

Government plans to sign new loan agreements with WB by late 2019



When a private collection is worthy of being displayed in a museum



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Saturday night at National History Museum

Immersed in an atmosphere of unheard-of spectacles

In Minsk alone, over two dozen state, private and commercial exhibitions open their doors on the Night of Museums, when they drastically change their format, offering quests and competitions, alongside their exhibition collections



Elections should be fair and open

President Alexander Lukashenko holds session to discuss in detail organisation and hosting of the forthcoming election campaign to the House of Representatives and the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly

By Vasily Kharitonov

At the start of the meeting, the President said, “We need to do everything to ensure that the elections planned for this November are held at a high standard. We’ll decide on the best dates in the near future. This means that the main pre-election activities provided by legislation should begin in August.” According to Mr. Lukashenko, it is necessary to solve all organisational issues in order to ensure a calm environment for the free expression of the will of the Belarusian people during the active election campaign.

“Requirements for the election campaign are unchanged. We need honest and fair elections without any artificial limitations. No one should have any doubts about their legitimacy,” the Belarusian Head of State stressed.

Mr. Lukashenko said that the Election Code had not changed in the run-up to the elections, the existing rules are well-known. “Everything should be done in strict compliance with legislation. I want to emphasise once again: we are organising



At the meeting devoted to forthcoming election campaign

the elections for our country, for Belarus. Of course, we do not want to be criticised by our neighbours and representatives of other countries, however, the main thing we must remember is that these are Belarusian elections,” he added.

“Co-ordinated teamwork with high personal responsibility from all of you and all those who will work in the commissions is a guarantee of success,” the President said, addressing the participants of the session. “Despite the fact that the main

organising burden will be on the Central Election Commission, you should facilitate the interaction of all participants of the election process.”

“Local authorities will conduct this multi-faceted orchestra. They will form election commissions which must be done in accordance with the legislation in a democratic and open way, with the active participation of the public organisations which make up the foundation of our civil society,” Mr. Lukashenko said.

The Head of State also stressed that the elections are a test for the acting power — primarily at local level. The executive hierarchy is especially responsible for the political and economic processes in the regions during the election campaign.

The President believes that the elected Parliament should become a discussion platform for dialogue for deputies with different political views. At the same time, they must share the main principles: the inde-

pendence of the country, stable development and growth of the welfare of the Belarusian people.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, the deputy corps should be represented by experts in various fields, specialists — responsible and loyal people, professionals with state thinking, highly educated representatives of industrial and agricultural enterprises, lawyers, scientists, well-known entrepreneurs, politicians and public figures in the regions. “Only those parliamentarians who have fulfilled all their election promises, were able to establish effective communication with voters and enjoy their real support and trust, will have a place in the new composition of the supreme representative body of power. I think the candidates will need to meet with people, talk, explain, comment on their position and about how they will work in Parliament,” the President added.

Mr. Lukashenko noted that the main role in covering the work of the deputy corps and fulfilling promises, as well as the upcoming elections, belongs to the media.

Landmark image project

By Dmitry Alexandrov

It has long been obvious that the country needs a new national exhibition centre that meets modern realities and the decision to build it was made at a meeting with the President

The urgency of the task was outlined by Alexander Lukashenko, “Any country needs such an exhibition centre. In today’s world, it is impossible to conduct trade without organising exhibitions and similar events. Moreover, development is impossible without these in an export-oriented country.”

“The centre should not be palace-like. This should be a functional centre with all the buildings and facilities necessary for such events. To ensure the centre is not expensive, there is no need to invent anything new. Of course, it should be attractive, but this does not mean that we must spend a great deal of money on its appearance and non-functional elements, as far as the architecture is concerned. The building must be simple, beautiful, functional and of good quality.”

After the meeting, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Alexander Turchin, commented, “This

ment are personally responsible for the promotion of Belarusian products to foreign markets. It is obvious that the new centre must become an effective tool to solve this problem. Mr. Turchin said, “In many countries there are specialised exhibition centres that demonstrate their potential. The decision has been made. We showed the preliminary architectural designs to the Head of State and he has no objections. Nevertheless, he instructed us to work on the project again, looking at savings. We aim for the centre to become operational in 2021. The deadlines are tight, and we will start designing it very soon.”

Construction is expected to begin no later than next year. According to Mr. Turchin, this is a landmark image project for the country which will offer 15,000 square metres of exhibition space, and the same will be allocated for the Congress Hall and business centre. In addition, open air sites for displaying heavy equipment will be located nearby. Financing the construction is likely to come from the credit resources of the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus, the project may also be included in the state investment programme.

During the meeting, Mr. Lukashenko ordered work to be done on the creation of a unified system of exhibition activities and the determining of a single operator for the construction.



The President described the idea as a national project. The topic is not new, and the time has come to conclude the discussions with real actions. It has been decided to use a construction ground near the Expobel shopping centre. There is a large area and the site is popular. The President asked for prudent spending, while ensuring maximum functionality of the facility.

is an important decision made by the Head of State today. Belarus is an export-oriented country, and we consider the construction of a national exhibition centre through this prism: the number of exhibitions, the participation of foreign companies and partners and, as a result, the promotion of our goods abroad.”

During the meeting, the President once again reminded people that the heads of Govern-

Great merit of German diplomat

By Vladimir Velikhov

German parliamentary delegation plans to visit Belarus in June, as announced by the Ambassador of Germany to Belarus — H.E. Mr. Peter Dettmar — to the Chairman of the House of Representatives, Vladimir Andreichenko



Peter Dettmar

The visit of Bundestag’s German-Belarusian parliamentary group to Minsk is scheduled for June 20th-23rd. Mr. Andreichenko noted that Belarus will be hosting the 2nd European Games at the time. According to him, Belarus is preparing a packed programme for the German MPs. “We look forward to discussing issues of further interaction,” he said.

Mr. Andreichenko hailed the Ambassador’s personal contribution to the strengthening of bilateral co-operation in all areas and the development of political dialogue. During Peter Dettmar’s time in office, several high-level visits were organised, and inter-parliamentary contacts intensified. Work in this area will be continued. The speaker has high expectations of the work of the Belarusian-German Bundestag parliamentary group and the working group at the National Assembly of Belarus.

Mr. Andreichenko also described co-operation in international organisations as a very important avenue. He recalled that Bundestag MPs co-sponsored Belarus’ OSCE PA resolution on the digital economy. This year, Belarus has prepared a resolution on technological forecasting. The speaker expressed the hope that the German MPs will support the document at the OSCE PA session in Luxembourg.

The parties discussed the prospects for trade and economic co-operation. Belarus looks forward to an inflow of German investment in the regions. Mr. Dettmar, in turn, noted the importance of further increasing the number of German companies working in Belarus. He announced that the visits of two large business delegations from Germany are planned for mid-June. They are expecting to hold talks with senior officials of the ministries, also visiting the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park.

Power and potential of global defence sector

Large-scale international *MILEX 2019* Exhibition of Arms and Military Equipment held in Minsk



By Vladimir Khromov

The main exhibition area was in the Minsk-Arena Sports Complex and on the adjacent site outdoors. More than 160 manufacturers and exporters of defence products from Belarus, Azerbaijan, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, China, Poland, Russia, Serbia and South Africa presented their expositions, while the largest being from Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan and China. The 8th international scientific

conference on military-technical issues, defence and security and dual-use technologies was held during *MILEX*.

The exhibition is one of the largest in the Eastern European region in terms of scale, composition and quality of the participants and exhibition infrastructure. Since 2001, this large-scale weapons review has traditionally attracted the attention of leading domestic and world manufacturers of military products.



The format of *MILEX* once again confirms the openness of our country and its interest in developing co-operation with other states in the field of security. This was commented on in Alexander Lukashenko's welcome speech to participants and guests of the exhibition.

The forum traditionally demonstrates the main trends in the world arms market, as well as the latest achievements of leading Belarusian and foreign manufacturers of military products. 'The format of the event provides an opportunity for the wider public to see the work done by the domestic military-industrial complex, which is one of the priority high-tech sectors of the national economy', the President's message reads. Mr. Lukashenko believes that the exhibition will facilitate the exchange of experiences between arms developers, launch joint projects and become a platform for mutually beneficial contracts.

