

# Minsk to Create Own Potash Exporter

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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MINSK — Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko ended export duties on potash and ordered a new company to be set up which will be responsible for co-ordinating exports of all Belarussian fertilizers, a statement from his office said Thursday.

The move follows the collapse of a trading alliance which potash producer Belaruskali had with Russia's Uralkali and the arrest by Minsk of Uralkali CEO Vladislav Baumgertner.

Meanwhile, Russia on Thursday, said that the arrest was not acceptable and signalled lower oil supplies.

Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich also told his Belarussian counterpart, Vladimir Semashko, that Moscow was not satisfied with the safety of some products from Belarus.

Dvorkovich told Semashko on Thursday that Russia would supply Belarus with 18.5 million tons of oil in 2013, although Belarus has been vying for 23 million tons, which it says it needs to feed its refineries.

The move could deal a blow to Belarus, a transit country for Russian oil and natural gas to Europe. Its fragile economy is heavily reliant on agriculture and Russian oil supplies.

Baumgertner was seized in August at the airport outside the Belarussian capital Minsk after being invited to talks with the prime minister, and then humiliated by television footage showing him being searched in his prison cell.

The government said in the statement Thursday that the bilateral meetings would continue next week.

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