

**Threads without knots**

Grodno's cotton mill was set up almost fifty years ago and came to house a powerful fertiliser facility (now known as Grodno-Azot). While men were busy constructing a domestic chemical industry giant, women worked at the new plant — producing threads and yarn. **Page 5**

**Business for you**

We can make anything happen in life, if we are determined **Page 7**

**Journey into Ashot Khachatrian's art**

National Art Museum hosts exhibition by St. Petersburg's Ashot Khachatrian: more than 30 canvases created over the decades **Page 9**



Belarus brings innovative products to the Russian market

Always warm in Sochi

Sochi has recently hosted the 2nd Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, with an informal meeting of Alexander Lukashenko, Vladimir Putin and Nursultan Nazarbayev taking place. The presidents shared opinions on the topical issues of the functioning of the Eurasian Economic Union, while also discussing some important international problems. The three heads of state agreed to continue their regular 'time check' regarding the state of affairs of Eurasian integration and on the international arena in general. **→ 3**

President to take part in 70th anniversary session of the UN General Assembly

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, will take part in the UN Summit, held in the organisation's headquarters in New York on September 25th-27th

The Head of State will deliver his speech on the first day of the general

debate of the UN General Assembly — September 28th, noted Andrei Dapkiunas, Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations. “The 70th anniversary session of the UN General Assembly will be held immediately after the 2015 UN Summit, from September 28th. Most state

leaders attending the summit will also take part in the general debate expected to last for more than a week,” added Mr. Dapkiunas.

He underlined the importance of the forthcoming summit, “We all see the importance of a longer meeting as an opportunity for communication,

dialogue and to allow the interaction of world leaders. The international agenda is the main focus of course, but there will also be time for other issues to be considered. In line with tradition, the heads of state and governments are allowed to bring other subjects of interest to be debated.”

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS—2015

Optimistic observers

International observers continue their thorough monitoring of our pre-election campaign, not voicing their preliminary assessments, as is traditional. Meanwhile, a briefing by the alliance of the election observation missions is an exception.

By Veniamin Mikheev

The alliance of election observation missions is a group of international observers, which includes the European Institute Libertas (Germany), the European Foundation for Democracy (Belgium), and the European Democracy Institute (France). Ten of its representatives have come to Belarus and, in close co-operation with our students from the Belarusian State University's Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences, they plan to analyse Belarus' pre-election situation, also conducting observations on election day and afterwards.

Hans-Jürgen Zahorka — a representative of the alliance and from the European Institute Libertas, says this is not his first visit to Belarus. He was previously here as a university lecturer. “I wish to stress that the overall pre-election atmosphere at the moment has improved. I'm very optimistic. If elections continue developing in the same positive manner and you continue developing steadily, I think the final assessment will be positive. It will be an important step for Belarus to join the Council of Europe,” he noted.

A Programme Manager at the European Foundation for Democracy, Margherita Putrone, agrees, “We are happy to take part in the alliance's work in Belarus. As regards my first impressions, I'm fully in agreement with my colleague.” In turn, the head of Minsk's delegation, Henrik Kroner, noted that fair elections are a sign of the normal development of democracy in a country.



The alliance of election observation missions arrives in Belarus as friends

DIRECT SPEECH

Hans-Jürgen ZAHORKA, the Managing Director of the European Institute Libertas:

If the assessment of the Presidential elections is positive, if they are fair and transparent, meeting Belarusian and international legislation — this would be viewed as great progress: not only for joining the Council of Europe but also simplifying the EU visa regime. This is because Belarus is a part of Europe.

With this in view, the alliance will analyse many aspects of our election campaign's coverage by media — including printed editions, TV and radio programmes, Internet sites and outdoor advertising. It will also monitor the pre-election campaigns of the Presidential candidates. “Our first question will be whether they feel free in their move-

ment and statements. As we know, to visit a small settlement to meet voters, candidates simply need to inform the local mayor; no other restrictions are in place.” Commenting on Belarus' electoral legislation, the observer notes, “The legislation is transparent; regulation looks fair. From this point of view I think the elections will be fine.”