Over 70 countries have Belarusian military products in their armies, as noted by the Chairman of the State Military-Industrial Committee, Ro-

man Golovchenko, at the opening ceremony. He said, "The defence system of the country owes its success to the active attention of the President. We've launched into production the products which were hardly dreamt of five or seven years ago."

The *MILEX* exhibition presented a wide range of promising weapons. The forum demonstrated the intellectual power and huge potential of the domestic defence sector. *MILEX* traditionally attracts leading domestic and world manufacturers of military products. The dynamics of the increase in the number of participants and visitors indicates the growth of the authority and popularity of the exhibition in the professional environment. A wide range of fundamentally new high-tech weapons and military and special equipment, in demand in the international arms markets, and demonstrating the intellectual power and huge potential of the domestic defence sector, was offered to specialists and the public.

It is now known that the production of small arms and am-

munition is well-established in Belarus. The State Secretary of the Security Council, Stanislav Zas, commented, "The country has created a new industrial sector in the production of small arms and ammunition. In parallel, there is the formation of the regulatory legal framework."

At the same time, the complex task of launching the production of final weapons is being undertaken. The Head of State spoke of it in the past and the recent show presented the results of this work in small arms, ammunition and missile systems. As Mr. Zas added, robotic technology and radio-electronics are also being manufactured.

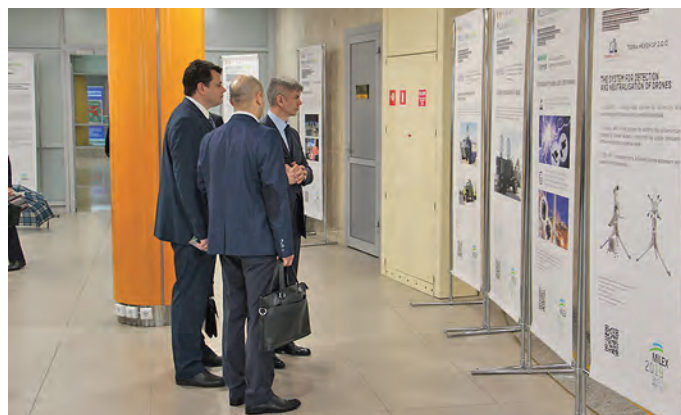
It is obvious that *MILEX* has become an authoritative international forum for those who produce military products. Mr. Zas noted with satisfaction that more than half the participants of the exhibition are Belarusian businesses and organisations. "The products of the domestic military-industrial complex presented here include modern science-intensive and complex equipment and weapons," he emphasised.

Significant representation at scientific conference

By Svetlana Yevgenieva

International scientific conference on military-technical issues, defence and security and dual-use technologies — *MILEX.INNOVATIONS 2019* — held at the National Library of Belarus

The conference brought together more than 500 Belarusian and Russian specialists from different industries. They discussed modern technologies and new approaches to the development of the defence sector of the economy as well as the possibility of scientific support for new developments. "The conference was also attended by experts of the ministries and departments of Belarus, domestic and Russian organisations, enterprises and firms engaged in the development



Conference is of great interest

and mastering of advanced technologies of military and dual-use," said the staff of the State Military-Industrial Committee.

An exhibition of innovative projects was organised for the first time. Companies and start-up teams presented new ideas that may be of interest to the defence and civil sectors of the economy.

More than 150 scientific reports and about 50 innovative projects were presented. 37 start-ups were showcased for guests. It is expected that the event will help attract young professionals to the defence sector of the economy.

The conference was held as part of the Exhibition of Arms and Military Equipment — *MILEX 2019*.

When relations are getting much closer

By Natalia Yemelyanova

Diplomatic mission of Switzerland in Belarus to acquire the status of a full embassy — the mission informs us on social networks



'At its meeting on May 15th, the Federal Council decided to upgrade the Swiss representation in Minsk to a full embassy. The decision was based on the steadily growing relations between Switzerland and Belarus. The embassy in Minsk is planned to be opened officially this year by the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis', reads the message.

Belarus already has an embassy in Bern. The press release notes that, in recent

years, relations between Switzerland and Belarus have become deeper. Switzerland and Belarus have since conducted a growing number of bilateral meetings on political and economic issues. Switzerland sees great promise in Belarus' economic potential and in its commitment as an intermediary for stability in the region.

Belarus has plans to appoint an ambassador to Switzerland this year. At present, Belarus' diplomatic mission in Switzerland is headed by Charge d'Affaires Pavel Matsukevich.

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Searching for that which unites not divides

Belarus suggests establishing a *European Partnership* specialised bank

By Vladimir Mikhailov

Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, has suggested setting up a special branch for the *Eastern Partnership* projects at the European Investment Bank, or a specialised bank of the *Eastern Partnership*. He put forward the proposal as he took part in the *Eastern Partnership* ministerial meeting that brought together EU foreign ministers and their counterparts from the *Eastern Partnership* countries in Brussels.

Mr. Makei suggested implementing big infrastructure projects as part of the action plan to invest in the trans-European transportation network. He also called for easing trade with the European Union, including for non-associated partner states.

The Minister also suggested identifying ambitious, but realistic priorities for the *Eastern Partnership* for the period after 2020. "By 2030, for example, we could triple exports of the *Eastern Partnership* member states to the European Union and the EU's investments in the *Eastern Partnership* countries and double the number of jobs created by the EU in the *Eastern Partnership* member states. We could also implement at least one energy-efficiency project in every city," he asserted.

Speaking about trans-border mobility, Mr. Makei pressed for the removal of artificial formalities for crossing the EU border, as these formalities mean that people must wait up to ten hours and trucks up to several days in queues in order to cross.

The Head of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry also called for the stepping up of digital co-operation and development of a regional agreement for person-



Representative meeting in Brussels

al data protection. An *Eastern Partnership* IT school could be set up in Minsk on the model of a similar school in Tbilisi. He also urged to invest more efforts in promoting entrepreneurship, alongside small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Minister informed the participants of the meeting that Belarus is ready to host a high-level event timed to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the *Eastern Partnership*.

ists. "We intend to firmly pursue the policy of advancing our relations with the European Union, and to secure the signing of the partnership priorities. Unfortunately, the process has been suspended through no fault of our own. I hope that, by the end of the year, we'll have moved forward in the signing of the agreement to simplify the visa regime and readmission," he noted.

According to the Minister, during the events in Brussels,

divides us and to build relations on this basis. Our adherence towards a uniting agenda rather than confrontation always generates greater results for all subjects of international law," he concluded.

Belarus and the EU haven't yet achieved a high level of development in their relations, the Foreign Minister told journalists before the meeting. He stated that there are still some restrictions on collaboration

hannes Hahn, told reporters on the side-lines of events timed to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the *Eastern Partnership* initiative, that Belarus-EU negotiations on the readmission agreement had been completed. "I think we've more or less finished negotiations on the readmission agreement in the end. We now have to determine the date and the place where we will sign it," noted Mr. Hahn.

Tackling the signing of partnership priorities, the European Commissioner explained that disagreements between Belarus and Lithuania regarding the Belarusian nuclear power plant are hindering a common resolution. "We are discussing the problem of Lithuania and Belarus with our friends and partners and working on how we can address this concern to come to an agreement. We understand that everyone has an interest in these partnership priorities," he added.

Mr. Makei commented that Belarus hopes to sign agreements with the EU on facilitating visa procedures and on readmission by the end of the year. "We intend to firmly pursue the policy of advancing our relations with the European Union and to secure the signing of the partnership priorities. Unfortunately, the process has been suspended for now through no fault of our own," emphasised the diplomat.

It was previously reported that Belarus had been ready to sign the agreement on facilitating visa procedures with the European Union for a long time. However, our European partners would like to sign the document together with the readmission agreement. This will oblige Belarus to take back illegal migrants who enter the European Union via Belarus. Therefore, the country has been working on ways to offset the financial cost of having to deport these citizens to their own countries.



