

# Alternative to privileged loans

The Government has been focusing on helping the public find accommodation, with the introduction of a new housing policy (for a five year period) planned. It aims to help those seeking to rent a room, or buy or build their own home, at affordable rates.

By Denis Kirillov

In Belarus, 850,000 families are currently on the waiting list for accommodation (including 280,000 in Minsk). Naturally, privileged loan terms cannot be offered to everyone, so the criteria for such loans have been toughened. On average, only a third of those on the list can hope to receive a low interest rate mortgage under existing regulations.

The Head of the Architecture and Construction Ministry's Department for Housing Construction, Alexander Gorval, tells us, "You have to save a deposit, take out a mortgage or purchase housing bonds. We aim to launch new mechanisms to help citizens use their own funds."

The new Housing Code will receive its second reading at the National Assembly's spring session. It gives permission for banks to grant mortgages tied in to the value of flats being constructed or owned (failure to meet repayments brings repossession of the property): the Law on Mortgages was originally adopted in 2008 but has not yet come into force. Meanwhile, the Law on Construction Savings is to commence, allowing construction companies to fulfil direct orders from the state — rather than housing-construction co-operatives. Mr. Gorval comments, "We want people to gain access to ready-made housing (without problems relating to pricing per square metre or construction schedules). When they reach the top of the list, they are free to choose a house or flat, even selecting their view from windows. They need only move in if everything meets their expectations — either with state support or not."



Housing construction in Vitebsk's Bilevo micro-district

A database of accommodation for rent is also being established, with Minsk immediately offering 48 flats and 8 rooms. Commercial apartment buildings are to be constructed and transformed into hostels, with rooms rented by the state to those on the list, for an unlimited time period. Moreover, the state will apply a flexible approach to the price of a square metre.

Those on the waiting list will

also be able to take land lots free of charge, building their houses independently. At present, village councils have over 70,000 such sites but only a few are truly attractive (most lack necessary infrastructure, roads or prospects for development). According to Mr. Gorval, executive committees need to find more appropriate plots. "We're studying the possibility of preparing various projects for individual houses — for

people to choose from. The state can help not only financially but by selling timber, sand and gravel at modest prices."

Construction companies need

to change their strategy, offering a wider range of services. The new housing policy aims to support consumers of construction services and construction sites.

## Expert opinion

**Irina ARKHIPOVA, First Deputy Architecture and Construction Minister:**

*Our ultimate goal is to ensure that those able to afford their own homes are given some state support to act independently.*

## Newly launched project to optimise transport routes

First part of modern logistical complex launched in Rakov of Volozhin District

By Sergey Ivanovsky

The transport-logistical centre is situated along one of Belarus' major roads: from Minsk to Grodno and on to the Polish border. It connects the EU and the CIS. Moreover, a second ring road (soon to be launched round Minsk) will pass nearby. The centre's convenient geographical location will help re-distribute traffic beyond the Belarusian capital. This should benefit the environment and alleviate traffic delays while optimising routes for large-haul trucks passing through Belarus.

The project is being realised as part of a programme to develop Belarus' logistical system (running until 2015). The General Director of Belintertrans, Vyacheslav Dovnar,



Contemporary logistics facilities in Volozhin

explains that a temporary storage warehouse is being used, covering 3,011sq.m, with four zones: shelf storage, floor storage for out-sized cargo, and rooms for customs clearance, and the acceptance, issuing and checking of cargo.

The neighbouring customs control zone allows parking of 65 transport vehicles simultaneously and the warehouse could expand its storage facilities to 10,000 sq.m (us-

ing facilities operating in Rakov). Over 300 trucks can be stored simultaneously.

The second and third parts of the complex are to be constructed and launched soon, with over 50 companies showing interest in Rakov's warehouse. Among them are Shenker AG, Rhnus AG, ICT, Kuehne & Nagel, Hellmann, Wim Bosman, Dachser, BTG, STS Logistics, and Schliz-and schon.

## Time for deep drilling

**New oil deposit discovered in Mogilev Region's Glusk District**

The deposit was discovered during drilling of the Shumyatskaya #1 well, at a depth of 4,300 metres. Its hydrocarbon deposits are estimated to yield over 20 sq.m per day. "The oil is of good quality, being lightly viscous, and has a rich content of associated gas," notes the Deputy General Director of Belgeologiya, the company's chief geologist for oil and gas, Yaroslav Gribik.

Geologists plan to next investigate the characteristics of the new oil field. Previously, the western part of the Pripyat flexure was thought to only

have very heavy, thickly viscous oil. "The recent discovery proves that this and other deep-penetrating sites are promising — from the point of view of continuing geological exploration," says Mr. Gribik. Shumyatskaya #1 is a super-deep well, being drilled on the Pripyat flexure, using advanced technologies and equipment. Its estimated depth is 5,100 metres but work continues to study its deepest point and its oil reserves. Belarusian geologists plan to gradually increase the depth of oil deposit searches. This year, Belorusneft starts drilling another super-deep well (over 6km) in the Gomel Region.

## Innovations for export

**BelAZ JSC working on 420 tonne dump truck**

BelAZ Director General Piotr Parkhomchik has told a delegation from the Kemerovo District that the first super-heavy dump truck prototype will be ready for them to test by 2013. The delegation toured the company's production facilities and an exhibition of dump trucks. Mr. Parkhomchik notes that, this year, the enterprise is entering new markets, with its first shipment to Peru scheduled for April-May. Exports to

Chile are to be expanded as, over the past two years, this country has purchased 16 BelAZ dump trucks.

The new market of Brazil is on the radar this year, with 220 tonne dump trucks to be supplied. Also in 2012, the company is taking part in an exhibition in American Las Vegas, showcasing its 360 tonne dump truck (using a Cummins engine and a Siemens driving gear). The vehicle is now being prepared for the exhibition, to then be shipped for sale to Colombia.