MT'S REFERENCE:

One hundred percent visibility

For the first time, the 2015 elections will allow for independent voting for people with poor eyesight. Two special screens are planned for the voting stations. This does not exclude however, the possibility for such people to vote in a cabin with the accompaniment of another person. They can also ask others to help them complete the voting form.

Three days without visa

The President of Belarus has signed Decree which envisaged a visa free regime of entry and departure for Chinese residents, as well as for a transit pass via the Belarus and a temporary stay in the Republic for up to three days

This order is aimed at Chinese visitors who come on direct flights from their own airports, on the condition they have an acting visa (in their acting document for going abroad) of a member state of the Eurasian Union or the Schengen zone. The decree comes in force after its official publication in one month's time.

Steps made to activate co-operation

Mogherini: 'EU wants to improve its relations with Belarus'

EU-Belarus relations need improving, noted the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini.

“We'd like to move in the direction of improving relations with Belarus,” she said, speaking at the European Parliament plenary session in Strasbourg (broadcast on the Internet). Federica Mogherini also noted, “I agree that the approach towards Belarus should be realistic rather than being solely restricted to our policy in the sphere of sanctions.”

Tackling the topic of the recent release of a range of prisoners by the Belarusian authorities, she said there's a window of opportunity that shouldn't be lost. “The issue is how to make this in the most sensible, positive and efficient way. I believe that whatever the EU's answer would be, it would be accompanied by steps to increase collaboration,” adds Ms. Mogherini.

According to her, the EU needs a long-term policy regarding Belarus.

Mobile code prepared

The National Centre of Legal Information presents Electoral Code in the form of a mobile book

The National Centre of Legal Information (NCLI) has prepared the Electoral Code of Belarus (as of February 11th, 2000) in the form of a mobile book for its further use in tablets and smartphones using Android. This information is being placed on the National Legal Internet Portal.

Navigation through the book is made through the contents; however, there are also functions to search in the text, to work with tabs, to adjust colours, the font size and the colour of the background. The information content of the mobile book is renewed by the NCLI when changes to the code appear in the National Register of Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus and officially appear on the National Legal Internet Portal.

Efforts to achieve social balance

Development of human potential, including enhanced welfare levels, is a state policy priority

By Yevgeny Kononovich

Despite various dimensions, there is a common denominator to the index, as seen in sociological surveys. From 1998-2015, the number of citizens viewing themselves as poor fell 2.5-fold: from 52 percent to 19.5 percent. Meanwhile, the share of those referring to themselves as

having a middle income rose from 27.3 percent to 75.5 percent (see the table).

Data collected through many years of monitoring, by the Information-Analytical Centre at the Presidential Administration, shows that drastic changes have occurred in Belarusians' assessments of their material welfare.

Population assessment of its prosperity

when being asked: ‘Whom do you consider yourself?’, %

year	I believe myself to be				
	rich	of middle income	poor	below the poverty line	Don't know/ no answer
1998	0.7	27.3	52.0	12.8	7.2
2006	0.5	65.5	22.8	1.3	9.9
2015	0.6	75.5	19.5	2.8	1.6

Remarkably, international organisations rate Belarus among the top ten for social equality. They believe the difference between the richest and

the poorest in Belarus to be almost the same as that in Germany, Austria and Sweden. Such social balance ensures political stability for the state.



During the plenary session of the 2nd Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia in Sochi

Always warm in Sochi

By Yevgeny Kononov

At the plenary session — held on the second day of the 2nd Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, Alexander Lukashenko shared his view that modern times have brought no release from disasters, crises or wars. “It is not the power of law but the power of force that dominates the global arena. A global redistribution of the spheres of influence can now be observed. However, egotistic ambitions, settlements and interests are not worth human lives. This should be remembered by heads of state, public figures and nations,” he said.

“The world is experiencing a lack of prospects due to sanctions and the isolation of certain states, as well as the force of military threat. We’ve always been against these methods,” the Belarusian President added. When speaking of the Union State, Mr. Lukashenko noted that it should become the nucleus of the Eurasian Economic Union. “We need to be efficient in our use of the potential for integration,” he continued. “When our plans are completed, Belarus and Russia will create a strong impetus to the integration of other countries.”