"We always proceed from the fact that it's necessary to find what unites rather than divides us and to build relations on this basis. Our adherence towards a uniting agenda rather than confrontation always generates greater results for all subjects of international law."

In Brussels, Mr. Makei met with the foreign ministers of the EU and the *Eastern Partnership* member states to discuss bilateral relations and Belarus-EU co-operation prospects. Moreover, he invited his partners from the European Union and the *Eastern Partnership* participating states to visit the 2nd European Games in Minsk, from June 21st-30th, 2019.

Before the meeting of foreign ministers of the EU and *Eastern Partnership* member states, Mr. Makei made several important statements to journal-

ists. It's important to thoroughly analyse all the achievements and also consider any drawbacks in order to achieve better results as part of this initiative within the next decade.

Mr. Makei added that in each union or bilateral relations there are negative aspects, however, we should not focus solely on these, but try to find something in common that unifies us and will help overcome existing problems to move forward. "We always proceed from the fact that it's necessary to find what unites rather than

between the sides and even the participation of the Head of State in the events, dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the *Eastern Partnership* wouldn't bring 100-percent return. "We are fully expecting the visit [of the President of Belarus] to be efficient and intensive," underlined Mr. Makei. "However, in any case, the meetings that will be conducted here will be very important for all sides."

In an aside, the European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Jo-

Co-operation gathers momentum

Belarus-Azerbaijan trade over \$500m in 2018

By Olga Korneeva

According to Belarus' Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Gennady Akhramovich, many promising projects are in the pipeline. Co-operation between Azerbaijan and Belarus has been developing rapidly in all areas and, as the Ambassador noted, a joint Belarus-Azerbaijan enterprise to assemble agricultural machinery in Turkey's Kirikkale is currently in operation. There are other significant joint projects that the parties intend to implement soon.

The two countries have reached a new level of co-operation, as they implement



At Baku exhibition

various promising projects involving third countries in trade and economic liaisons. According to the diplomat, bilateral co-operation is gaining momentum, not only in trade but also in science, education, culture, sports and other areas.

Mr. Akhramovich emphasised the high level of bilat-

eral relations and cited the statements that the presidents of the two countries made during Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Belarus. Both heads of state see co-operation between Azerbaijan and Belarus as exemplary for the two sovereign, independent countries.

New movement strategy

By Olga Korneeva

Belarus' Development Bank confirms floating Eurobonds in Belarusian Roubles

The bank will float Br210m worth of Eurobonds with a maturity period of three years and a coupon rate of 12 percent per annum, at 100 percent of face value, via the global market of the Irish Stock Exchange.

The final breakdown of investors per region includes bidders from the USA and the UK, and several Northern and Western Europe countries. The pool of investors includes management companies, investment funds, insurance companies, pension funds and banks.

The Chairman of the Development Bank, Andrey Zhishkevich, believes that the maiden

floatation of Eurobonds nominated in the national currency will promote a new movement trajectory for the entire national financial market. "With this project, the Development Bank has formed an open market indicative of long-term funding in Belarusian Roubles. It will have appreciable influence on the expectations, forecasts and actions of other participants of the national market," he said.

The fundamental idea behind the deal is to demonstrate the degree of external trust in the national currency, find new contact points for Belarusian banks and companies with international investors and creditors, and increase the overall level of Belarus' investment appeal on the international financial scene.

Park is an example of global possibilities

The international forum on regional co-operation and development within the framework of the *Belt and Road* initiative, which will take place in the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park in July, will help bring new investors, believes Alexander Yaroshenko who heads the Park's Administration

By Olga Korneeva

"Among other things, the planned forum is expected to attract new investments and investors. We hope that some of the businesses we've set our sights on will be attracted to the Park," the official said, noting that these are a Belarusian, a Swiss and a Chinese company. Mr. Yaroshenko added, "I hope we will see Belarusian residents with new technology in the form of new materials for packaging. The Swiss project is also very interesting. It's a high-tech project relating to software products and the storage and processing of large amounts of data. As for the Chinese company, we hope for a major investment in the area of automobile components."

The official reminded journalists that the Industrial Park



intends to raise the number of resident companies to 60 this year. "We are now prioritising not the number of resident companies we attract, but their development, the construction of manufacturing facilities, and, most importantly, their commissioning," he stressed.

The key motto of the international forum on regional co-operation and development within the framework of the *Belt and Road* initiative reads: *Open Great Stone Park — An Example of Global Opportunities*. The forum is designed to bolster links with the interna-

tional investment community, representatives of the private sector and state agencies. It will enhance the competitive ability and investment appeal of the Park at international level, in addition to securing its status as the most open and comfortable site for doing business along the *Belt and Road*.

Representatives of the countries participating in the *Belt and Road* initiative, diplomatic missions abroad and in Belarus, heads of business associations, investment funds, banks, private and state companies are expected to take part in the forum.

In search of new strong connections

By Svetlana Yevgenieva

The *Made in Belarus* exhibition of Belarusian producers shown at the 86th International Agricultural Exhibition in Serbia's Novi Sad

The exhibition was attended by companies representing the petrochemical industry, as well as food manufacturers. A number of companies are already working in the Serbian market, others expected to make business connections during the exhibition.

In particular, Belshina demonstrated tyres for agricultural machinery and trucks. The Mountain Wax Plant offered paraffins, highly refined candle wax, paraffin emulsions, reagents for drilling, model compositions for accurate casting and other products, including their business speciality, an anti-tracer for mineral fertilisers, which is designed to prevent caking and dust suppression during storage and transportation. In turn, Lidakhleboprodukt demonstrated flour and semi-finished flour products for fast preparation, as well as a



At the exhibition in Serbia

whole range of pasta. Oat, barley, buckwheat, rye and wheat cereal and various mixes were shown by Smorgon's Bread Products Plant.

In the outdoor area of the exhibition centre, Belarusian agricultural equipment was on show, led by Serbian partner, Belarus-Agropanonka JSC.

The exhibition was organised by the Belinterexpo exhibition company of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with the support and participation of the Embassy of Belarus in Serbia. In total, companies from 61 countries took part. National pavilions were presented by Egypt, Indonesia, Spain, Italy, China, the Netherlands, Russia and others.

Investments to reach up to \$300m

Government plans to sign new loan agreements with WB by late 2019

By Vladimir Velikhov

Loan agreements on three new projects were under discussion during the recent visit of the Belarusian delegation, led by Economy Minister Dmitry Krutoy, to Washington. This was to take part in the Spring Meetings of the Boards of Governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WBG). During their visit, the Belarusian delegation met with Cyril Muller, the Vice President for the Europe and Central Asia Region of the World Bank.

The two parties discussed the World Bank's active portfolio in Belarus, featuring eight investment projects totalling about \$790m. They pointed to the high quality of the active portfolio and efficient utilisation of the resources. They shared views on plans for the preparation of new infrastructure projects in education, energy efficiency and housing and utilities. The loan agreements for these three projects are to be signed in 2019. The aggregate investment is estimated at around \$300m.

Other promising avenues of co-operation mentioned during the meeting included new projects in energy efficiency in the social sector, upgrade of public finances, transport, and other priority areas.

Apart from the investment portfolio, the parties reviewed progress in drafting the road map to increase the efficiency of the domestic economy. In particular, they noted that they share a vision of how the stability of the financial sector should be maintained, how public finances should be bolstered and how the public debt management policy should be improved. The World Bank deems it necessary to conduct more dramatic



World Bank ready for investments

structural reforms in the real economic sector and to simultaneously strengthen social security and social assistance. It is also necessary to reform the energy sector to reduce subsidies for heat supply.

The Belarusian delegation informed their WB partners about the Government's determination to keep working to promote small and medium-sized entrepreneurship, to introduce corporate management in the public sector and to strengthen social security, especially at regional level. As far as heating subsidies are concerned, work will continue within the framework of the policy adopted by the Head of State.

The World Bank emphasised that additional measures to reduce fiscal risks in the public sector might be needed to maintain long-term sustainable economic growth in Belarus.

