

²⁹ Communication from the Commission. A strategy on the external dimension of the area of freedom, security and justice. P. 6.

³⁰ For a conceptualization of a European internal security regime see: Monar, Jörg. “An Emerging Regime of European Governance for Freedom, Security and Justice.”

³¹ See: Pazdnyak, Vyachaslau. “EU Enlargement and Belarus: A ‘Collage’ of Security Spaces // Yevropeiskoye buduschee Belarusi [Belarus’ European Future. In Russian]. Proceedings of a seminar. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Regional Bureau for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Ed. by Helmut Kurth. Minsk: Donarit, 2004; Also: Pazdnyak, Vyachaslau. EU and Belarus: a transit of (in)security [In Russian and in German]. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2005.

³² See: Communication from the Commission a strategy on the external dimension of the area of freedom, security and justice, and .Solana, Javier. A secure Europe in a better world. Document adopted at the European Council in Brussels, 12 December 2003. Paris: The EU Institute for Security Studies (December 2003).

DIVERSIFICATION OF BELARUSIAN EXPORTS THROUGH BALTIC PORTS

The Government of Belarus resolved to transfer part of cargo traffic from the Ventspils seaport to that of Klaipeda

Sergey Sidorski, Prime Minister of Belarus, announced in the course of his meeting with Petras Vaitekiusas, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Lithuanian Republic to Belarus, that it had been resolved to transfer part of cargo traffic from the Ventspils seaport to that of Klaipeda. This became the result of the efforts undertaken by Vilnius, which over the past years had been pursuing a consistent strategy on attracting an increasingly larger share of Belarusian exports through the Klaipeda seaport. For Minsk it became an advantageous option in view of the increasing threat of economic sanctions on the part of the European Union. It also could be a leverage to influence the policy of Riga, regarded in Minsk as non-amicable, which ostentatiously supports the Belarusian opposition.

«We have very good relations with the seaport of Klaipeda. Belarusian cargo currently covers over 25% of the Klaipeda seaport traffic,» the head of the Belarusian Government remarked during the meeting with Lithuanian Ambassador. To quote him, a decision was taken to transfer additional 100 thousand tons of cargo to the Klaipeda seaport from Ventspils. «Belarus accounts for over 20 million tons of cargo,» Sergey Sidorski said, emphasizing that the Klaipeda seaport needs to compete against those of Kaliningrad, St. Petersburg, and Nikolayev. So far this statement by Belarusian Prime Minister has received no comments from Moscow.

The head of the Belarusian Government also expressed his satisfaction with the development of trade and economic cooperation with Lithuania. «It is very important that Lithuanian businessmen are happy with the investment environment in Belarus», Sergey Sidorski stated, accentuating that Belarus has «one of the best and most transparent investment codes.» «The existing problems are contrived. Those who want to work confirm this,» believes Belarusian Prime Minister.

The advantage of the Klaipeda seaport is that it is the northernmost ice-free port and also the closest one to Belarus. It is 680 km from Minsk to Klaipeda and 1,100 km from Minsk to Ventspils. The port has a traffic capacity of 40 mln. tons. The Klaipeda port transports over 4,5 mln. tons of Belarusian cargo, 1.950 mln. tons of Russian cargo, and 12.943 mln. tons of that of Lithuania. The major share of Belarusian cargo is oil products, which take 445 of the total volume; they are followed by fertilizers (26%), food stuffs and forage (21%), and metal products (5%). Last year the Ventspils port transported 8.17 mln. tons of Belarusian cargo, the major part of which was oil products and fertilizers. The total cargo turnover of the seaport in 2004 made 27.8 mln. tons.

Besides, the Belarusian side has announced its intent to carry out a pilot delivery of potassium fertilizers through Kaliningrad in the 4th quarter of 2005. The capacity of the Kaliningrad port for handling Belarusian exports is evaluated at 1 mln. tons per year. Official Minsk is not giving up on using the capacities of the Gdansk seaport. In late summer these hopes were discussed at the level of Ministries of Transportation of Poland and Belarus.

Some observers believe that it is quite possible for Belarus' activity on diversification of its exports through Baltic ports to make another topic for discussion of the «Belarusian issue» in Brussels. According to the resolution of the European Commission, a monitoring of the Belarusian authorities' adherence to the rights of trade unions is currently being performed. A negative result of this monitoring may involve introduction of economic sanctions.

Roman Yakovlevsky. 27.10.05.

COOPERATION CANAL: CONSTRUCTION WORK AT THE AUGUSTOW CANAL CONTINUED EVEN IN WINTER

By June 1st, 2006 the Augustow Canal should be ready for commissioning. Apart from being a waterway, it is also regarded as a tourist sight. The prepared investment projects envisage constructing a mill, restaurants, country homesteads, a smithy, crafts centers, night clubs and even facilities for downhill skiing in the vicinity

BACKGROUND

The Augustow Canal was built from 1825 to 1839 on the initiative of the Polish Kingdom, after the designs by Polish engineers, but with the imperial assent of Russian Tsar Alexander I. The main reason for the construction was fear that Prussia's tariff policy will impede transportation of Polish and Lithuanian commodities to the Baltic coast. Approximately until the 1950s, water ways to the Baltic Sea were used primarily for drifting logs down the stream and carriage of passengers. The Augustow Canal is peculiar in that it starts from Necko Lake and stretches from one lake to another up to the border between Belarus and Poland. Nowadays it is actively used for tourism. According to Leszek Teczlik, burgher-master of the town of Augustow, during the season the Canal attracts up to 100 thousand tourists.