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Belarus provides itself with food and is actively increasing exports

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Polish border: the weakest suffer the most

Disturbing footage of children in tears in torn and dirty clothes. Pregnant women sleeping on frozen ground. Even strong men who were unable to hide tears of despair... All these pictures send shivers down the spine. How cynical the empty shrugs of the authorities of some countries against their background look — a sign of absolute indifference to the tragedy of people. Belarusians have never been so callous and never will be! → **4-5**





By Yevgeny Kononovich, Dmitry Umpirovich

The Head of State met the Chairman of the Belneftekhim Concern Andrei Rybakov and the Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Nazarov in charge of this area to hear a report on the current situation in the petrochemical industry, as well as plans for the future.

The competence of the Belneftekhim Concern includes a wide range of areas: from geological exploration and mining to the production of tens of thousands of types of goods. Moreover, there are industrial petrochemical giants in almost every region of the country which means jobs, substantial taxes to the budget, foreign exchange earnings in the country and a significant contribution to the development of regions. It is not surprising that the first thing the President was interested in was the general financial and economic performance of the petrochemical complex.

Andrei Rybakov reported to the President that this year the stable work of all the organisations subordinate to the concern has been ensured. Both production

volumes and exports are growing. In an interview with reporters, the head of the concern specified, “Based on the cost of a barrel, we are overfulfilling all plans to fill the budget. By the end of the year, we are planning more than 130 percent of the export growth rate.

“We are already engaged in business planning for next year and we see that we will only improve all indicators.”

Allied with Russia

The President also asked if there are any problems with oil supplies to Belarusian refineries. The agenda also dealt with the conditions for the functioning of Belarusian and Russian enterprises, taking into account the agreements with Russia.

“We still have a difference here,” stated Aleksandr Lukashenko. “And there is a tax policy. We seem to have somehow agreed halfway, but there are problems.”

On November 4th, at a meeting of the Supreme State Council of the Union State, Belarus and Russia signed a large package of integration documents. Among other things, they provide for

the creation of equal conditions for the operation of our enterprises.

There is still a lot to be done in this direction, but Andrei Rybakov is optimistic. He reminded the journalists that work is underway to create common markets for oil and oil products with Russia. Its end result should be equal business conditions for Belarusian enterprises.

Moreover, work is underway to reorient export routes to Russian ports. Andrei Rybakov explained that such a decision was made on the basis of risks and rhetoric, which came from the Baltic direction, so as not to depend on any particular circumstances, “We have already reoriented our supplies to Russian ports. It was planned to reach 1.7m tonnes by the end of the year; in fact, there will be at least 2.3m tonnes. It is beneficial for us today.”

However, the head of the concern added, this does not exclude monitoring of the Baltic vector. If necessary, we will work there as well. As far as exports to Ukraine are concerned, the business plans here remained unchanged.

“As we have said, we are supplying our oil products to the Ukrainian market.

Actually, there are no obstacles,” assured Andrei Rybakov. “As they say, business and nothing more.”

All projects are under control

An important topic is the activities of petrochemical enterprises under the pressure of sanctions. Thus, the countries of the collective West are trying to squeeze out direct competitors from the markets of oil products, fertilisers, tyres and fine chemicals. Aleksandr Lukashenko said straightforwardly,

“It is clear that they are trying to shake us up, primarily in the petrochemical direction: the supply and sale of petroleum products. Our so-called foreign partners do not behave very respectably.”

According to Andrei Rybakov, the sanctions pressure could not but affect the work of the enterprises of the industry. It is important to minimise this impact, promptly and adequately respond to changing conditions so that enterprises continue to work successfully, pay salaries to people and payments to the budget on time. And they succeed in this.

‘Security is sacred’

Migrants, integration, pressure on Belarus: the President gave an interview to the Editor-in-Chief of the Russian magazine *Natsionalnaya Oborona*, military expert Igor Korotchenko



Igor Korotchenko

West will itself destroy its economy and currency

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko predicts economic difficulties for western countries as a consequence of the amount of unprecedented money printing. “The West is decaying. We’ve achieved the thing we wanted in Soviet times. The evidence is them printing Euros and US Dollars. They will ruin the economy! They will destroy their economies and their currencies, thanks to which they have been dominating the world,” noted the Belarusian leader.

According to him, the countries of the West ‘are grasping at the things that cannot be touched’. “Because it was the source of their wealth and power in the world. And they are destroying it with their own hands,” he said.

About refined ‘politicians’

President of Belarus believes that the standards of politicians in the European Union has dropped significantly in recent years. Aleksandr Lukashenko compared the current figures in the EU with their predecessors in past decades. And the former do not look good in comparison. “There are no politicians over there after Chirac [former president of France, Jacques Chirac], Schröder [former German chancellor, Gerhard Schröder], and others. There is definitely no one there on a par with de Gaulle [a French army officer and statesman, the founder and president of the Fifth Republic of France, Charles de Gaulle] anymore. It means just what you’ve said: complete degradation,” said the Belarusian Head of State.

Aleksandr Lukashenko remarked

that western politicians grandstand, “I often watch them. Once they see a TV camera, they immediately blossom: they start waving their hands, smiling, adjusting their jackets, walking around... And they are not politicians. They are people, who are trying to become, you know, refined politicians.”

Moreover, there are quarrels and mutual mudslinging in Europe. The President also noted the strong dependence of some European countries on US policy, “Interesting things will happen in Poland. Just you wait. If it was someone else, [the European Union] would have already cut them down to size like Bulgaria or someone else. It won’t happen to Poland because Americans have Poland’s back. Everything Poland is doing contrary to the policy of the European Union was ordered by Uncle Sam.”

“They and the Ukrainians reproach me. They say that Lukashenko does what Putin tells him to. I think that Poles, Duda [Polish President Andrzej Duda] and Morawiecki [Polish Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki] are the wrong people to raise this subject,” noted the Belarusian leader.

About strong leaders

Nevertheless, Aleksandr Lukashenko is convinced that there are still true leaders in the modern world. “Look at Xi Jinping [China President],” Aleksandr Lukashenko cited as an example. “He is a giant, a strong leader. Look at Putin. They criticise Putin but our civilisation would have perished without him, Russia would have been split apart. Time came and things worked out and Russia was

saved partially thanks to President Putin. It happened in front of my very eyes.”

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, Federal Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel looked excellent in comparison with other politicians in the European Union. “How could ‘Mutter’ Merkel gain fame in Germany? In comparison with them she looked extremely solid. Although I am not trying to exaggerate her role, she looked good in comparison with the rest. And there was no one else. There are no politicians worrying about their nations over there. They worry about their own pockets, bribes, and the rest... There is no freedom of speech. Empty chatter,” the President of Belarus is convinced.

How Americans ‘cast down’ Macron

“Listen, what is the European Union? How many people do they have? 500 million I think or more than that? They have no security of their own and no army of their own! Look. They stepped on the toes of the Australians who then refused to buy French submarines worth 50 or 60 billion. Which means Americans took Macron [French President Emmanuel Macron] and France by the scruff of the neck and ‘dipped’ them into the Atlantic Ocean. There was a bit of an outburst which then calmed down, things were accepted the way they are. This is their policy,” the Belarusian Head of State mentioned a recent example.