Apart from traditional meetings with the IMF and the WBG senior executives, the Belarusian delegation held talks with top managers of the European Investment Bank and the European

Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The World Bank is ready to transfer funds directly to the state budget of Belarus if certain indicators of the road map are reached on an annual basis. This was announced after Mr. Krutoy met with the World Bank's Vice President, Cyril Muller, during the annual meeting of the EBRD Board of Governors in Sarajevo.

The negotiations touched on the continuation of the World Bank's expert advice and consulting assistance. The Belarusian side thanked the bank for their constant support in implementing structural changes designed to ensure steady economic growth within the framework of the updating of the road map for structural reform in Belarus. Close attention was drawn to the need to step up social protection and aid to citizens in areas with a complicated social and economic situation. Unemployment benefits, retraining, employment and the encouragement of private business

were mentioned. If certain indicators of the road map are met on an annual basis, the World Bank is ready to allocate untied loans directly to the state budget via the Programme-for-Results (PforR) financing policy.

Mr. Muller highlighted the significant level of the WB's work with Belarus, the country's disciplined approach to honouring its commitments, the transparent system of approval, implementation and oversight of projects. It was noted that, despite changes in the bank's management, the volume of funding Belarus gets will not be revised, and broader co-operation within the framework of the partnership programme adopted in April 2018 to guide co-operation till 2022, depends only on the quality and speedy preparation of new projects.

During the meeting, Mr. Krutoy sketched out the Government's plans for the further advancement of co-operation with international financial institutions, with a view to financing priority infrastructure projects. It was noted that, taking into account Belarus' need for infrastructure investments in the medium term, it is important to attract the resources of four leading financial institutions — the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank — to the tune of at least 1bn Euros every year.

At present, Belarus' co-operation with the WB relies on the World Bank Group partnership strategy for 2018-2022, which was passed in 2018. Over the period of co-operation (1992-2019), the volume of investments the World Bank has poured into the Belarusian economy has exceeded \$1.7bn.

Basics to be built on

UK Minister of State for Trade Policy, George Hollingbery, plans to visit Belarus in June, as announced by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Belarus, Fionna Gibb, on meeting the Chairman of the Council of the Republic, Mikhail Myasnikov



By Vladimir Khromov

George Hollingbery plans to take part in the first round of the intergovernmental trade dialogue. According to the Ambassador, the Minister intends 'to launch negotiations on trade and attend the European Games opening ceremony'.

The two parties also reviewed the prospects of bilateral trade and economic co-operation and political dialogue. They welcomed good links between the foreign ministries of the two countries and progress in inter-parliamentary contacts. In May 2018, Belarus hosted a delegation of UK parliamentarians. The delegation head and leader of the All-Party Parliamentary Group to Belarus, John Whittingdale, recently noted in the UK Parliament, Belarus willingness to interact with other states and the intensification of bilateral co-operation.

The agreement to establish intergovernmental trade dialogue was achieved in March 2018, during an official visit of Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, to the UK. The trade dialogue aims to promote mutual trade and investment between the countries.

Belarus has invited the UK to open a pharmaceutical enterprise and a business to make charging stations for electric cars in the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park. Mr. Myasnikov assumed the British delegation would be interested in the Great Stone Park, where resident companies are offered attractive economic terms. He suggested considering the possibility of setting up a British company or a joint venture to make pharmaceutical products. Such a company would enjoy good access to the Eurasian Economic Union

market where both sides have the necessary competences. "In this way, one could successfully trade in the Eurasian economic space as a whole," he added.

The Belarusian side is interested in advancing co-operation with the UK in the sphere of biotechnologies, precision mechanics and optics and electric transport. "As for charging stations, it may be a good idea to start making them in Belarus, perhaps in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park," Mr. Myasnikov said, also drawing attention to the growing volume of Belarus-UK trade. "This is not only in specific goods," he stressed, referring to oil products. "Trade in other commodity groups has nearly doubled. It means our companies are actively working together." Mr. Myasnikov also suggested stepping up co-operation in science, technology, and education.

The UK Ambassador's diplomatic mission in Belarus is nearly over. Mr. Myasnikov thanked Fionna Gibb for her work. He noted that significant positive changes have happened in Belarus-UK dialogue during her time in the country. Interparliamentary co-operation was no exception. The Head of the Upper Chamber of the Belarusian Parliament recalled that a British delegation visited Belarus in May 2018. "The visit solved many issues and enhanced the trust of both parties," said Mr. Myasnikov.



Interest shown to such machinery

Loan to assist sales to Mongolia

Belarus and Mongolia sign intergovernmental agreement on providing an export loan to enable deliveries of Belarusian machines, vehicles and equipment to Mongolia

By Natalia Yemelyanova

The document was signed as a Belarusian delegation visited Mongolia. It was led by the Deputy Industry Minister, Alexander Ogorodnikov, and included representatives of MTZ, MAZ, Gomselmash, Bobruiskagromash, Mogilevliftmash, Pozhshnab and the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus.

Members of the delegation met with representatives of the Mongolian ministries of food, agriculture, light industry, finance, road development and transport and emergencies, as well as representatives of the Ulaan-

baatar city administration, representatives of several Mongolian companies, who are interested in buying Belarusian machines, vehicles and equipment.

In the next few years, representatives of Belarus and Mongolia are expected to arrange deliveries of fire-fighting equipment, agricultural machines, municipal vehicles, road construction and road cleaning machines, passenger lifts and railway cars.

The two sides also agreed the date for the next session of the Belarus-Mongolia commission on trade and economic co-operation. This will take place in June 2019.

Memorial plaque to Nemetskaya Sloboda

By Svetlana Savelieva

A memorial plaque, created with the support of the Lutheran Church of Germany and the German Embassy in Belarus, unveiled at Lyuteransky Park in Minsk's Karl Liebknecht Street

A memorial in the form of a book was created on the initiative of the Head of the Lutheran community in Minsk, Olga Shtokman, and records the history of multinational and tolerant Belarus. "One page features a German settlement, in the centre of which there is a church and the other has an engraved inscription informing the reader that, in the 18th-19th centuries, there was a German Quarter (Nemet-



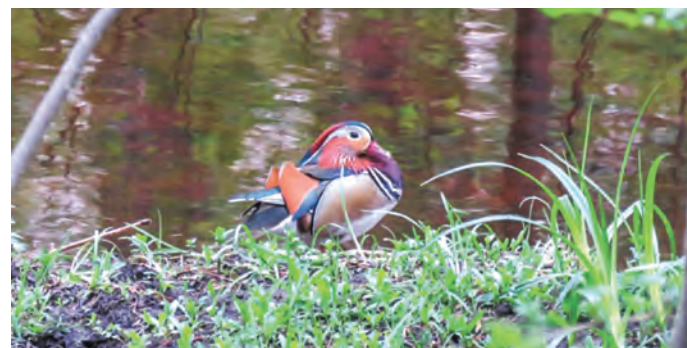
sckaya Sloboda) and a Lutheran Church here. The idea of creating such an historical reminder came to me when we began finding the tombstones of an old German cemetery during the expansion of Karl Liebknecht Street," explained Ms. Shtokman.

The German Ambassador to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Peter

Dettmar, was invited to the opening of the memorial.

Ms. Shtokman is also promoting an initiative to create a Belarus-Germany gallery. Information stands with archival information and illustrations describe the similarities and differences in religion, culture and other aspects of the two nations. In the future, she plans to replenish her exhibition with new archival data.

In the early 20th century, over 2 thousand people of German nationality lived in Minsk. They settled in an area called Nemetskaya Sloboda which included Lyuteranskaya, Malaya Lyuteranskaya and Nemetskaya streets, which were later renamed. Residents were mostly Lutheran Germans.



Comfortable habitat

Mandarin duck — rare for Belarus — noticed at Berezinsky Reserve

By Olga Korneeva

The Mandarin duck (*Aix galericulata*) rarely flies to Belarus. This is the second sighting of the species in the reserve: it was first recorded in our country in April 1986, when one of the birds was seen on the Berezina River

in the Berezinsky Reserve. In Belarus, there were six sightings of the species, mainly on bodies of water in the city or in the vicinity of cities. This new case is somewhat different from previous ones in its remoteness.

