas sector is expected to be the most popular with investors, with investment in primary processing of raw materials projected to be \$200 billion. "Gazprom, RAO Unified Energy Systems of Russia, Rosneft and TNK-BP have proposed the largest number of projects. But many projects are connected with the development of the metals industry," Khloponin said.

"\$23 billion will be invested in non-ferrous metal projects, and \$27 billion will be invested in ferrous metal projects and the coal industry. In the electricity sector, investment in 84 projects will amount to \$62 billion. The investment projects mostly focus on the European part of Russia, which is understandable as central Russia has sufficient electricity infrastructure," the Governor noted. He said the key problem would be shortages in the workforce. "We must admit that Russia has insufficient workforce capacity," Khloponin said.

* LUKoil to complete \$400 mln deal on European gas stations in 2007

LUKoil [RTS: LKOH] plans to finalize the purchase of a gasoline station network in Europe from the U.S.-based energy giant **ConocoPhillips** in the second quarter of 2007 at a cost of more than \$400 million, the company's president said Tuesday.

Russia's largest crude producer agreed last December with ConocoPhillips to acquire 376 filling stations in Europe. The purchase will enable the company to enter the markets of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and **Belgium**, and to strengthen its position in Poland, Hungary and Finland.

"We plan to complete the deal in the second quarter of 2007 at a sum of over \$400 million," Vagit Alekperov said adding that he hoped the regulating bodies would be able to issue their permit to complete the deal by the target date.

Currently, these facilities are branded Jet stations and will be re-branded as LUKoil stations within one year in Finland, and two years in the other countries, LUKoil said earlier in a statement.

The third-largest energy company in the U.S. and the fifth-largest refiner in the world, ConocoPhillips operates about 500 Jet-branded filling stations located mainly in Europe.

* Severstal-auto" and "Fiat" to produce "Ducato" car in Elabuga

"Severstal-auto" company and "Fiat Group" reached agreement on production of several modifications of a commercial "Fiat Ducato" car. It is planned to start production of "Fiat Ducato" at the beginning of 2007 in Elabuga. Project output capacity of the new enterprise will make 75000 cars a year, the considerable part of which is aimed for export markets of "Fiat".

'Expansion of collaboration with "Severstal-auto" is the next step in reinforcement of strategic partnership between our 2 compaines. Start of "Fiat Ducato" production is a bestseller on the European market will let us use Russian market of light commerical vans to the fullest,' director general of "Fiat Group" Sergio Markionne stated. According to the assessments of expoerts, the volume of Russian market of LCV makes 200 000 cars a year. A considerable rise is expected in the next 3-4 years.

Director general of "Severstal-auto" Vadim Shvetsov commented the agreement in the folowing way: the new project is a significant result of our strategic partnership. It shows mutual endeavour to use the possibilities of the fast-growing Russian automobile market to the fullest. Production of "Fiat Ducato" in Russia will let us offer to the Russian customer one of the best world products in LCV segment."

"Severstal-auto" carries out full backing of the project.

* The first resident of "Alabuga" SEZ - "Severstal-auto" approved

"Observative Council is a body which coordinates the work of SEZ," - head of Tatarstan territorial management of Federal agency on Special Economic Zones Timur Shagivaleev explained. Tatarstan Prime Minister Rustam Minnikhanov heads it. The Council gathers not less than once in 3 months. Urgent issues of SEZ development are discussed there. We recommend "Severstal-auto" company to be the first resident of "Alabuga" SEZ. If the Council approves our proposal, Special Economic Zone starts its real development.'

Observative Council headed by Tatarstan PM Rustam Minnikhanov approved the recommended candidacy. "Severstal-auto" Open Corporation became the winner of in a specific competition among many pretenders to be the first resident. The appropriate protocol was signed by Yury Zhdanov, head of federal Agency on SEZ, and the president of "Severstal-auto" Vadim Schvetsov on behalf of the resident.

It is expected, that "Severstal-auto" takes 317 000 square meters of the territory of "Alabuga" zone to produce cars.

'We are glad that the first resident of "Alabuga" is a Russian Company, - RT minister of trade and external economic cooperation Hafiz Salikhov emphasized. It is honorary. It means that if local manufacturers come, foreigners will soon arrive. It is not an easy procedure to validate all the documents. The potential resident should be ready to invest 10 million Euro. We will render any assistance to a company which settles in the industrial-promotional "Alabuga" special economic zone,' Hafiz Salikhov assured.



NEWS FROM BELARUS

* Belarus provides good investment opportunities -RZB (Raiffeisen Zentralbank Austria)

Member of the Managing Board of Raiffeisen Zentralbank Austria (RZB) Patrick Butler considers that RZB finds the Belarusian market quite good to work on. Belarus provides good investment opportunities, he noted when answering a question of a BelTA correspondent.

A reminder, in a meeting today in the House of Government Prime Minister of Belarus Sergei Sidorskiy and Member of the Managing Board of Raiffeisen Zentralbank Austria Patrick Butler discussed possible variants of bilateral cooperation. In particular, RZB offers to introduce Belarus in international capital markets as a reliable partner. Belarus is a borrower who has a very small foreign debt what is one of its positive features, Mr. Patrick Butler said. "Before now it was mainly banks who were main investors of Belarus. However today different funds are showing a keener interest in Belarus," he said.

Signing of an agreement between RZB and the Government of Belarus on attracting investment resources in Belarus was on the agenda of today's meeting, Chairman of the Board of Priorbank Sergei Kostiuhenko told BelTA. In 2007, Belarus expects the arrival of €1 billion worth of investment.

The terms of investing "will be even more attractive than they used to be," Patrick Butler said. This concerns both the cost parameters and the terms, he added.