He stressed that the European Union with a population of half a billion people should have a strong position. “It should be a massive power. As Americans swim

closer on ships and submarines, they should tremble and ask for permission to get closer in advance. But Americans wiretap everything in the European Union and hear silence [in return] ... Someone may make a statement for mass media and that’s it. That’s Europe for you. The same applies to America. Crazy people!” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

And here are Igor Korotchenko’s most outstanding quotes about the role of the personality of the Belarusian President in history:

** In the person of Aleksandr Lukashenko, we see an outstanding politician and leader. He is a man of great intelligence, political will and strategic goal-setting. This is very important for modern politicians... Today we see political dwarfs in Europe, who, I believe, in a number of their speeches and actions are simply inadequate and dishonour their nations. Lukashenko is a person who adequately represents Belarus.*

** Strong politicians who are ready to the end to stand up for their country and defend its interests are the national treasure of any state. Aleksandr Lukashenko is a politician of this scale. And against the background of the degrading European elite, he makes a very strong impression with his inner composure, strength and ability to resist pressure from outside, not to succumb to it.*

** At a critical moment in national history, your President displayed personal courage and political will. And this is huge from all points of view.*

Based on materials of belta.by

The answer will be reasonable

First of all, Aleksandr Lukashenko touched on the completion of the autumn field works and early preparation for spring. The main requirement is that everything must be done to a high standard and in the best possible time. The President noted that food prices are generally very stable, and this will improve and strengthen the financial situation of farms. Special emphasis is placed on the preparation and repair of equipment for spring while the strategic task for the near future is land reclamation.

In total, about nine million tonnes of grain have been harvested in the country this year.

“This is a good harvest for this year. This amount will be enough to provide people with bread and bakery products, and there will be enough fodder for the livestock that we have and plan to have next year,” believes Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The true face of ‘democracy’

The attention of the world community is now riveted on what is happening these days on the Polish border. Refugees from countries destroyed by the ‘democratic West’ — Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria — are now trying to break through to the European Union via our country. There are about five routes in the world along which ‘millions fleeing from war’ travel; however, attention is now focused on Belarus. The President noted the work of the media,

“Journalists are doing a great job by showing the true face of this democracy. Finally, our society and others will understand what kind of democracy, human rights and freedom of speech they have there in the West, which they have continuously lectured us about.”

It’s impossible to write dispassionately about how the Polish authorities and border guards behave towards refugees. Aleksandr Lukashenko gives real examples of the actions of the Polish side,

“They beat people and break ribs — people are bruised and broken. They are simply thrown out on the state border. And what is unacceptable (I don’t know why mass media don’t show it every day) they fire weapons over heads of refugees in our direction. As a border guard I can tell you that if a single shot was fired from the neighbouring territory in Soviet times, everything would have been destroyed over there. It is a terrible violation of the state border, when you start shooting in the direction from the neighbouring state.”

This is about humanity and European values. The Head of State also added,

Completion of the harvest campaign, an acute situation at the border and sanctions pressure: these and other topical issues were the focus of attention at the meeting between the President and the leadership of the Council of Ministers



“You see that this kid asks for water to drink but they stand like fascists. Gestapo! They turn on floodlights at night, loudspeakers, to disturb the children.”

Helping hand

The task of the Belarusians is to help people who fled from the destroyed countries. The President issues clear instructions. The first is to pay attention to pregnant women and children, “This is a complete disaster! There are a lot of women 8-9 months pregnant. This is something we will have to deal with as they will probably give birth here. They say they are not leaving the camp. ‘We’ll stay here!’ But how’s this going to work out? These are Kurds, Syrians, Afghans and others — the temperature is plus thirty now in their countries while we already have a minus! They do not know what it is like to spend the winter in these forests in Belarus.”

The option offered by the Head of State is to place the children of refugees, and maybe even their mothers, in sanatoriums.

“Pregnant women and children are the number one question. Take a look and decide. You cannot leave them, especially children,” said the Head of State.

The second question is to organise the delivery of dry firewood to the refugee camps. Meanwhile, the President instructed the Belarusian Foreign Ministry to raise relevant issues in the UN and other international structures.

Provocations will not work out

The Head of State also spoke about a dangerous trend,

“There were attempts to transfer weapons, ammunition and explosives to these people in the camp.”

Weapons are mainly supplied (together with the Russians we are keeping this issue under control, and we have talked with Putin on this topic) from Donbass. What are these weapons for? They want to arrange a confrontation here. They want to push our frontier guards with theirs, our military with theirs. Any machine gun, pistol, provocation — and there will be a military conflict.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko continued, “It is necessary for the Defence Ministry, the KGB and border troops to ensure control over the movement of NATO and Polish troops.

You see that there are 15,000 military personnel, tanks, armoured vehicles, helicopters and aircraft over there already. They’ve been deployed closer to our border. Brazenly. Without warning anyone.

Although they are supposed to warn us in line with the agreements. You are personally responsible for the movement of troops in the adjacent territory. You have to see them and you need plans to counteract them if anything happens. We are not deploying (I did not give such instructions) our grouping of the Armed Forces. But we have to see things. And foresee everything. We don’t want a little war to break out at the border while we are not prepared for it.”

Via Vladimir Putin, the Belarusian Head of State passed on a request to the Russian Defence Ministry to join the watch on the western borders of the Union State, “They had sent strategic bombers accompanied by our fighter jets. We should constantly monitor the situation at

the border. Yes, those are bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons. But we have no other way out. We have to see what they are doing beyond. Russians, Belarusians should control the situation together.”

The President was informed that, together with the Russian Tu-22s, the Su-30SM fighters of the Belarusian Air Force controlled the border area.

Threats force us to answer

Conducting a meeting with the Council of Ministers, the Head of State noted that they began to frighten Belarus too much with the fifth package of sanctions. In this regard, he recalled the instruction to the Government: nothing can be forgiven. Moreover, he asked a question,

“Poland is threatening us with border closure. They are welcome to do it then fewer opposition-minded people will go there. I have just heard what these brainless people have been babbling about. They are contemplating the closure of transit through Belarus. But it will not go through Ukraine as the Russian border is closed there. There are no routes through the Baltic states. But if it is us who will close it for Poles and, for example, Germans, what will happen then?”

Aleksandr Lukashenko is sure that the country should not stop at anything defending its sovereignty. At the same time, the President recalled that the pumping of natural gas through Belarus was doubled, “We provide heat to Europe, and they are threatening us with border closure. What if we block natural gas transit? Therefore, I would recommend the leadership of Poland, Lithuanians and other brainless folk to think hard before opening their mouths.”

The Head of State warned,

“If they impose additional sanctions — indigestible and unacceptable to us — we must respond. We agreed with you six months ago on the way we would do it.”

Pandemic: you must not relax

The Head of State paid special attention to the topic of the pandemic. He stated that the incidence of COVID-19 in Belarus began to gradually decrease, and this can be said not with cautious optimism, as before, but with confidence, “The decline in morbidity is evident.” Moreover, this is typical even for Minsk, where, until recently, there were high incidence rates.

The President also reminded people that, at the end of the year, from all sources, the country will spend \$2bn to fight the pandemic and save lives.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by





At the hellish gates of Poland



By Lyudmila Gladkaya

27-year-old Narzan, who lost her child, has three children. Already on the first day, she has suffered a lot from the Poles. She said that she and her family were in Poland, but they were detained and literally pushed into Belarus using tear gas. Other people from the refugee camp told me similar things.

This is what our neighbours do regularly, without looking at who is in front of them, on the other side of their 'democratic' barbed wire — children, women, old people... They use gas indiscriminately and are already using weapons and dogs against people and beat the unfortunate. Was it because of them, almost three thousand people, that serious forces were pulled onto the borders? About 15,000 Polish soldiers, special forces, helicopters, tanks, air defence systems, other heavy weapons, special equipment, water cannons? Will they use flash and noise equipment against them? Is this an adequate response to migrants?