The natural habitat of the duck is the forests of the Amur River basin and Eastern China. In the past century, it was successfully acclimatised to Western Europe, where it is bred as a decorative park bird. The duck nests in tree hollows.

Promising areas of co-operation become reality

Belarus is ready to share its approaches and experience in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals with Latvian partners

By Vladimir Velikhov

Latvia has started working on a national development strategy for 2021-2027 and has expressed interest in Belarusian experience in this area.

“Our Latvian partners want to learn more about our approaches to sustainable development and we will be happy to share our experience. Belarus is interested not only in economic and humanitarian matters, but also in environmental issues. We want to discuss the preservation of transboundary water resources, green technologies and the green economy,” the Deputy Chairwoman of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus and National Co-ordinator for SDGs, Marianna Shchetkina, said before meeting the Head of the Sustainable Development Committee, Vjaceslavs Dombrovskis. She said that Belarus is implementing the social and economic development strategy to 2030 and is working on a similar document for sustainable development until 2035.

In turn, Mr. Dombrovskis said that Latvia is interested in Belarus’ experience in IT, as we have achieved significant progress in this area. Latvia is also interested in discussing co-operation in matters relating to the transportation of Belarusian cargoes via Latvian ports and is ready to offer advantageous terms.

The advancement of Belarus-China relations is also being considered. To get first-hand information on these matters, the delegation visited the Hi-Tech Park and the Chinese-Belarusian



During the meeting in Minsk

Great Stone Industrial Park.

The participants of the meeting noted that Belarus-Latvia relations in general and the interparliamentary dialogue in particular are based on mutual trust. The interaction has recently become more significant and systemic. Belarusian and Latvian MPs intend to continue working to step up trade and investment co-operation.

Belarusian senators thanked their Latvian counterparts for support in the EU and expressed the hope that trust-based interparliamentary relations will act as a catalyst of co-operation in other areas.

The parties also discussed the organisation of the IIHF World Championship which Minsk and Riga will co-host in 2021. In particular, the need to develop interesting Belarus-Latvia routes, which are planned to be open for visa-free travel to championship ticket holders.

Latvia is an important trade partner and a large transit corridor for Belarusian export to third countries. As of 2018, Latvia was Belarus’ 14th largest partner in terms of trade and 10th in terms of export. Bilateral trade amounted to almost \$600m (33 percent up from 2017). Belarus had a trade surplus. In 2018, the Belarusian economy attracted over \$100m of investment from Latvia.

Latvian investors take an interest in projects in trade, the service sector, pharmaceuticals, woodworking, food and other industries. There are 585 enterprises in Belarus using Latvian capital.

In June 2018, the Belarusian and Latvian governments adopted an action plan to advance co-operation across promising areas, including medical tourism, motorway services, technology and the food and woodworking industries.

Tasting the ‘zing’

By Svetlana Yevgenieva

Belarusians produce world’s first cornflower-flavoured ice cream with rye cones and flax seeds

One hundred years ago, Maxim Bogdanovich set the Belarusian trend for cornflowers and now these same flowers appear on aeroplanes, restaurant menus and even in ice cream. The dessert, using the ‘national’ flower is manufactured by Belarus’ oldest ice cream factory: Bely Polyus. A cornflower is not the only Belarusian ‘zing’; the ice cream also contains flax seeds, while the cone is made using rye flour. The idea of the makers is to create a product that will allow tourists to ‘taste’ Belarus in the true sense of the word.

“We’ve noticed tourist’s asking, ‘What unusual things can be eaten in Belarus?’ the answer often being only draniki. We hope that the cornflower ice cream will solve this problem, as it’s a tasty and unique product that doesn’t exist in any other country. Its taste is like any other dessert, with a milky base supplemented with floral and herbal flavours, then, biting into a flax seed, the sweet honey after-taste is released,” said Maxim Zhurovich, Bely Polyus’ Deputy Marketing Director.

‘Bely Polyus — national ice cream in a flavoursome cone...’ is how the company describes the new product. The brand promotes the Belarusian language and its cultural symbols.

From mid-May, the cornflower ice cream will be gradually introduced to the supermarkets of Minsk and other Belarusian cities. The manufacturers have decided not to export the product, to leave the ‘zing’ (or, to be more precise, the ‘cornflower’) ‘only in Belarus and nowhere else’.



ADVICE FROM DR. ZHUKOVA

Only correct training required

What is cardio and how to exercise?

A. Semiletov, Orsha

Cardio is a kind of training when the emphasis is put on the cardiovascular system. Such exercise is necessary for athletes and those who care about their health and is especially topical for those who are just beginning to train.

Cardio training has become more popular in recent years. How can we get the maximum benefit from cardio, and what issues should we consider during training? It’s important to remember that such exercises are not aimed at developing the muscles of the body, but the cardiovascular system. Accordingly, in cardio training, the pulse should be regularly monitored, otherwise, serious damage to health can occur.

Before starting exercising, the upper and lower blood

pressure must be checked. The most accurate way to do this is to undergo a computer examination, which will show the state of the cardiovascular system and give an idea of the suggested blood pressure during exercise. To find the upper and lower limits of the pulse without a computer, subtract the person’s age from 220. 65 percent of this figure gives the lower limit, 85 percent the upper.

Cardio training is beneficial only if a person does it correctly. During training, it’s important to constantly monitor the heart rate. For this reason, experts advise the use of additional equipment, this is especially important for those who tend towards high blood pressure or have problems with the cardiovascular system.

Before exercise, it’s important to define the final goal: active heart training or



Correct training is a key

weight loss. In the first case, the training should be more intense (pulse at 85 percent of the maximum upper mark) but shorter in time (an average of 15-20 minutes). If the goal is to lose weight, then training should last for 40-60 minutes but with lower intensity — 65 percent of the upper pulse limit.

It is better to start with

10-15-minute low intensity classes. It should be remembered that, in the morning, this should be lower — about 100-110 beats per minute for beginners and 120-125 beats for regular visitors of the gym. Evening training can take place in a more intensive mode, with a pulse of 130 beats at the beginning and 140

in trained people.

Experts advise exercise for at least 30 minutes three to five days a week. Modern lives are busy, and most people can hardly find 30 minutes in their schedule — especially when they work and want to give more time to their families. Therefore, cardio can be combined with work: i.e. biking into the countryside or to the supermarket. It is also useful to walk or climb stairs without a lift.

Only a gradual increase in the volume and intensity of exercise can provide safe and effective training. If done correctly, after a month, the pulse rate will fall, and it will be possible to increase the intensity. To move to a new level, it’s possible to use the so-called ‘verbal test’ when a person should be able to talk calmly during exercise.

By Tatiana Zhukova, doctor of the highest category, Candidate of Medical Sciences



Showing cinematic talent from around the world

The 72nd Cannes Film Festival began with a heady mix of star names, fresh faces and both high- and low-brow subject matters

Since 1955, the Cannes Film Festival has awarded the Palme d'Or to some of the greatest filmmakers of all time, from Frances Ford Coppola to Jane Campion. However, the prestigious golden leaf remains one of the hardest prizes to predict. While Oscar

season involves thousands of voters and aggressive, months-long campaigns, the Palme d'Or race among the 20-odd films selected for official competition screen across 10 days for a jury of celebrated actors, filmmakers, and other influencers, some of whom can be fickle about their tastes.

This year's jury stands out for being particularly filmmaker-centric. Cannes veteran Ale-

jandro G. Iñárritu is serving as President. He's joined by fellow directors Kelly Reichardt, Alice Rohrwacher, Maimouna N'Diaye, Yorgos Lanthimos, and Pawel Pawlikowski — as well as Elle Fanning, the youngest Cannes juror in history. Almost all of them have screened work at the festival, and their projects suggest a jury composed of complex, disparate sensibilities.

The opening night movie — *The Dead Don't Die* — features one of the most eclectic casts ever to walk the red carpet, including Bill Murray, Adam Driver, Chloe Sevigny, Tilda Swinton, Selena Gomez, and Tom Waits.