At a further meeting on the same day, Mr. Lukashenko noted that Belarus values its co-operation with the Russian regions, adding that our two states control problems in their bilateral relations similarly. He reminded them that he always personally meets heads of the Russian regions when they come to Belarus to discuss topical issues. “I’m always thankful to the Russian regions,” the President said. “Our Belarusian-Russian relations have been saved by the regions of Russia in the past. If we hadn’t co-operated then, it would have been truly difficult to preserve the relations we had in Soviet times. After the USSR collapse, times were hard.” According to the Head of State, Belarus’s turnover with



Belarus brings contemporary developments to Sochi

some Russian regions is even higher than with other countries. “Around half of the turnover of Belarus is accounted for by Russia — which is the basis for the significance of our relations,” he stressed.

As regards the Sochi event, Mr. Lukashenko believes it’s already headline making. “We’ve outlined a concrete theme for the upper chambers of our parliaments and they will be pleased to comply with it,” he said. The President expressed gratitude to Vladimir Putin and governors for the well-organised event, expressing confidence that it would be held regularly.

In turn, the Russian President noted that Belarusian-Russian relations are developing successfully. “Of course, some issues need our special attention but, in general, the goals we set during our meeting will be achievable,” he said.

The event, initiated by the upper chambers of our two states’ parliaments and supported by the presidents, was on a large scale. On the eve of the meeting, an exhibition of products opened on the Black Sea bank in the city. Belarus and Russia were not in competition there, but merely demonstrating the results of joint projects.

The forum’s agenda focused mainly on a discussion of the Union State’s industrial policy and included round table discussions and press conferences. Six intergovernmental and 19 interregional agreements were signed as a result and the topical issue of Belarusian product supplies to Russian trading networks was discussed. The exhibition focused on import substitution and industrial co-operation and it is clear from the outcomes that a great deal of co-operation has taken place. Such a concentrated demonstration of mutual achievements is extremely positive. Belarusian-Russian co-operation in some spheres of industry is already routine: our scientists have achieved considerable successes together and many companies have joint agreements in place.

The list of industries where Belarus and Russia enjoy joint developments and produce high-tech and competitive products is impressive: machine building, petro-chemistry, military-technical products, light industry, pharmaceuticals and IT, among others. There is a fundamental flaw in any discussions on sanctions, anti-sanctions or other economic leverages and instruments of global political dialogue, in that the key is that Belarus and Russia, while complementing each other, are quite self-sufficient states. This is confirmed by a convincing show of jointly manufactured products, including clothes and aviation supplies and machinery. Russian governors often visit Minsk, and the Belarusian capital welcomes delegations from Russian regions approximately once a month. During such meetings, the President always emphasises that interregional co-operation creates the foundation for our Union State and, in hard times, has even saved it. The results of this collaboration are evident and the recent Sochi event was a perfect demonstration.

Both sides keen to co-operate

By Taisia Azanovich

Belarus and Syria are working on the creation of MAZ machinery assembly production

This was discussed at the meeting between the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Syria, Alexander Ponomarev, and the Syrian Industry Minister and Co-Chair of the Joint Belarusian-Syrian Commission on Trade-Economic and Technical Co-operation, Kamal Eddin Tu’ma and the Chairman of the Commission for Planning and International Co-operation of Syria, Khuder Qais.

The Belarusian representatives attending the meeting were business executives. The press service revealed, “The major topic under discussion was issues of export crediting of MAZ automobile machinery supplies to Syria. The two sides have confirmed their interest co-operating further, aiming to renew the supplies of Belarusian automobile machinery to the Syrian market and set up an assembly production of Belarusian machinery in Syria in the future.”

They also exchanged opinions on the fulfilment of separate agreements, reached in April 2015 during the session of the Belarusian-Syrian Inter-governmental Commission on Trade-Economic and Technical Co-operation.

Priority partner in Italian regions

Belarus and Italy developing roadmap for economic co-operation

“The \$2bn trade we have with Italy today can be increased two or three times. There is an agreement that we will work out a roadmap for the governments of the two countries to address the current issues,” noted Belarus’ Prime Minister Andrei Kobryakov as he met the President of the Lombardy Region, Roberto Maroni.