Warsaw is more accustomed to calling them terrorists. But the 'terrorists' — the youngest are only a few months old — armed with toys, looking through the 'razor-wire' at the Polish military, beg to let them through and shout out the names of the countries they want to enter, using, by the way, their right. The answer is indifference and laughter at best.

"They called us to Europe! Why do they abuse us now?" the Kurds are indignant. "They talk so much about the fact that all countries need to abide by the principles of humanitarian law. Why don't they do it themselves?"

Here's another refugee shouting, "We are not terrorists, we have no weapons. Who is this army against, these helicopters and vehicles?"

...The Belarusians — authorities, organisations and volunteers — continue to bring to the camp warm clothes, shoes, food and milk for children, which their

Will Warsaw and the EU take responsibility for the torment of migrants, for the death of an unborn child of a Kurdish refugee?

Narzan, 27, is from Iraqi Kurdistan. She was nine months pregnant, but her unborn baby's heart stopped beating. Narzan received assistance, an ambulance arrived, but the child was born dead... This is the new 'normality' of the policy of the European Union and official Warsaw. I saw enough of it, working on the Belarusian-Polish border in a spontaneous camp of refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries, whose troubles the collective West had a hand in.



mothers asked for. Grodnovodokanal enterprise is replenishing water supplies in recently installed cisterns along the camp.

A metre away from the 'barbed wire' is a boy of about three years old. With one hand he grabbed his father's hand — the one with the can of porridge, with the other he holds the one with the spoon. There is a helicopter in the sky, the child gets scared, closing his eyes and ears. But the feeling of hunger is stronger: the boy, without opening his eyes, continues to eat.

Another Kurdish boy, about five years old, holds a sausage on a twig above the fire. There are prosthetics nearby. Parents say that the child lost his legs after the accident. At home they could not find a specialist who would give their son the opportunity to walk. Therefore, they are going to their relatives in Germany.

Our doctors are on duty at the border. They are treating several women for hypothermia and head injuries. They also helped a 14-year-old boy; the child with hypothermia was taken to the nearest hospital. Now he is better and returned to his family in the camp.

At this time, news comes from a parallel Polish reality that the military there cut the wheels of an ambulance that came to help the refugees. They

demonstratively cut three wheels and drove away, leaving the medics in the forest with a faulty vehicle. No comments.

Not all are like that from the other side. Polish and German human rights activists are ready to go to the border and help Middle Eastern refugees. However, Warsaw does not let them in, as it does not let journalists in either. The necessary shots from the Polish military are published in extremist resources regularly. Poland also regularly spreads fake news about the situation at the border.

"Why do Poles fail to comply with international law? Why is only President Lukashenko helping us?" wonder refugees.

The problem can be solved in just a couple of hours. The refugees do not need Poland, the ultimate goal of the majority is Germany, where some of them have relatives. The Poles have already been asked to put these unfortunate several thousand people on trains from Belarus to the countries of their destination. What are Poles? Nothing. What about the creation of complications and the blackening of our state? Heavy equipment and an entire army are already at the borders. What prevents them from using this force, arranging a confrontation, even starting to kill for a great picture for CNN and new accusations.

In general, all this is wild speculation. It seems that we are witnessing not just a crisis in the EU, but a complete atrophy of its brain.

ON THE WAY TO POLAND OR HOW WE FOUND THE COORDINATORS OF THE TRANSIT OF KURDISH REFUGEES IN THE FOREST

I observed the following picture near the last gas filling station on the way to the Belarusian-Polish border: a group of foreigners got out of the taxi, then three people approached them — two women and a young man — and took the Iraqis into the nearest forest. These people haven't seen so many taxi drivers before.

We watched for some time, and then we went to this forest. There we found both 'businessmen' and a small tent camp with refugees. They say they are from Kurdistan and want to go to Germany. According to the stories of other foreigners, they pay from \$4,000 per person for such transit.

"Remove the cameras," the three who had recently accompanied the refugees into the forest told us in English. They said that they were not locals, that they did not understand Russian and Belarusian.

"Do you speak English?" we ask. "Yes," replied the older woman.

— Where do you go?
 — Remove the camera.
 — Are you from Poland, Lithuania?
 — No. We are not from here.
 — What are you doing here?
 — Put your phone away, we won't talk to you.
 — Did you lead the refugees to the border?
 — We don't need to talk to the press.
 — We have a record of how you ferried Iraqi citizens to the border. What are you doing in this area? This is the border area.
 The coordinators walked out to the gas station, where another person was waiting for them. They got into the car and drove away. In the evening of the same day, about two hundred foreigners came out of these forests. This case confirms that it is not our citizens who are involved in the delivery of refugees to the border with the EU. I assume that it was the European Union that created this whole situation in the border area.



Belarus lent a helping hand

The situation with refugees at the Belarusian-Polish border is under the personal control of the President. Last weekend, the Head of State instructed to streamline and organise the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid to refugees at the border. On Saturday morning, Aleksandr Lukashenko sent a command to the military: to organise tents where all incoming aid will gather together, distribute it evenly among the refugees and, most importantly, feed the children. What was instructed has been done. The supply of firewood was provided, diesel electric generators were installed, and medical assistance was organised.

The Poles, however, continued with their misleading information. One assertion — that our country does not provide humanitarian assistance to refugees on the state border — was later commented on personally by the President,

“It looks more than strange, because I have been dealing with this issue all weekend. And all the issues that I entrusted to be done have been resolved. We feed the kids, and the pregnant women, and we take them firewood — everything they need.”

Encouraging news came for the refugees: three German cities — Munich, Erlangen and Nuremberg — have agreed to accept them. Later it became known that Giessen, Göttingen, Cologne, Freiburg also joined them. But how to get there is a big question, as the Poles do not let them in. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that two to three thousand refugees are not a problem for the European Union. The President offers a reasonable solution: the Belarusian side is ready to deliver them there,

“If the Poles do not provide a humanitarian corridor, they prevent it, we can take them to Munich by Belavia. What’s the problem?”

Do not give in to provocations

Meanwhile, according to the Head of State, the situation on the state border continues to heat up.

“It is clear why this is happening. We understand this very well. It is not for nothing that they continue to assert that Belarus and Russia are to blame. It is clear that this is aimed at escalating tensions. See what is happening in the Black Sea. The President of Russia and I had a long talk on this issue yesterday. Americans and NATO are behaving disgustingly in the Black Sea. Therefore, the situation is especially heated for us. But we are not little boys to succumb to their incomprehensible movements.”

The Head of State believes that this conflict is beneficial for Poland today.

“There are more than enough internal problems, problems with the European Union — and a crowd appears and they are already shooting at the state border,” he commented.

Aleksandr Lukashenko added that every day a huge number of people, tourists and so on move through our country, “This is the cauldron where everything rages and burns. In no case should any tension be created here.”

Moreover, the President noted that in recent months the Belarusian side has banned several thousand illegal migrants from entering the country, and this is easy to verify,

“If the Germans or Americans want to be convinced of this, they are welcome, every person is counted at the airport.”

Based on materials of sb.by

PHONE CONVERSATION

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko and Acting German Chancellor Angela Merkel had a telephone conversation, as reported by the Press Service of the Head of State

The telephone conversation between President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko and Acting German Chancellor Angela Merkel took place on the evening of November 15th. The conversation lasted about 50 minutes.

During the conversation, a number of problems were discussed, firstly, the situation with refugees at the Belarusian-Polish, Belarusian-Lithuanian and Belarusian-Latvian borders.

The conversation tackled in detail the ways and prospects for solving the migration problem in order to prevent an escalation of the situation at the border. And one more important aspect, which the President of Belarus and Acting Chancellor of Germany discussed in detail: humanitarian assistance to refugees through the provision of humanitarian aid.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Angela Merkel agreed on further contact to resolve the situation.