Other celebrities who came out for the opening ceremony included jury member Elle Fanning, Julianne Moore, Alessandra Ambrosio and Eva Longoria.

Architecture firm unveils striking proposal for 'green' Notre Dame



The rebuilt Notre Dame could feature a futuristic glass design, solar power, and an urban farm that supports vulnerable and homeless Parisians, if one architecture firm's vision is realised

In April, French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced an international competition for architects to redesign the cathedral's 19th century spire, which collapsed after a fire devastated the 850-year-old Gothic landmark. Paris firm Vincent Cal-

lebaut Architectures responded to the call with an innovative, eco-friendly design that supports the local population and produces more energy than it uses.

The Vincent Callebaut project is titled 'Palingenesis', a Greek concept of rebirth or recreation. The firm proposes a new roof made of glass, oak and carbon fibre, which connects 'in one single curved stroke of pencil' to the sloping spire. The rooster which topped the original spire, retrieved from the rubble after the fire,

will resume its watch from the new glass design, while the cathedral's choir will be 'bathed in natural light'.

Beneath the spire, the roof will host a fruit and vegetable farm run by charities and volunteers, in order to produce free food for vulnerable local people. 'Up to 21 tonnes of fruits and vegetables could be harvested and directly redistributed for free each year', the firm said in a press release. 'To that end, a farmers' market would be held every week on the forecourt of Notre Dame'.

The roof and spire will also produce electricity, heat and ventilation for the cathedral: an 'organic active layer' within the glass will provide solar power, while the roof's diamond-shaped 'scales' will open to offer natural ventilation — a design inspired by termite mounds. The spire will act as a 'thermal buffer space' in which hot air accumulates in winter.

If the Vincent Callebaut design is selected, the firm said, the reborn Notre Dame will define 'the new face of the church in the 21st century', presenting 'a fairer symbiotic relationship between humans and nature'.

NCA says its budget needs to double

Organised crime poses such a threat to the UK that an extra £3bn will be needed to fight it over the next three years, the National Crime Agency says

Its Head Lynne Owens says this includes more than doubling the NCA's annual budget from £424m to nearly £1.1bn.

Ms. Owens said that the NCA is facing a 'chronic and corrosive threat'. She said, "It's a number of things, it's globalisation, it's the rapid use and expansion of technology, it's the development of encryption and it's the demand for services — it's the supply of drugs, and we are a nation unfortunately, with a high demand for drugs. It's paedophiles using the dark web to target children in their bedrooms, those who dominate communities using fear and violence through the trade of drugs and firearms and illicit finance and cyber crime."

When asked about reports indicating that the number of organised crime groups has fallen over the past year, Ms. Owens said 'that's quite an old-fashioned way of looking at things'. "For example, offenders operating on the dark web might only network through technology. So they won't be part of a traditional organisation, but they are a network of like-minded individuals and that is why we get to a higher figure of offenders," she added.



Aviation fuel tax would cut CO2 and not hit jobs

Imposing taxes on aviation fuel would reduce the sector's carbon emissions by 11 percent and have a 'negligible' impact on employment and the economy, a leaked study from the European Commission has found, piling pressure on the bloc to stop exempting aviation from fuel taxes

According to the report, applying a tax of €330 per 1,000 litres of kerosene — the EU's minimum excise duty rate for the fuel — would result in a ticket price increase of 10 percent and an 11 percent decrease in passenger numbers. This would lead to an 11 percent fall in carbon emissions.

The report did find that the tax would have a negative impact on aviation sector jobs — with a projected 11 percent reduction — but that its impact on employment and GDP as a whole would be 'negligible'

due in part to the higher fiscal revenues the tax would generate.

The aviation sector is subjected to several taxes already, including air passenger duty and VAT for domestic flights which average at €11 and €4 respectively across the bloc.

The taxation of fuel already on board an aircraft upon arrival at an international destination is prohibited by the 1944 Chicago Convention, but the treaty does not apply to fuel taken on board at the destination.

In the EU, fuel for commercial aircraft is exempt from taxation. Member states have, however, been permitted to tax fuel from domestic aviation since 2003. Yet, contrary to a bevy of countries including Canada, the US, Australia, Japan and Saudi Arabia who all levy such a tax, no EU member states does.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



When a private collection is worthy of being displayed in a museum

The *Honore Daumier and More* exhibition from the private collection of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany to Belarus — H.E. Mr. Peter Dettmar — and his wife Ilka is a unique event for the National Art Museum

By Veniamin Mikheev

In recent times, exhibitions from private collections have occupied a prominent place in the museum's calendar. Such shows make it possible to present works that are mostly inaccessible to a wider audience. The *Honore Daumier and More* show is unique: items from the private collection of the Dettmar couple are being briefly offered for public viewing at Belarus' major museum for the first time.

The Minsk exposition features part of the collection which the Dettmars have carefully brought together over the years, buying works of art in different countries which they visited as part of their service. As Mr. Dettmar noted, during this time, the exhibits have become 'a part of their own history' as 'they symbolise what has accompanied us over the last 30 years'.

The *Honore Daumier and More* exhibition showcases more than thirty paintings



and graphic works, as well as objects of decorative-and-applied art, created mainly by 19th-20th century European, Belgian, German, Dutch and French masters.

The show includes twenty-four graphic lithographs, published in the famous Parisian *Le Charivari* illustrated newspaper, from 1832 to 1937. The newspaper was founded by the French draftsman, lithographer and journalist, Charles Philipon, and his son-in-law, bookseller and founder of the publishing house, Gabriel Aubert. Being known for its caricatures, *Le Charivari* collaborated with many famous French artists: Honore Daumier, Alexander-Gabriel Dean, Gustave Doré, Paul Gavarni, and others.

One of the greatest French artists, Honore Daumier, was a famous painter, sculptor and draughtsman, but was best known for his caricatures. From 1830, he liaised with Charles Philipon by posting satirical illustrations in the *La Caricature* magazine; after 1832, he collaborated



When true interest is demonstrated

with *Le Charivari*. The various classes of modern Parisian society, with their manners, customs and habits, were the subject of the artist's satire. The range of topics covered by Daumier was so great that his creative heritage is often compared with Honore de Balzac's *Human Comedy*.

The lithographs in the exhibition were created by Daumier in 1840-1865. Most pieces are social cartoons, given the strict ban on political satire at the time. However, the artist continued to denounce the

political system of the modern world in this genre. The lithographs introduce several of the many series of caricatures painted by Daumier during his long creative life. These include: *Marital Morals*, *Parisian Troubles*, *Tragic-Classical Physiognomy*, *Ancient History*, *Beautiful Days of Life*, *Good Bourgeois*, *Anything*, *Fathers* and others.

It's worth emphasising that, thanks to the exhibition, the artist's works are being showcased for the first time at the National Art Museum of Belarus, providing an opportunity for the Belarusian audience to get to know the creative heritage of the world-famous master.

Among the paintings on show are portraits from the family gallery of Ambassador Peter Dettmar's father, created by German artists of the early 19th century. In addition, *Spring* by Belgian painter Louis Etienne Timmerman and works by Dutch artists of the late 19th-20th century deserve special attention.

Masterpieces happily return

By Alexander Pimenov

15 paintings by Faibich-Schrage Zarfina, of Parisian School, return home

The Embassy of Belarus in France has agreed with the heirs of the famous artist of the Parisian School — Schrage Zarfina — to purchase his paintings for return to his native Belarus. The works were bought for the corporate collection of the A-100 Group of Companies. In early May, they were delivered to Belarus, all customs procedures have been

completed and the exhibition is being prepared. It is planned that, in the future, the exhibition will open in the Minsk Regional Local Lore Museum in Molodechno, as the artist was born in the Minsk Region.

The masterpieces were created using various painting techniques and represent different periods of the artist's work. This will create a holistic impression of his creative life. These 15 paintings are currently the largest collection of Schrage's works in Belarus. His *Large Vase in Ochre Colours* (1965) and

Night Sea Sight (approximately 1950) are of major interest to experts.

