

Klaipeda will receive Venezuelan oil for Belarus

The Lithuanian-Belarusian intergovernmental working group developed on 7 October an agreement for the transit of Venezuelan oil to Belarus via the Lithuanian state-owned oil terminal Klaipėdos nafta. This is the first effect of the co-operation as part of the bilateral group for economic co-operation in the energy sector appointed this June by the prime ministers of Lithuania and Belarus.

For Belarus, this is the second deal which enables it to receive Venezuelan oil, after the agreement with Ukraine (via the port of Odessa and transit to a Belarusian refinery in Mozyr). The contract with Lithuania covers the reloading of 5 million tonnes of oil via the Klaipėda terminal over two years (2.5 million tonnes annually) and oil transit by railway transport to the second Belarusian refinery in Novopolotsk. The Lithuanian companies which handle this contract – Klaipėdos nafta and Lithuanian Railways – and most likely Transchema representing the Belarusian side (this company is incorporated into Klaipėda and is owned by Belarusian state-controlled petrochemical companies) are to sign detailed agreements by the end of October.

The contract is a significant step forward towards establishing stronger ties between the economic interests of Belarus and the Klaipėda port and terminal. So far the Lithuanian port has mainly handled the forwarding of the production of the Mazeikiai refinery owned by Poland's PKN Orlen. The Lithuanian government has further plans regarding the terminal; in addition to attracting new oil importers to be handled by the terminal, it intends to make Klaipėda a hub for receiving and regasification of liquefied gas, which will work towards the needs of both Lithuania and Belarus. <jhyn>