BELARUSIAN DOCTORS REPAIRED PROSTHESES FOR LITTLE NATHAN

8-year-old Kurdish boy Nathan lost his legs after an accident in Iraq. Now, instead of legs, he has prostheses which recently broke. The child was examined by specialists of the Grodno branch of the Belarusian Prosthetic and Orthopaedic Centre. As it turned out during the examination in the refugee camp, during the operation for the prosthesis, the kneecap was broken. In the field, it was only possible to adjust it, so the child and his parents were taken to the workshop for further repairs. Having regained the ability to walk, the child smiled and said ‘ok!’



DIRECT SPEECH

Anton Bychkovsky, official representative of the State Border Committee:

It is very strange to hear accusations from the European Union of organising refugee flows by the Belarusian authorities against the background of obvious figures: since August 1st of this year, in just three months, about 8,000 people have not been allowed into Belarus. About 5,000 more foreigners, who during this period entered Belarus legally, have left Belarusian territory as a result of preventive measures taken to prevent violations of migration legislation; these were potential migrants. And these are specific, documented facts.

RESONANCE

Polish ‘Medics on the Border’ were attacked for helping refugees



‘Give refugees the right to seek asylum’: people took to the streets in London against Polish authorities’ actions



Residents of Canada opposed what the Polish authorities are doing in relation to refugees



Berliners rallied in support of refugees who cannot enter the EU



Vaccine of hope

Experimental batch received: the Belarusian drug for coronavirus

By **Khristina Glushko**

The first time the Head of State spoke about the possibility of creating a domestic vaccine against coronavirus was on December 14th last year during a visit to the 4th Savchenko City Clinical Hospital in Minsk. The President stressed, “If the developments of our scientists turn out to be serious, we will be dealing with our own vaccine. I am convinced that this infection will remain with us forever. Therefore, we will need a vaccine. If we learn to produce one ourselves, we will gain experience, it means that we will have good specialists, scientists, good doctors and our healthcare will consequently develop.” The President is confident that biotechnology has good prospects, and we should certainly move in this direction.

Almost a year has passed which turned out to be rich in events. Our scientists have not only produced the vaccine in a test tube, but very soon they will send it for preclinical trials that meet all international standards. Not a single stage passes without state support: the President recently signed a decree on the implementation of an investment project to organise the production of an anti-COVID drug at the premises of BelVitinipharm JSC in 2021-2023. We found out from the experts what stage development is at and when Belarusians will be vaccinated.

What are scientists working on?

Our vaccine will be inactivated whole-virion, and it will be manufactured according to the classical technology, which has been used for decades. What does this mean? A coronavirus is grown on a cell culture, then it is chemically inactivated (loses activity) and is injected into a person in a certain amount already inviable, causing an immune response in the body. Scientists say that the Belarusian vaccine will become an analogue of the Chinese Vero Cell, containing the full composition of antigens: the entire viral envelope, which includes not only the S-protein, but also the N-protein. It is assumed that the vaccine will be injected in two doses.

Experts have identified several variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus: at first, they worked with Wuhan, European and the British and now they are

working with ‘Delta’, which dominates in the country. Since fully-fledged preclinical tests are expensive, the scientists carried out a preliminary stage: they immunised a small group of laboratory animals in order to assess the toxicity of the finished product. So far, the verdict is as follows: the vaccine is well tolerated. Two groups of experts from the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre for Epidemiology and Microbiology and the Institute of Biophysics and Cell Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences are working on the project.

Security issue

Alina Dronina, Deputy Director for Science at the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre for Epidemiology and Microbiology, confirmed that an experimental batch of the vaccine has already been received and there is preliminary evidence that the drug is safe and immunogenic.

“By the end of the year, the development of laboratory regulations will be completed — this is our scientific part. In 2022, we must transfer the technology to the manufacturer. As a result, production technology will be developed and then a pilot batch of the vaccine will have been received,” she explained.

Further, according to the specialist, the registration stage is envisaged after which the vaccine can be used.

Where will the vaccine be produced?

At the moment, Belmedpreparaty enterprise in co-operation with BelVitinipharm has established a joint venture. Two stages can be distinguished in the production of the domestic vaccine: at the first stage, BelVitinipharm will produce the active component, and the finished vaccine will be produced at the facilities of Belmedpreparaty. At the same time, specialists will design and build a production complex on the basis of BelVitinipharm, where the vaccine will be produced in a full cycle: this is the second stage, which is planned to be deployed by 2023-2024.

Export potential

Experts are also thinking about the future. So far, the plan is as follows: an experimental indus-



DIRECT SPEECH

Aleksandr Lukashenko, President of Belarus: *The domestic vaccine is a matter of honour for Gusakov and Pinevich, the Healthcare Ministry and the National Academy of Sciences. It is necessary to develop the very best vaccine within the shortest possible time. It should be the best because we can draw on existing expertise and knowledge. It has already been done by Russians, Europeans, Chinese and Indians. Many are already producing these vaccines. We already have some expertise, we are not doing it from scratch.* **(At a meeting with Healthcare Minister Dmitry Pinevich on March 26th, 2021)**

ADDITION

Doctors often say that, thanks to vaccination, the coronavirus may well go from a pandemic to a seasonal disease; that is, people will continue to become infected, but in the same way as, say, the flu or SARS. The only condition is vaccination: it will protect against serious consequences.

QUOTE

Aleksandr Lukashenko, President of Belarus: *Vladimir Putin was vaccinated with ‘Sputnik V’ while Joe Biden was vaccinated with Pfizer. And what about me? We agreed with Dmitry Pinevich that as soon as the Belarusian vaccine is ready, we will get jabbed. So, let’s get our vaccine and I am ready to get vaccinated, but only with our product, only with the Belarusian vaccine. This is my honest opinion.* **(During a conversation with doctors of the Minsk Regional Clinical Hospital on October 20th, 2021)**

trial batch should appear by the end of June 2022, and by the end of 2023, the vaccine is planned to be released into use. Despite the fact that there are many of them on the market today, the Belarusian drug may well take its rightful place. In any case, specialists will conduct the entire volume of tests, which will allow exporting.

NEWS IN BRIEF

A drug for the treatment of coronavirus registered in Belarus



Xie Xiaoyong, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People’s Republic of China to the Republic of Belarus, spoke about this during the signing of the document to receive the Chinese vaccine against coronavirus.

He noted that the drugs of Chinese traditional medicine — aimed at treating coronavirus and developed jointly by our countries — have already received a license for emergency use in Belarus. They are produced at the China-Belarus Great Stone Industrial Park.

“These are the first drugs for the treatment of coronavirus registered in Belarus,” stressed the Ambassador. “According to my information, official production will soon begin in the Great Stone Park. These drugs have good efficacy and have cured many coronavirus patients in other countries.”

Foreign investors injected \$6.7bn into Belarusian economy within nine months of the year

In January-September 2021, foreign investors injected \$6.7bn in the real sector of the Belarusian economy, the National Statistical Committee reported.



The main investors into the country’s organisations were business entities from Russia (44 percent of all incoming investments), Ukraine (13.1 percent) and Cyprus (12.6 percent). Foreign direct investment amounted to \$4.8bn, or 72.4 percent of all foreign investment.

In January-September, Belarus’ organisations invested \$4.1bn abroad, with a significant number being sent to economic entities in Russia (78.9 percent of all directed investments), Ukraine (4.3 percent) and Cyprus (3.1 percent). Direct investments accounted for 93.8 percent of all investments abroad.