Faibich-Schrage Zarfina was born in 1900 in the village of Smilovichi in the Minsk Region's Igumen District. He received his initial art education at the Vilno drawing school and, in 1914, emigrated to Palestine. In the early 1920s, he went to Europe to continue his studies. The painter studied in Berlin in 1923 and moved to Paris in 1924. Apart from drawing, Schrage worked in textile art and graphics. In 1947, he moved to France's Roni-sur-Bois, where he lived



A picture of Zarfina

until his death in 1975. The artist's paintings are kept in museums in France, the UK, Germany, the USA and Israel. Two more are in the National Art Museum of Belarus and another 12 are part of Belgazprombank's corporate collection.

Reaching the finals — already a success

In Tel Aviv, the 64th International *Eurovision-2019* Song Contest ended, with performers from 26 countries taking part in the finals. Among them was Belarus — represented by the youngest participant of the singing forum: ZENA. The Belarusian contestant was placed 25th, gaining 31 points, with her *Like It* song



By Natalia Yemelyanova

The first place and the symbol of the competition — the crystal microphone — went to Dutch singer, Duncan Laurence. The bookmakers weren't mistaken when they called his ballad *Arcade* an undisputed leader. The performer scored 492 points. Duncan Laurence is 24 years old and his real name is Duncan de Moor, with Laurence being his stage name, a derivative of his mother's name: Laurencia.

Arcade is based on Duncan's personal story. "I was inspired by a story about a girl whose love died very young. She had lost her love, but she always hoped that one day it would return. This spark of hope was put into the song. The lyrics and melody came from the depths of my heart. That's why the song sounds so organic. *Arcade* is a story about finding love in our lives. It's hope for what seems so

unattainable," the singer explained.

Second place went to the Italian, Mahmood, and his *Soldi*, while third place was taken by Russia's Sergey Lazarev and his song *Scream*.

For Belarusians, the results in Tel Aviv were a great success. The bookmakers were sceptical about ZENA's chances; she was predicted to take 34th place out of 41. The chances of winning were less than 1 percent. However, it appears the singer's producer, Victor Drobysch, was right to doubt the bookies. The final result seems unaffected by the scandal associated with Mr. Drobysch who, in late March, supported the position of the Brunei authorities when they imposed the death penalty for same-sex relations.

ZENA — Zina Kupriyanovich — went through to the finals after the first semi-final. In total, 17 countries competed for

places in that semi-final. Apart from ZENA, representatives of nine countries — Greece, Serbia, Cyprus, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Australia, Iceland, San Marino and Slovenia — were lucky to reach the finals.

Zina Kupriyanovich was born in Minsk. From childhood, she studied piano, ballet, gymnastics and drawing. At the age of six, she began to sing in a vocal group and then in a choir. In 2013, Zina was a finalist in the children's *New Wave* contest and, a year later, her debut video for her song *Towards the Wind* gained more than a million views on the Internet. In addition, she won the *Junior Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk* competition and released songs and videos to get to the finals of the national selection round of *Junior Eurovision*.

Zina Kupriyanovich received her ZENA pseudonym after participating in the *New Factory Star* TV show, where



Duncan Laurence wins Eurovision 2019

she was mentored by producer, Victor Drobysch.

In Lisbon last year, Belarus was represented by Ukrainian singer, Nikita Alekseev. He took 16th place among 19 participants in the first semi-final and didn't reach the finals. The Israeli, Netta Barzilai, was the winner.

Belarus has participated in Eurovision since 2004. Our representatives have reached the finals six times: in 2007 — Dmitry Koldun, in 2010 — 3+2 band, in 2013 — Alena Lanskaya, in 2014 — Teo, in 2017 — *NaviBand*, and in 2019 — ZENA. So far, Dmitry Koldun's 6th place result is the best.

Immersed in an atmosphere of spectacles



By Alexander Pimenov

In Minsk alone, more than two dozen state, private and commercial exhibitions have opened their doors on the Night of Museums, when they drastically change their format, offering quests, competitions and shows, alongside their exhibition collections

It was growing dark on Saturday night, but there were already crowds wishing to immerse themselves in the medieval atmosphere on the doorstep of the National Centre of Contemporary Arts, in Nezavisimosti Avenue. The organisers offered guests the chance to transport themselves into

the era of glorious tournaments and splendid balls. One could imagine oneself part of the world of *Game of Thrones* — the most popular TV series in the world. One of the biggest budget series in the history of television is watched by millions of people, so the subject is very topical.

"The programme is completely full," noted Olesya Inozemtseva, the Centre's Director General for Creative Activity. "We showcase pictorial, graphical and sculptural works which reflect the 'dark ages'. By offering an exhibition, we can also throw in a master class on medieval dance and this isn't all. Anyone who wishes can try on aristocratic costumes and take photos."

People also take photos in full armour on the throne from the *Game of Thrones* as a souvenir of a museum visit. Some are deeply immersed in the thematic games, while others enjoy the music, and children enthusiastically watch cartoons about knights.

On this day, museum employees from all over the world celebrate their professional holiday: International Museum Day. This tradition was established back in 1977, when the resolution was adopted. Since 1997, the Night of Museums campaign has joined it and is currently organised in a hundred countries around the world. More than twenty thousand museums take part!

Our museum community comprehensively supports the idea and continues to successfully hold their unforgettable evenings. The National History Museum and the National Art Museum have been participating in this event for the last 14 years. The museum organised the Night of Fashion event this year, and also attracted visitors with its *Sixth Feeling* programme.

Today the trend is for increasing numbers of museums and exhibition venues to focus on an interactive format. This

year, many events on the Night of Museums are dedicated to the 2nd European Games and the 200th anniversary since the birth of Stanislaw Moniuszko. In addition, the topic of Belarus' liberation from Nazi occupation is a theme that runs throughout. It's most widely reflected in the Belarusian State Great Patriotic War History Museum, where visitors are offered the chance to touch history and see the way of life of those bygone years: the organisers have created a reconstruction of a dugout. Many were also keen to see an interactive venue where a Li-2 plane was situated; the history of this aircraft was described,

as well as its role during the war. Visitors were also shown the assembly and disassembly of a machine gun and given the opportunity to take photos in modern military uniform, learn Morse code and the secrets of restoration work.

It was also possible to join in with cultural life at the Loshitsa estate, where works by famous composers from previous eras were heard. Moreover, the Yanka Kupala Literary Museum offered a treat by inviting everyone to celebrate its 75th anniversary. On that night alone, seventy-five exhibits with a unique history were on display.



At National Art Museum

Cautiousness is key where security is concerned

Special centre to provide co-ordination and response to unexpected situations during the 2nd European Games

By Natalia Yemelyanova

An operation and co-ordination centre for the 2nd European Games, located at 103 Pobediteley Avenue in Minsk, has been opened. The Prime Minister of Belarus and Chairman of the Republican Organising Committee in charge of organising the Games, Sergei Rumas, was shown the capabilities of the facility.

The key task of the centre is to co-ordinate actions, while events proceed as normal, and to come up with measures to respond to unusual situations in the course of the 2nd European Games. The centre will work 24/7 from June 19th until July 2nd, employing about 100 people per shift. International experience and suggestions by the European Olympic Committees were taken into account in the course of creating the centre.

The facility will receive immediate information about unexpected situations. Training sessions are already be-



At the entrance to Main Operations Centre

ing arranged to practice responding to situations during the actual Games. The Belarusian Head of Government saw one such session in progress. It was an example of what duty personnel are expected to do if an incident happens during the Games. People responsible for various areas — such as protocol, catering, transportation, TV broadcasting, volunteer work and interaction with the European Olympic Committees — will be posted inside the operation room. Negotiation rooms to promptly handle emergency situations are located nearby.

Mr. Rumas also saw the technical solutions centre in operation. This will work as part of the operation and co-ordination centre and take care of any technical malfunctions during the Games. A special unit will keep an eye on all the information systems used by various contractors, Beltelecom and other communications operators. Statistics of technical problems will be summed up each day in order to get rid of bottlenecks and forestall any repeat of unwanted situations.