There are plans to set up the Belarus-Italy Business Co-operation Council in order to intensify relations between the two states. The Belarusian-Italian trade-economic intergovernmental commission is expected to hold its meeting in January 2016. A delegation of Italian businessmen is set to pay a visit to Belarus in the second half of 2016.

According to Mr. Kobryakov, Belarus views Lombardy as one of its main trading partners in Italy. In 2014, Belarusian exports to Lombardy totalled 13.2m Euros (14.3 percent up on 2013). Belarusian imports made up 128.4m Euros (80.1 percent as against 2013). Our main exports included fabrics, leather, chemical products, as well as metals, steel products and forest products. Belarus imported Lombardy’s machinery and equipment, clothes and textile goods, synthetic yarn, chemical substances, construction materials and metal products.

Things developing well in oil industry

By Irina Ushakova

New oil deposits discovered in the Gomel Region

Belorusneft geologists have discovered a new oil deposit in the northern structural zone of the lansko-starooskol layers at the Rechitsa oil field.

As a result of deeper drilling works at the exploitation well number 148, oil-containing layers with a total depth of 13.4m were opened.

The industrial flow of light oil with an output of about 25 tonnes a day was received during testing. According to the specialists, the geological deposits could reach up to 700,000 tonnes. The decision to deepen well 148 was made in February, after the discovery of a deposit in the lansko-starooskol layers of the eastern structural zone of the Rechitsa oil field. At that time, well number 202 was producing almost 100,000 tonnes of oil.

Specialists of BelNIPIneft con-

tinued to study the prospects of the oil-and-gas-bearing capacity of the lansko-starooskol layers. After conducting a range of research projects, a zone was allocated in the northern sector of the Rechitsa oil field predicted to have oil-saturated container rocks. The Rechitsa oil field was discovered in 1965 while the lansko-starooskol layers have been industrially developed since 1969.

A programme is currently being developed aimed at the explo-

ration of the northern section of the lansko-starooskol layers and to determine areas for further development. The Belorusneft Production Association was set up in 1966 and the enterprise is involved in searching, developing and exploitation of oil deposits, drilling of wells, the extraction of oil and oil-associated gas in Belarus. It also works in the oil industry in other countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Venezuela and Ecuador.

Collective security in focus

A plenary session of the CSTO Collective Security Council has recently finished its work in Dushanbe. The summit studied around fifteen documents, while the key theme, related to the assurance of safety in the region, was the fight against terrorism and radical Islamic movements. The topic is especially pertinent to Tajikistan, which borders Afghanistan, where the Islamic State group is now gaining momentum separately from the Taliban. Extremists could potentially begin their penetration into the former Soviet republics from there. Accordingly, appropriate protective measures need to be put in place.

By Alexander Benkovsky

Before the presidents began their talks, the National Palace (Kohi Millat) hosted sessions with foreign ministers, defence ministers and the Committee of the Security Council Secretaries. Events of this kind are usually organised some time before the session of the CSTO Collective Security Council to prepare for the meeting of heads of state. This time, it was held just two hours before the key meeting. Ministers discussed the agenda of the following session, in addition to documents relating to joint actions of the operational and military preparation of managerial bodies and force formations of the collective security system. Some aspects dealing with the training of military staff at military higher educational establishments were studied, as well as the co-ordination of the educational and scientific activity of the CSTO member states' defence ministries.

The presidents talked for a considerable time and Alexander Lukashenko later informed us, "We investigated the most important avenues of our organisation's development as a group, while amending our plans for the future. We've agreed to amend our charter documents immediately and optimise our organisation. The reason for these actions is a constantly escalating situation on the border of the CSTO member states."

The President stated with regret that all alien states are now required to deal with common risks and threats. A growing level of extrem-



During the plenary session of the CSTO Collective Security Council

ism and the influence of international terrorist groups arouse concern. "Today, we face the escalation of tension in zones of continuing conflict, open warfare and the emergence of new hotbeds of instability, including in the vicinity of our borders. As a result, people are dying, states are deteriorating, people grow poor and an unprecedented flow of refugees and illegal migrants are flooding other countries. Under such conditions, we need to strengthen our military power and the mechanisms of the CSTO anti-crisis management," he said.

Meanwhile, according to Mr.