Our Children traditional New Year charity event to be held in the country from December 14th to January 14th

“For the New Year holidays, we are holding the traditional large-scale campaign Our Children. Its importance for society can hardly be overestimated, because it is dedicated to the most precious thing we have — children. This good tradition will continue this year, from December 14th to January 14th,” said Deputy Prime Minister Igor Petrishenko.

Alongside many events in all regions of the Republic, Minsk will traditionally host the country’s main Christmas tree, charity events at the Palace of the Republic and the Palace of Independence, as well as a ball for talented pupils and students.



During the action, officials and concerned citizens visit socially significant sites and events with gifts for foster families, orphanages, disabled children and children from large and single-parent families.



The food and processing industry is one of the most developed sectors of the economy of our country. Today Belarusians are fully provided with high-quality domestic food products. Only 27 years ago, it was difficult to imagine that Belarus would be able not only to feed itself, but also to increase the export of products dozens of times. Belarusian food enjoys well-deserved recognition and the confidence of consumers, being exported to more than a hundred countries. For several types of dairy products, our country is one of the five leading world exporters. All the achievements of the industry were demonstrated at the international specialised wholesale exhibition-fair *Prodexpo*, which took place in Minsk.

From our table to yours

Belarus provides itself with food and is actively increasing exports

By Vladislav Sychevich

Cause for pride

This forum is primarily a platform for communication between industry professionals and for making relevant business decisions, high-quality professional networking, demonstrating the capabilities and products of the target business audience and presenting the latest innovations. The largest Belarusian and foreign manufacturers and suppliers of food products and equipment for the food industry were displayed there. It was here that they showed products that will win the hearts of consumers in future. It is symbolic that the pavilion on Pobediteley Avenue, which is better known to Belarusians as ‘chamomile’, was chosen as the venue for the exhibition. Its shape resembles this flower, and the roof petals symbolise the export directions of Belarusian products. Our country obviously has much to be proud of in this area, emphasised Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Subbotin, “We can completely provide ourselves with food. We try to sell all surplus to our foreign partners as much as possible. Against the backdrop of global turbulence, food is in demand while prices are going up. We are able to take advantage of the situation. In 2021, over nine months, \$4.7bn of goods were exported. Growth amounted to 112.6 percent compared to last year.”

Aleksandr Subbotin stressed that a positive foreign trade balance is also be-



ing formed, which amounted to more than \$1.6bn, “These are all subsidies for doctors, salaries for teachers, so we are trying to go in this direction. We have open markets in 116 countries. We are now successfully trading with 104 countries, with African countries also joining. Exports increased by 40 percent even to the EU, no matter how tense communications sometimes appear.”

The Deputy Prime Minister also assured that by the end of the year it is planned to achieve the level of food exports of \$6bn.

Currently, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Belarus ranks 23rd in terms of ensuring food security out of 113 countries. The domestic market of our country is fully supplied with food. The quality of products under the ‘Made in Belarus’ brand does not raise any doubts among foreign consumers. Therefore, the geography of supplies is constantly expanding, said the Minister of Agriculture and Food, Ivan Krupko, “Be-

larus has increased food supplies to China. Growth was 140 percent compared to last year. Moreover, there is an increase in the supply of products to the EU and CIS states. We are seeing an upturn in all markets. Exports to the EAEU countries are also growing. At the same time, the Russian market remains premium.”

There is much to see

As far as the exhibition is concerned, in addition to the demonstration of the manufacturers’ innovations, the organisers have prepared a rich business programme. In particular, the *Internal Consumer Market and Food Security* business forum was held, bringing together representatives of interested departments, as well as heads of leading enterprises in the food sector. At the *Modern Technologies in Retail*, conference representatives of Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade (MART), associations of retail chains, retail and brand trade and food manufacturers discussed issues of interest. The B2B-TradeDialog also took place — individual negotiations between suppliers and buyers of food products. The event was organised for exhibitors only and by appointment. The conference of Belarusian agribusiness producers *BelarusFresh* was also held, bringing together representatives of collective and farm enterprises — producers of fruits and vegetables, as well as retail chains and government bod-

ies. Along with the experts’ reports, it was envisaged to hold a ‘question–answer’ section and tastings of Belarusian apples, berries and other fruits and vegetables. An international tasting competition was held among the participants of the exhibition. Competitions for confectioners and chefs were also organised.

This year, Belarus exported \$4.7bn of goods over nine months

An international competition for the best packaging and label was held within the framework of the exhibition for the first time, said Anna Stepanenko, a member of the European Packaging Institute and chair of the organising committee of the *SmakArt-2021* competition, “The main goals of the contest are to identify the best packaging samples for bakery, confectionery, flour, cereals and pasta, to help manufacturers in a competitive environment create viable brands and maintain consumer loyalty for the successful sale of their products. Packaging currently has significant marketing potential and, provided it is efficiently developed, becomes an important competitive advantage for the company in the market in the struggle for buyers. Good packaging has been proven to increase sales by up to 35 percent, but this requires good design and competent management.”

Development of friendly dialogue

By Marta Astreiko

The event was supported by the Belarusian Embassy in Japan, the Ostrovets and Mstislavl district executive committees, the National Agency for Investment and Privatisation, the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as the Hokkaido Prefecture Administration, Hakodate and Noboribetsu city authorities, regional chambers of commerce and public organisations.

“In his welcoming speech to the forum participants, the Belarusian Ambassador to Japan Ruslan Yesin noted the almost 200-year relationship of Belarus with the Hokkaido Prefecture, as well as the positive interaction between the Belarusian and Japanese biathlon feder-

ations, the cities of Ostrovets and Hakodate, Mstislavl and Noboribetsu,” said

the Belarusian diplomatic mission.

In his address Hokkaido Prefecture



A Belarus-Hokkaido Forum was successfully held in two Japanese cities of Hakodate and Noboribetsu

Governor Naomichi Suzuki expressed the hope that the success of this forum would contribute to the further development of a friendly dialogue between the Republic of Belarus and Hokkaido.

Japanese businessmen followed with interest the presentation of the Ostrovets District, commercial and investment proposals in the areas of woodworking, food, light and jewellery industries and information about the BelCCI.

Moreover, an exposition of Belarusian manufacturers of textile and linen products was organised at the event.

The forum was preceded by meetings with Hakodate Mayor Toshiki Kudo, and member of the House of Representatives of the Japanese Parliament, Osaka Seiji.



COVID-19 'war games'

Israel became the first country in the world to conduct a nationwide drill to test its readiness in the event of an outbreak of a new, more lethal COVID variant

The 'Omega Exercise', as it was called by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, was meant to prepare for a hypothetical, new COVID-19 variant. Dozens of top officials took part in what Prime Minister Naftali Bennett called a COVID-19 war exercise last week to gauge the country's preparedness for the next wave of the pandemic.

"We are starting an unprecedented event here," the PM said at the start of the exercise. "Not only on an Israeli scale but on a global level. We are conducting a war exercise to prepare for a new variant that does not even exist yet."

The 'Omega Exercise', as Bennett

called it, was held in the format of a 'war game', the Prime Minister's Office said. Bennett has regularly referred to the 'Omega strain', the next harmful COVID-19 variant that has not yet been discovered. A war game is a game of the mind; no physical exercises took place.

Bennett said that Israel has surfaced from the 'Delta' wave without locking down, proving that 'with proper management, the pandemic can be defeated'.

Bennett acknowledged that the pandemic has not yet disappeared, noting how in countries, like several in Europe, there are a record number of daily cases.