Incidents will be assigned three

levels — red, yellow, or green — depending on their severity. Georgy Katulin, Director of the Minsk European Games Organising Committee (MEGOC), explained that it will be necessary to downgrade as many incidents as possible to green level and deal with problems directly as they happen, since co-ordinating centres at each and every venue of the Games is the lowest tier of organisation.

Mr. Rumas also asked about the readiness of information systems for the organisers of the competition and of the mobile app designed for guests and tourists. Special software has been developed for the 2nd European Games, which can later be used during other major events, not necessarily sporting ones, and it has further been agreed that the software product can later be commercialised. One of the proposals put forward by governmental agencies suggests setting up a sports directorate to help organise events, including those taking place abroad, using the software product. The PM suggested looking into these possibilities after the Games. The directorate's ability to earn its living instead of relying on the state budget is key.



SPORT



Petanque is here

By Artur Nikolaev

This summer, a dozen fan zones to operate at the 2nd European Games in Minsk

To feel the atmosphere of a major tournament like the 2nd European Games in Minsk, it is not necessary to visit gyms or stadiums. If for some reason you can't get a ticket, you can drop into a fan zone: there will be a dozen available.

"Fan zones will be organised in Minsk, as well as in the regional and district cities," says leading specialist of the Foundation Directorate of the 2nd European Games — Pavel Korenevsky. "Three fan zones will be organised in the capital: near the Sports Palace, Minsk-Arena and Chizhovka-Arena. There will also be similar venues in Brest, Grodno, Gomel, Mogilev, Vitebsk and some district cities — such as Bobruisk and Molo-dechno."

The main fan zone near the Sports Palace will open two days before the start of the competition: on June 19th. "Each of them will have its own format and colour: national, family and

dancing," explains Pavel. "For example, the main fan zone of Minsk will be named European: here, presentations by the participating countries will be held. There will be demonstrations of sports that are not part of the main programme — including petanque (ball throwing), traditional types of wrestling and skateboarding. Food outlets will be organised in these fan zones and souvenirs will be available to purchase." Special attention will be given to demonstrations on historical fencing. They will be held on June 22nd and 23rd in the Upper Town. In turn, the Mikhail Savitsky Art Gallery will showcase valuable ancient swords, tools and masks.

"During the Games, master classes and demonstration performances by outstanding athletes will be held in the zones," adds Mr. Korenevsky. "It will be possible to meet and get autographs from legendary Belarusian and foreign athletes. All information about the zones will be posted on the official website of the European Games. I also advise you to follow the information on social networks."

Flame of Peace welcomed

By Svetlana Savelieva

Torch relay of 2nd European Games continued on its way through the Grodno Region

The region accepted the relay from the Brest Region, with Grodno Azot JSC becoming the first site visited by the 2nd European Games torch. The flame travelled through the company's site and then the torch was raised up to one of the factory's towers, which are more than 130m high.

The major venue for the official events was the stage on the main square in the centre of Grodno, with a busy concert programme prepared for guests and participants, featuring Grodno's own and other invited stars.

There were lots of surprises, with famous Grodno-born basketballer, Ivan Yedeshko, repeating his well-known pass to Alexander Belov, who brought gold for the national team of the USSR at the Olympic Games in 1972. One of the young Grodno players acted in the role of Alexander Belov.

Ivan Yedeshko was the first torchbearer to travel through the streets of Grodno. "It's very nice to take part in the relay in our native city. I'm always keen to come here and enjoy chatting to children and pupils. I believe it's necessary to maximise the potential of the 2nd European Games to promote sport and healthy



Flame of Games at the height of 130 metres

lifestyles," said the outstanding basketballer.

Grodno Region athletes plan to make a name for themselves with new sporting victories: around forty athletes representing the region are preparing for the Games. Fans from Grodno will be in the stands supporting their favourites. Of course, the relay brought many spectators onto the city's streets.

"It's an exciting moment, as the flame is a sporting symbol of achievement. It's prestigious and a great responsibility to carry it through our native land. I'm glad that this significant sporting celebration will take place in Belarus," said Ivan Tikhon, a world champion and prize winner of the Olympic Games in hammer throwing.

The torch, carrying the flame of the 2nd European Games, visited almost all the landmark historical sites in the

city, including the oldest active church in Belarus: the 12th century Kolozha Church. It was carried through the city's streets by those who are well known both in Grodno and beyond. These include distinguished athletes: Olympic champion in artistic gymnastics Yelena Volchetskaya and marksmen, Vitaly Bubnovich and Igor Basinky. The route of the relay started from the square where the flame eventually returned, making a circuit around the historical centre of the ancient city. The official events continued with a lively concert.

After Grodno, the Flame of Peace torch relay continued its journey through the region and has already been to the Avgustovsky Canal. The route was planned to showcase the unique character of the region, as well as its major sites and important facilities.

Carnival of the week



Cycling Carnival *Viva Rovar* becomes central event of Minsk's Cycling Week — gathering over 22,000 participants

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 21st June. *Two Worlds of Russian Icon Painting: 17th century monuments from Russian Icon Museum (Moscow)*
Until 30th June. *Salvador Dali*
Until 3rd July. *Games*.
Until 8th July. *Travelling Along Rhine*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 30th May. Exhibition of party dresses: *Invitation to the Ball*

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

11 Sovetskaya Street
Until 2nd August. *Killed Strongmen of Belarusian Land*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

3 Nekrasov Street
Until 2nd June. *Disclaimer, or All Characters Are Invented*
Until 2nd June. *Dialogues. Parallels. Dimensions*
Until 2nd June. *Limbo: Adventures of the Artist in India*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

47 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 9th June. *Knight's Affair*

BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY MUSEUM

13 Bogdanovich Street
Until 31st May. *Vladimir Korotkevich: Awakened Memory*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 15th September. *European Martial Arts. From Volcano's Smithy to Mars' Arts*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY

12 K. Marx Street
Until 1st September. *Dangerous Beauty*

FIRST RSDRP SESSION HOUSE-MUSEUM

31a Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 7th July. *Miraculous World Under Microscope*

YAKUB KOLAS MUSEUM

5 Akademicheskaya Street
Until 5th June. *Legends of Sun Stone*

TROITSKY SUBURBS

7A Bogdanovich Street
Until 2nd August. *Live Singing Birds*

LIBRA

37 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 31st May. *Marc Chagall*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
23.05. *Laurencia*
24.05. *Carmen*
26.05. *Violin is My Soul*
27.05. *Karmina Burana. Carmen-Suite*
28.05. *Figaro's Wedding*
29.05. *Vitovt*
30.05. *BELCANTO. Concert of Anastasia Moskvina and Oksana Volkova*

MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
23.05. *A Thousand and One Night*
24.05. *Jane Eire*
25.05. *True Story of Lieutenant Rzhnevsky*
26.05. *Merry Widow*
28.05. *Grooms*
29.05. *Secret Marriage*
30.05. *Musical Cocktail*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
25.05. *How to Become Rich*
29.05. *Dangerous Ties*
30.05. *Husband Leaving Wife*

BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

44 Kropotkin Street
23.05. *Suffering from Common Sense*
27.05. *Adam's Jokes*
28.05. *Wisdom Measurer*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
23.05. *Mixed Feelings*
24 and 25.05. *Night of Anton Chekhov's Miniatures*
26.05. *Master and Margarita*
27.05. *Mechanical Man*
28.05. *Forgetting Herostartos!*
29.05. *Pygmalion*
30.05. *In Search of True Self*

YANKA KUPALA THEATRE

7 Engels Street
23.05. *Black Lady of Nesvizh*
25.05. *ART*
26.05. *Paulinka / Homeland of Prudok*
28.05. *Fortune Tellers*
29.05. *Elza's Land / Pinsk Gentry*
30.05. *Pan Tadeush*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
23.05. *Sasha, Take Garbage Away*
28.05. *Zhmurik*
29.05. *Double Double*
30.05. *The Fool / Pieta*

CHAMBER DRAMA THEATRE

5 Frunze Street
23.05. *Corporate*
24.05. *Diablo and Senhorita Prim*
immersive show
29.05. *A Night at Hotel*