Lukashenko, much is being done to ensure CSTO security. This year, the work aimed at co-ordinating the organisation's foreign policy efforts has been effectively continued, primarily with regard to the operation of the Foreign Ministers Council. In addition, the deployment of the collective rapid response force has been worked out. The President is convinced that, in the near future, the CSTO will accumulate some elements of its military component to outline regional air defence systems and peacekeeping forces. Mr. Lukashenko reminded us that, while planning for future action, it's nec-

essary to rely on the available resources, setting concrete goals that proceed from the real assessment of threats.

"While accelerating the work on the Collective Security Strategy the CSTO will be able to ensure the development of common views on the protection of its interests. The introduction of common standards for defence products, the equipment of CSTO military contingents with unified armaments and material will allow the organisation's military potential to be greatly increased," said the President. "Sadly, although we've been discussing these issues recently,

few concrete measures have been achieved. I believe that the heads of state should honour their commitments in this field, particularly those relating to equipment."

In his speech to his colleagues, Mr. Lukashenko emphasised his desire to maintain peace in the region. According to his logic, strengthening military power is a reasonable step to dissuade attacks. "Expanding interaction with leading regional and international security bodies should be one of the ways to enhance the CSTO's potential as a respected organisation, one of the ways to raise the level of trust and reduce tensions in the region and the world," he added.

As a result of the CSTO Collective Security Council session, a declaration was adopted summarising the results of the 2014-2015 work and outlining proposals for the organisation's further development. The presidents also signed documents on the system of CSTO troop management, a co-operative agreement in the field of transportation of military and other formations, their movable property and products of military designation, as well as a protocol on the extension of the validity term for the agreement on the establishment of a single system of technical protection for railways. A budget for the coming year was also approved.

This year, Tajikistan presides over the CSTO but, in 2015-2016, Armenia will be at the head. Mr. Lukashenko wished success to his colleagues, and confirmed our country's adherence to the Collective Security Treaty's principles and goals.

An authoritative participant

Belarus elected to IAEA Board of Governors for 2015-2017

The decision was made at the plenary session of the IAEA General Conference in Vienna on September 17th. The fact that Belarus was elected to the IAEA Board of Governors shows that the country's achievements in nuclear power engineering and the application of nuclear technologies in science, healthcare, and other fields of economy are internationally recognised.

The IAEA Board of Governors generally meets five times per year to discuss major reports, the IAEA programme and budget, and develop recommendations on the key activities of the Agency. The Board of Governors also adopts safeguarding



agreements and draft IAEA safety standards, appoints the IAEA Director General, examines cases dealing with the violation of nuclear non-proliferation obligations, and decides on further steps that may include the submission of the case to the UN Security Council for consideration.

Membership in the IAEA Board of Governors will provide Belarus with an opportunity to directly participate in the IAEA decision-making process.

Important project being successfully implemented

An exhibition of the Belarusian nuclear power station officially opened at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna

For the first time ever an exhibition of the Belarusian nuclear power station project has opened during the 59th session of the IAEA General Conference. The opening ceremony was also attended by the Belarusian delegation, headed by Mikhail Mikhadyuk, Deputy Energy Minister. He said that the opportunity to arrange a national exhibition is an important sign on the part of the IAEA administration.

According to the Deputy Energy Minister, the IAEA's guidelines for new countries working on nuclear energy programmes are a good reference point for Belarus. A detailed schedule in correlation



Presentation of Belarusian NPP exhibition

with the document can be found on one of the stands of the Belarusian exposition. Mr. Mikhadyuk remarked that the Belarusian nuclear energy programme is now in the third phase — the construction of a nuclear power station. Belarusian specialists have already

carried out 83 percent of the work. "According to Russian colleagues and international organisations, the project is being successfully implemented," added the Minister.

On the whole, the Belarusian stand offers information about how much work has

been done already at the construction site near Ostrovets, about plans for 2016, and the development of the manufacturing and social infrastructure. Although the official opening ceremony took part in the afternoon, the Belarusian stand had been open since the morning and had attracted many conference delegates. Since many countries across the globe have stated their intention to proceed with the development of the nuclear energy industry, the Belarusian experience will be of great interest to them.