"The most threatening thing is not

the current situation, but what we do not know yet," he said. "Just as the 'Delta' strain suddenly and violently erupted, other, more deadly and more contagious, vaccine-resistant variants could arrive."

He said that the exercise was meant to be a proactive attempt to prepare for such a scenario. The event was meant to check that all the ministries are ready for the next wave, that the hospitals can manage under extreme circumstances, and that the country's top scientists are closely following every variant that has emerged in the world — no matter how small.

The exercise was held at the National Management Centre in Jerusalem.

Vatican calling on Europe to take responsibility for refugees

Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Vatican Secretary for Relations with States, urged European authorities to take responsibility for migrants and refugees trapped on the Poland-Belarus and Lithuania-Belarus border, RIA Novosti reported

"We urge governments across Europe to take responsibility with regard to migrants and refugees," Paul Richard Gallagher emphasised. "We call all those involved in this initiative to assume their roles and tackle what is clearly a very serious humanitarian issue," added the representative of the Holy See.

Paul Richard Gallagher also called on the EU countries to show humane attitude to migrants. "As for the position of the church, we know that, for example, the church in Poland criticises the gov-



ernment's handling of this issue and is trying to call on the authorities to apply a more humane and flexible approach," he was quoted by TASS as saying.

"I urge everyone to look at this situation not through the prism of numbers but realise the plight of people like us who are facing a very serious situation,"



Hindu women worship the Sun god as they stand amidst the foam, covering the polluted Yamuna River, during the Hindu religious festival of Chhath Puja in New Delhi

Toxic foam covers India's sacred Yamuna River

One of India's holiest rivers was coated with toxic foam, adding to the woes of New Delhi residents already enduring a blanket of thick smog over the capital

The Yamuna is already one of the most polluted waterways in the country but parts of the river, which courses through the centre of Delhi, were coated in mounds of white foam resembling snowfall.

The city government blamed the blight on 'heavy sewage and industrial waste' discharged into the river from further upstream recently.

Meanwhile, it did not deter several Hindu worshippers from taking a dip in the river to mark Chhath Puja, a four-day festival to offer prayers to the Sun.

But the pollution did disrupt water supply to part of the city, according to local officials, who did not say how many households had been affected.

Indian officials have long pledged to clean the Yamuna but without success, and the blooms of toxic foam have become an annual occurrence.

A 2020 government report found water quality in the river had become 'critically worse' over the last five years. Delhi and its surrounds have also been engulfed in thick and hazardous smog since recent time.

Anne Boleyn's statuette

Wooden bird bought for £75 belonged to Anne Boleyn. The carved falcon belonging to the ill-fated queen is being loaned back to Hampton Court Palace.



It was catalogued as an 'antique carved wooden bird' when it was auctioned for 75 Euros in 2019. Now it has been identified as Anne Boleyn's heraldic emblem, the 16th-century royal falcon that probably adorned her private apartments at Hampton Court Palace — only to be removed after Henry VIII ordered her execution and the eradication of all traces of her. Its true worth is believed to be about 200,000 Euros.

The exquisite and richly decorated oak carving is in such extraordinary condition that it even bears its original gilding and colour scheme. In 1536, barely three years after it was made, Boleyn was beheaded on bogus adultery charges — just because she could not give Henry a male heir, only a daughter,

the future Elizabeth I.

The falcon is to be placed on long-term loan to Hampton Court by Paul Fitzsimmons, a Devon antiques dealer, who spotted it in an auction.

Tracy Borman, a leading Tudor historian and joint chief curator for Historic Royal Palaces, the charity that manages Hampton Court, said, "The irony is that Anne Boleyn is the most popular of the six wives and she's probably the one with the least surviving evidence ... because she was obliterated by Henry. So that makes this really quite special and obviously I'm very excited about it. When I realised how this absolutely would have fitted with the decorative scheme, I had a shivers-down-the-spine moment."



In late October, several world media outlets published a new series of investigations about Facebook problems. Seventeen American media took part in the compilation of *The Facebook Papers* dossier. Journalists worked together, examining thousands of pages of internal documents of the American company, which were at the disposal of a former Facebook employee, Frances Haugen. She recently spoke to members of the British Parliament with her revelations. From London, she will go on a tour of Europe and meet with MEPs. Ms. Haugen's speech in the British Parliament coincided with the discussion in the UK of a new law on Internet security. It is obvious that the topic of information leakage and data security is relevant today for every state. The Law 'On Personal Data Protection' came into force in Belarus on November 15th.



Mark, you have a leak

A former Facebook* employee has leaked thousands of pages of internal company documents. The dossier contains censorship, dubious moderation and VIP clients — among other things.

By Ulyana Bushui

New page

The study of new documents from the so-called Facebook dossier and the resonant testimony of the former employee of Zuckerberg's company on October 25th opened a new page in the history of the popular social network. Unexpectedly, American journalists discovered that the rules for publishing posts, although they turned out to be the same on paper, were not aimed at everyone. Western politicians and stars had great privileges over all this time, and the leadership of the IT giant systematically turned a blind eye to violations of laws.

For Mark Zuckerberg, the influx of money is more important than anything in the world. This idea was repeated by the company's former employee, Frances Haugen, in the USA and later in the British Parliament. According to her, the social network turns a blind eye to the registration of very young users.

Contrary to the rules, every tenth page belongs to 10-11-year-olds. Facebook's Instagram causes teenage girls to think about suicide. When sharing this information, the woman referred to research by the company which knows about the problem but does nothing to solve it.

Three former employees of the social network also told the American media that Facebook provided special treatment to celebrities and applied its rules to them inconsistently and haphazardly. Facebook and Instagram have been reported to have a special XCheck moderation system for several million privileged users around the world. They can get away with publications for which ordinary 'friends' of Mark Zuckerberg face immediate sanctions.

Mired in mud

It also became known that representatives of the Facebook management intervened to allow American politicians and celebrities to publish controversial messages that violate the rules of the social network. It is said that, in many cases, the decision was made personally by Mark Zuckerberg.

It turned out that the social network did not react in any way to reports of human trafficking. Users from the Middle East posted ads for the sale of housekeepers on their pages and no one blocked the messages. In addition, the social network is actually accused of colluding in the storming of the Capitol on January 6th. There were so many doubters of Mr. Biden's honest victory that their Facebook group became the fastest growing in the history of the social network. There were not enough moderators, and they simply didn't have time to clean up calls for violence.

Facebook denies all charges. The founder of the company, Mark Zuckerberg, said that journalists misinterpreted the information of their internal documents. Facebook Supervisory Board called on the company's management for greater transparency. The members of the council are going to hear Frances Haugen as soon as she returns to the United States from Europe. After talking to her, recommendations will be sent to Facebook. Whether to follow them or not is the right of the Internet giant.

* In late October, the US multinational holding company Facebook Inc. changed its name to Meta in major rebrand

MEANWHILE

Frances Haugen admitted that her actions are partly funded by Pierre Omidyar, a founder of eBay. At the same time, she claims that he became her sponsor only this October, while she first met with a journalist of *The Wall Street Journal* to discuss the publication of internal Facebook materials in December 2020.

It is known that the whistleblower also uses the services of a political activist from the Democratic Party, an assistant to Barack Obama when he was President of the United States, Bill Barton. It was he who was one of the main organisers of her speech to the US Congress with the revelations about Facebook in September. Since October, Mr. Barton has been receiving a salary for his services through charitable foundations created with Mr. Omidyar's participation. Meanwhile, *The New York Times* admits, the newspaper's journalists have not yet been able to establish a direct benefit for Ms. Haugen from the Facebook revelations.