"These will be untied loans of international funds and specialized institutions. They will be attracted via bonds and syndicated loans. The funds will be channeled into the economy on the whole to raise the efficiency of Belarusian companies," Sergei Sidorskiy said. In his words, earlier RZB was cooperating with Priorbank mainly, now it is reaching a new level by establishing relations with the Belarusian Government.

An opportunity to use RZB potential, institutions and instruments to attract foreign investments to Belarus to support specific companies was also on the agenda of the meeting.

Raiffeisen Zentralbank Austria AG (RZB) is the third largest bank in Austria with capital assets totaling €103,2 billion. Standard&Poor's assigned an A-1 credit rating to the bank. RZB was founded in 1927 in Vienna. Now it is the central institution of the Raiffeisen Banking Group.

* Lyons Financial Solutions ready to invest in construction of facilities of High-Tech Park in Belarus

Lyons Financial Solutions Holdings Limited (South Africa) is ready to invest in the construction of the facilities of the High-Tech Park in Belarus, company CEO Garry Fromentin has stated today at a meeting with Prime Minister of Belarus Sergei Sidorskiy. "We are interested in such projects and have wide experience of implementing them", Garry Fromentin said. "We find the terms of investing in Belarus as acceptable", he added. According to Sergei Sidorskiy, Belarus and South Africa have concluded seven intergovernmental and interdepartmental treaties. "We consider South Africa to be a highly developed and industrialized country", he said.

* Belarus hopes that issue on transit of Kaliningrad goods will be settled as soon as possible

Belarus hopes that the issue on transporting Kaliningrad goods via its territory will be settled as soon as possible, Prime Minister of Belarus Sergei Sidorskiy has told reporters today.

Since January 2007 the Belarusian customs bodies have toughened procedures of transporting goods through Belarus' territory by motor transport. In response to that the transport ministry of Russia stated about impossibility of considering an issue on giving the Belarusian side Russian permits for transporting freights to and from third countries. "It is not serious", the head of the Belarusian Government said. Sergei Sidorskiy believes that settlement of this problem is a "technical issue". "We have a problem, which should be resolved. Not by the Prime Ministers and the governments but by concrete officials involved in this work. And first of all by the Russian and Belarusian officials, as we are striving for creating the single customs space", Sergei Sidorskiy underlined. "The working groups held meetings in Smolensk. I was informed that in one-two days these issues will be settled", he said. Moreover, the Belarusian side put forward a proposal on setting up a working group to consider transport issues. The Russian side has not reacted upon the proposal yet.



*** Belarus' leading tire manufacturer Belshina sells its shares, the overall cost \$1bn, Premier says.**

Specialists are mulling over the opportunities of selling shares of Belshina, Belarus' #1 tire manufacturer, Premier of Belarus Sergei Sidorskiy told reporters today.

"This is an efficient company and it will cost over \$1 billion," he said.

Every year the Government draws up a program of privatization and denationalization of state-run companies. This work has been completed with regard to big companies. "At any moment, if investors express willingness to work with Belarusian companies under the conditions stipulated by the President, we are ready to cooperate," Sergei Sidorskiy said. The conditions include maintaining the production level at active manufactures, no reduction of jobs and some other conditions. "Any potential investor is welcome in our country," he said. However, nobody will buy Belarusian companies for peanuts, he added. "The companies should cost what they cost under market economy," the Premier said.

Today Belarusian refineries, which once used to be insufficiently modernized, report the highest level of processing of resources. There are no analogous companies in Russia. "For example, we were told Beltransgaz cost \$300 million but the Dutch bank ABN Amro assessed the company as worth of \$5 billion," Sergei Sidorskiy said.

*** Belarus, Russian agreement on economic cooperation may be signed in Minsk on March 23**

An intergovernmental Belarusian-Russian agreement on economic relations may be signed in the course of a session of the Union State Council of Ministers on March 23 in Minsk, Prime Minister of Belarus Sergei Sidorskiy has told reporters today.

"We have been carefully working on this issue with the Russian partners", he said. Belarus is ready to sign the agreement. However, the Russian side has not fulfilled several agreements, for example, the one on regulating by February 15, 2007 the issue on Belarusian sugar deliveries to Russia.

"The point is not to sign the agreement by March 1. The point is to sign a good agreement which would help solve all problems in the Belarusian-Russian economic relations," Sergei Sidorskiy stressed.

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RUSSIA-EU SOFT: 21.03.2007**CONFERENCE ON COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR RUSSIAN AND BELGIAN SOFTWARE PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS**

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

Moscow - April 2007 International Protection, Security & Fire Safety

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9th Moscow International Oil & Gas Exhibition and 5th Russia Petroleum and Gas Congress will be held from 26th to 29 June 2007, at Expocentre, Moscow, Russia.

MIOGE is Russia's largest oil & gas exhibition. Since its launch in 1993, it has established itself as a leading event for the Russian energy market. It is also one of top ten oil & gas shows in the world.

For more information, please contact :

Ms. Irina GORSHKOVA

Tel : 44 207 596 5016

fax : 44 207 596 5106 or 5111

email : irina.gorshkova@ite-exhibitions.com

MOSCOW – INTERTOOL 2007

The 8th International Trade Fair for Tools, Metal-working & Manufacturing Technologies "INTERTOOL MOSCOW" will be held in October 30 to 2 November 2007 in the Expocentr Krasnaya Presnya, Moscow, Russia.

For more information, please contact :

Ms Sabine FOESSL

MSI Fairs & Exhibitions

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Tel : 43 1 402 8954 15

Fax : 43 1 402 8954 54

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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

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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.

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