About 20 national exhibitions were opened at the IAEA headquarters. Belarus' display stands alongside those of Russia, the USA, France, Germany, Japan, China, India, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates.

Threads without knots

Grodno's cotton mill was set up almost fifty years ago and came to house a powerful fertiliser facility (now known as Grodno-Azot). While men were busy constructing a domestic chemical industry giant, women worked at the new plant — producing threads and yarn. The company grew, gaining momentum, coming to supply a quarter of the USSR's thread. The decay of the 1990s might have tolled death for the factory but, happily, modernisation has made it possible to preserve production and jobs, while taking manufacturing to a whole new level.

By Katerina Charovskaya

Two decades ago, the situation looked hopeless. The Central Asian republics — which seceded the Soviet Union — ceased to supply raw materials, establishing their own spinning plants. Moreover, our state and the factory lacked funds to import cotton. Hard times began: the factory closed its workshops, cutting working hours for personnel, losing employees and accumulating losses. To fill financial gaps, it began producing socks and tights. However, the move did not solve the problem, and workers were obliged to accept hosiery in lieu of wages.

Alla Minaeva, who heads the factory's museum, recalls, "People received their 'salary' and then went to neighbours, friends and markets to 'sell' it — including in Poland. Shuttle traders were common, simply to survive. Some left their jobs and others remained on the staff; owing to reduced working hours, people had enough time to trade independently."

By 2000, the problem was acute and a decision was needed on whether to close the factory or find an efficient solution. It was decided to seek an alternative to imported raw materials and, with this in mind,



Gronitex JSC is one of the leading enterprises of Belarus' textile sector

equipment was purchased to process local flax. Sadly, the quality of the resulting yarn proved unsatisfactory and the factory lacked the ability to take out loans for further investment. It was obliged to give the bank its recreation centre and pioneer camp on the bank of a lake to repay its first loan and, by 2004, the plant was in serious debt, and lacked modern machin-

ery. It was obliged to lay off 5,000 staff members, as it was making a loss of 14 percent annually.

Under the new name of Gronitex, it gained support via a Presidential decree, with over Br17bn allocated to enable technical re-equipment of the thread section (the sewing and knitwear facilities having already been most recently modernised).

It was necessary to do everything possible to satisfy customers used to the quality of imported goods.

The Grodno factory began to turn a profit once its quality improved; 'old' customers returned and new clients were attracted.

The President's second decree — 'On Support of Light Industry' — enabled the company to modernise

its yarn and thread production. The Director of Gronitex JSC, Valentina Lavtsel, recalls those times with pride, saying, "We purchased the most modern and high quality machinery, from Germany, Switzerland and Italy. We aimed to ensure our technological processes could rival western analogues in speed and quality." Since 2008, profitabil-

ity has remained positive, with all state loans and bank credits repaid. Employees enjoy a gym, free dental treatment and consultation with a therapist. Using its own funds, the company has repaired its buildings and developed its grounds, welcoming suppliers and clients with pride.

Of course, global conditions remain competitive, obliging the enterprise to remain on its toes. Some customers fail to pay for their goods, for instance. Nevertheless, using its own funds and banking loans, the company is investing 1.7m Euros in installing two imported spinning machines — to replace six obsolete models. One was launched recently for a test run, at the hands of Lilia Chesnulevich. She admits, "I work with pleasure now. In the past, I had to knot flying threads by hand, tying hundreds during a working shift. The new machine copes with these breaks independently — importantly, without making knots. I simply observe."

The current stage of modernisation is soon to be finished, enabling Grodno threads to reduce in cost by 15 percent, while being of better quality. This will enhance the competitiveness of the company and of related light industry.

Opportunities coincide with wishes

By Irina Ushakova

Largest helicopter producer, AgustaWestland, keen to collaborate with Belarus

AgustaWestland is interested in co-operating with Belarus. "We've agreed to organise a visit for our potential partners to Belarus," commented the Prime Minister, Andrei Kobayakov, during his meeting with journalists after the visit to the AgustaWestland production facility — a subsidiary of the Finmeccanica company.