FACEBOOK DOSSIER FACTS

► In 2020, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg told Congress that the social network removes 94 percent of hate speech. However, internal documents show that less than 5 percent of such statements are deleted.

► US residents make up less than 10 percent of Facebook users, but it is America that the bulk of the budget for content moderation is directed at: 84 percent. The rest of the world accounts for 16 percent. Especially serious problems with moderation are registered in India — due to a large number of languages used.

► Facebook declared the fight against conspiracy theories as one of its main tasks. However, the 2019 report showed that the test account of a conservative-minded US resident began to receive information about the QAnon conspiracy movement two days after its creation.

► Before the US presidential election in November 2020, Facebook stepped up the fight against disinformation. However, immediately after the election, many control tools were disabled — although employees warned that rumours of election fraud were spreading on the social network and posts with incitement to violence were being published.

► In 2020, the Vietnamese authorities, under threat of blocking, demanded that Facebook censor local opposition publications. Mark Zuckerberg, according to sources of *The Washington Post*, personally decided to comply with the demands of the Vietnamese authorities.

► There are VIP Facebook users who are not subject to the usual content moderation rules. In addition, Facebook executives could personally determine whether a particular post of a well-known user (for example, a politician or a celebrity) violates the social network rules.



European (non)unity

An exemplary punishment of Polish authorities by the European bureaucracy for their disobedience in the form of a fine of 1m Euros per day (the refusal to cancel the possibility of disciplinary pressure on judges in Poland was the reason) is another signal indicating that something is wrong with the infamous unity and solidarity in the European Union.

By political analyst **Aleksei Dzermant**

Taming the shrew

The first bells rang several years ago. Governments of some Eastern European countries refused to host migrants from the Middle East. Germany, France, Italy and Spain took on the main burden at that time — becoming the main destination for refugees fleeing from war and devastation.

The situation is repeating itself these days. Eastern European countries are becoming the main entry gates for migrants but are not satisfied with the trend — striving to shift their problems to Brussels and Berlin. Through this, they actually contribute to the penetration of refugees from their territories further to the west, no matter how they try to portray a fight against illegal migration.

In fact, all the high-sounding words about European solidarity and commitment to common values turn out to be fiction: when faced with real problems, national egoism comes to the fore.

It was very clearly manifested at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic when the EU countries were fighting a new scourge alone for a long time, and the European Commission was simply incapacitated for a long period and rendered no assistance. European states closed their borders and introduced lockdowns, without looking back at any European bureaucracy.

Only now is the EU beginning to develop some common approaches — offering a multibillion-Dollar plan to restore the economies of the countries most af-

ected by the pandemic. However, it turns out that there is no unity, and Poland and Hungary can be punished for their obstinacy — being deprived of these funds.

The Polish Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, even compared the situation with the beginning of the Third World War which the European Commission could allegedly start. That is, serious passions are boiling. Poles want to receive money from Brussels and also put their national right above the European one — and also curry favour with the United States as a ‘Trojan horse’.

Brussels' headache

The split lines in Europe are present not only because of the attitude towards migrants and attempts to get out of supranational jurisdiction. The EU is losing unity also due to an external multidirectional influence.

After Britain's exit from the EU, it became quite obvious how much its interests diverge from the interests of continental Europe. This can be seen by the example of strained relations with France: this involves a conflict over fish in the English Channel, contradictions between the French and Anglo-Saxons around Australia and Oceania, and assistance in militarisation of Ukraine which is becoming a powder keg of Europe and an obvious headache for the EU.

The UK and the USA project their interests inside the EU, including through the Eastern European ‘Fronde’ to Brussels — Poland, the Baltic states and Romania which are trying to form a cordon sanitaire be-

tween Russia and Western Europe, while actively selling their services to the Americans.

In turn, Germany, Austria and Italy are trying to find mutual understanding with Russia in the energy sector, promoting Nord Stream-2 which is disliked by Poland, the Baltic states and their overseas patrons.

Poland and the Baltic states have actively engaged in the process of militarisation on the eastern borders of the EU, and it's a big question whether it fully meets the interests of Brussels, Berlin and Paris since, in this case, new points of tension will weaken them and play in favour of the Anglo-Saxons, for whom conflicts inside Europe and on its borders are an opportunity to increase their influence and manage the process.

House host: who is it?

It is obvious that the idea of European unity, European values and the European Union itself as an institution are experiencing a serious crisis. In fact, there is no solidarity at all, and values do not arouse enthusiasm in the member states. Especially those values that are brought to the point of absurdity, which ignoring entails fines and sanctions.

Does this mean that the EU will degrade and break up in the near future? Probably not. Too many resources and efforts have been invested in it, so disobedient members, such as Poland, will be brought to order, punished and used to show everyone else who is the boss in the Union. The most sensitive punishment — with money — is likely; with-

out it, the countries of Eastern Europe will not last long.

However, punishments do not negate the existence of serious problems with strategic thinking in the EU. If it had been at the proper level, many crises both within the Union and on its borders could have been avoided. This applies to refugees, the situation around Ukraine and Belarus, and relations with Russia.

Strategic lack of independence and short-sightedness are the main problems of Europe to which solutions are not yet visible.

In military and political terms, the EU is still under the umbrella of NATO, which means that the security of Europe depends on the will and intentions of the Americans. We have seen more than once recently how the United States can work against its own allies.

In terms of values and ideology, the EU still believes in its own exclusivity and mission, although it has long been clear that the interpretation of European and universal values promoted by the EU cannot be acceptable even in neighbouring societies: Turkey, Russia, Belarus, and so on.

However, this does not negate the desire to impose these values and make them the absolute criterion of truth — which leads to conflicts and contradictions. The European Union will face an unenviable fate if it fails to change its approaches, become more suited to the changed situation where Europe does not have a monopoly on the truth and where it is necessary to negotiate with its neighbours for the sake of ensuring common security.

Looking for golden rackets

Four of the strongest tennis teams have determined the best in the final stage of the national tournament



Three days of competitions, four teams and only one main prize — the *Golden Racket* national tennis team competition has finished in Minsk. From March to October, athletes from all regions of the country met on the courts to determine the strongest, and then the four best teams determined the winner in the finals of the tournament.

The *Golden Racket* competitions in our country were held only for the third time, but they were already enjoyed by young tennis players. Despite the fact that there are many events in the age group up to 12 years old — the athletes of this particular age category were fighting for the trophy — this tournament differs from the others, first of all, in the team format. Yulia Gotovko, of the national tennis team, decided to support children on the final day of the competition.

“In my time, there were no such team competitions, we performed only individually,” recalled the athlete. “However, looking at the guys, I caught myself thinking that at their age it would have been interesting for me to play in such competitions. These are completely different emotions. I believe that it is very important to hold such tournaments in our country: the children will have even more desire to go in for sports, and this will contribute to the development of tennis.”

The winner of the *Golden Racket* event was the team from the Minsk specialised children and youth sports school of the Olympic Reserve for tennis. The youngsters from this school won the competition for the second time in a row, and the school’s deputy director for the main activity Yekaterina Smuraga said that the players were selected for the squad based on the national rating, so really the best ones were included. Their rivals also fielded good athletes, making the battle on the courts stubborn. On the first day, the tennis players of the Minsk specialised children and youth sports school of the Olympic Reserve No. 1, who eventually took second place, and on the final day of the tournament they were stronger than the bronze-winning RCOP tennis squad.

“These competitions teach athletes to be united, to root for each other. The guys made a lot of effort to achieve success both psychologically and physically,” said Ms. Smuraga. “Anyway, only the best wins, and this time it’s our team.

We also want to win the tournament next year. We will do everything to ensure that the challenge cup remains with us after the next Golden Racket event.”

When coming to training throughout the year, pupil of the Minsk specialised children and youth sports school of the



Olympic Reserve for tennis, Yelizaveta Sharamet, was looking closely at the prize won by her team last season. She confesses that she dreamed of playing in the *Golden Racket* and proving by victory that Smena is the best. Having made her way to the team, in the final stage the girl won all her matches, and in the final fight she brought a victory point for her sports school.

“At first I was worried,” Liza said, not hiding her feelings. “Still, when you play for a team, you don’t want to let the other guys down. The rivals this year were strong, everyone showed their skills, but I’m glad that we are the winners!”

Liza believes that not only the final stage of the tournament turned out to be interesting, but also the qualifying round. Tennis players travelled to regional centres to see teams from other regions and, while performing in the competitions, had a great time meeting new friends and relaxing. They wanted to bring the *Golden Racket* tournament — organised by the President Sports Club, the Belarusian Tennis Feder-

ation, and the National Tennis Academy — to international level this season, but the invitation of foreign teams had to be postponed for now due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“Nevertheless, both we and the Belarusian Tennis Federation will continue to work in this direction,” says Pavel Vasiliiev, chief specialist of the information and public relations sector of the President Sports Club. “The *Golden Racket* tournament has already become traditional, so we hope that next year we will be able to invite teams from other countries to it. Since 2019, co-operation between the President Sports Club and the Belarusian Tennis Federation has reached a qualitatively new level. In addition to holding a series of *Golden Racket* tournaments, we are implementing a large-scale and comprehensive programme of bilateral partnership, the main tasks of which are to improve the methodological base and to improve the qualifications of coaches and judges through seminars both in Minsk and in the regions.”

ARENA

● **Belarusian kickboxers win 10 awards at the WAKO European Championship for Older Cadets, Younger Juniors and Older Juniors in Montenegro**

The gold medals of the tournament were won by Ilya Syritsky (weight category 57kg), Yevgeny Pyatnitsa (81kg) and Aykhan Safarov (over 81kg).

Silver medals were claimed by Andrei Voronik (54kg) and Ippolit Sluzhenko (71kg) in men’s competitions, and Yelena Kopytenko (60kg) — for the women.

Tigran Vartanov (71kg) and Georgy Fokin (63.5kg), as well as Ulyana Myadel (65kg) and Yana Zhdanova (52kg) replenished the bronze medal box of the Belarusian national team.

● **Basketball players of our country claim second victory in the European Championship qualification**



At Minsk’s Sports Palace, the Belarusians defeated the Dutch team in overtime with a score of 83:72 (16:21, 18:15, 13:14, 20:17, 16: 5). The most efficient among the winners was Anastasiya Verameyenka, who scored 23 points with 13 rebounds and two assists. Meanwhile, Maryia Papova has 21 points and Aliaksandra Tarasava boasts 13 points. In the first round of the competitions in qualifying Group I, Natalia Trofimova’s trainees beat the Czech national team in Prague — 66:60.

● **Belarusian sambo wrestlers take third place in team standings at the World Championships in Uzbekistan**

They have earned eight various awards. Svetlana Timoshenko (weight category 80kg) became a four-time world champion. In the finals, she won a landslide victory over the Ukrainian athlete Galina Kovalskaya. Earlier, victories were celebrated by Anfisa Kopaeva (50kg) and Tatiana Matsko (59kg).

Maria Kondratieva (over 80kg) and Vladislav Sayapin (71kg) replenished the medals box of the Belarusian national team in the sports section with bronze awards. Moreover, Yevgeny Mikhno (64kg) also finished third in the combat section.

Earlier, Marina Zharskaya (54kg)

claimed bronze medals in the women’s events while and Pavel Gladkikh (64kg) took the third place on the podium for the men’s sports sambo.

● **The Belarusian team won the Cup of the President’s Sports Club international tournament among junior ice hockey teams**

In the final match of the competitions, Dmitry Shulga’s squad beat the Russians (U-16) with a score of 4:1 (1:0, 1:1, 2:0).



As for the rest of the positions in the final table of the tournament, the Russians took second place, followed by MTZ-YuHL players.

Photo of the week



BELTA

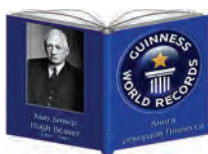
Wild horses in the Naliboksky Republican landscape reserve in the Minsk Region

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



November 18th is World No Tobacco Day. It is carried out to inform and draw attention to the health hazards and health effects of smoking. The World Health Organisation calls on governments to build effective policies to reduce tobacco use.

November 18th is Guinness World Record Day — a collection of world records, published annually. The Guinness Book of Records was first published in 1955.



The idea began during a dispute in a pub, as hunting lovers could not decide which bird was faster than the rest. One of the participants in the dispute was Hugh Beaver, executive director of the Irish brewery Arthur Guinness Son & Co, who decided to perpetuate various achievements. The holiday appeared in 2005, in honour of the 50th anniversary release of the book.

On November 19th, 1711, Mikhail Lomonosov (1711-1765) was born — the first Russian natural scientist, transformer of the Russian literary language, poet, artist, historian, champion of national education and founder of the Russian



tradition of encyclopedism. On his initiative, Moscow University was opened. He was the first to formulate the law of conservation of mass. He also laid the foundations for the development of modern versification. It is to him that the descendants owe the birth of the Russian mosaic.

November 19th is the Day of Missile Troops and Artillery in the Republic of Belarus. The holiday dates back to Soviet times. It was established to commemorate the outstanding merits of the rocket forces and artillery in the fight against the Nazi invaders during the Great Patriotic War. In particular, in the defeat of the invaders at Stalingrad, where artillery played one of the key roles. (November 19th, 1942, is the day of the beginning of the Soviet counteroffensive at Stalingrad).



November 20th is World Children's Day, celebrated annually at the call of the UN to commemorate the adoption on November 20th, 1959, by the 14th session of the UN General Assembly of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted by the 44th session of the UN General Assembly on November 20th, 1989).



November 21st is the Day for Workers of the Agriculture and Processing Industry of the Agro-industrial Complex in the Republic of Belarus. Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the national economy in most states, including the Republic of Belarus, which has centuries-old agrarian traditions. The holiday was approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus of November 10th, 1995, and it is no coincidence that it falls on the end of autumn: the period of completion of the harvest.



November 21st is World Television Day, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly on December 17th, 1996, to commemorate the first World Television Forum, held at the UN Headquarters on November 21st, 1996. Television has been recognised as an important tool for influencing — targeting, directing and monitoring public opinion.



On November 22nd, 1801, Vladimir Dal (1801-1872) was born — Russian writer, lexicographer, ethnographer and doctor, as well as a corresponding member of the St. Petersburg Academy



of Sciences and creator of *The Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language*, for which he was awarded the title of Honorary Academician of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. The dictionary became a landmark in the history of Russian science and culture. Dal collected more than 200,000 words, each of which he illustrated with a saying, a proverb and gave examples of language expressions in which these words are most often used.



On November 22nd, 1941, during the Great Patriotic War and the blockade of the Nazi troops of Leningrad, the 'Road of Life' was opened, linking the besieged city with the mainland. The first convoy of 60 cars with sleds on trailers set off across the ice to the eastern shore of Lake Ladoga and reached the port of Kobona in the evening. During the operation of the ice route, hundreds of tonnes of cargo were delivered from the rear to the besieged city.

On November 23rd, 1706, the first lanterns in Russia were lit in St. Petersburg. They were hung on the facades of houses near the Peter and Paul Fortress by order of Peter I in honour of the victory of Russian troops over the Swedes near Kalisz.