He also reminded us that in Soviet times, Belarus produced a great variety of component parts, including navigation and radiolocation systems for the aerospace industry. "Today we are talking about Belarus' inclusion in a co-operative project with Finmeccanica S.p.A."

AgustaWestland (AW) is the world leader in helicopter building, a subsidiary of Finmeccanica. Founded in 2001, the company has been producing helicopters for both military and civil purposes. Its production areas and offices are located in Italy, the UK, Poland and the United States. In



At the AgustaWestland production facility

2014, AgustaWestland netted 4.4bn Euros profit while the company's business portfolio is estimated at 4.5bn Euros. Finmeccanica S.p.A. is one of the leading industrial groups in the high-technology sector in Italy and one of the top global players in aerospace, defence and security.

The meeting at the Maserati production facility in Turin also tackled the prospects of working with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, and Mr. Kobayakov visited the manufacturer.

While chatting to the executives, Belarus' PM announced that we are ready to organise a visit of the company's delegation to Minsk for further collaborative discussions.

Alexey Vaganov, a member of the Supervisory Board of the Unison JV JSC, explained to journalists that the two sides have initially agreed to implement two projects dealing with the assembly of passenger and commercial vehicles. "It refers primarily to the commercial vehicles Iveco and Fiat,

as well as passenger automobiles. Our first step is the establishment of SKD assembly in 2016, and the level of localisation is expected to reach 30-50 percent in 2016," he noted.

There are plans to use the facilities of JV Unison JSC (aiming to produce 20,000 vehicles per year) and Belautomaz in the Fiat Chrysler Automobile project. According to Mr. Vaganov, the total investment hasn't yet been announced; only models and technical assistance have been discussed. During the meeting, there were steps taken to establish a working group to develop a memorandum on co-operation between Belarus and Fiat Chrysler. The automobile concern is the largest automobile-building company, founded after the merger of Fiat and American Chrysler. The company is the world's seventh biggest vehicle producer. Their headquarters are located in the Netherlands while its financial centre is in the UK.

After a two day visit of the Belarusian governmental delegation to the Italian Republic, Mr. Kobayakov told journalists that Belarus and Italy are entering a new level of interaction.

Document signed

By Taisia Azanovich

Development banks of Belarus and Vietnam to co-operate in financial sphere

The Bank of Development of the Republic of Belarus JSC and the Bank of Development of Vietnam have signed a framework agreement on co-operation.

"The document is aimed at beginning collaboration between the development institutions of the two countries in the financial and banking spheres while promoting joint investment activity and mutual trade," noted the bank's specialists.

They specified that the document has been signed for the development of agreements, reached during the participation of the Chairman of the Development Bank's Board, Sergei Rumas, in an annual meeting of members of the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP), held this May in Nha Trang (the Socialist Republic of Vietnam).

There are two ways to achieve an executive position in the modern world. For those who have ambitions to move from the executive to a government role, the usual pathway is to set up independently as an entrepreneur or alternatively, to be appointed using various PR tricks. Jacques Séguéla, French PR and advertising guru, names ten universal rules for pre-election campaigns. Among them are 'voting for a person rather than a party', 'voting for a social image rather than a political image' and 'voting for ourselves rather than candidates'. A significant number of voters however, rely on an authoritative personality or PR techniques.

PR definitely influences people's choices

Nikita Belyaev, the Liberal Club's Administrative Director:

Almost all the attention of voters in the run up to the election is focused on the personalities of the candidates for a post. This is no surprise as these are the 'faces' of an election campaign. They are shown on TV and their photos appear on promotion leaflets. However, in most cases, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Any candidate is backed by a large team, including an advisor and a PR manager.

This raises many questions, are the voters being deceived by PR spin? In the past, most participants of an election campaign were self-managing candidates but modern PR approaches enhance features that candidates may lack in reality, and equally hide other traits. These risks are part of our society. Considering the development of modern mass media and the extent to which voters are involved in diverse communication methods, a refusal to use any PR methods would be perceived as deliberately perverse. PR makes it possible to efficiently inform voters about the campaign, while creating a competitive election process. This is the reality.

The positive or negative consequences of PR use are just one aspect of it. PR allows the possibility of including public interests in an election campaign. This is important as, to promote ideas, the candidate needs to be convinced that they are in high demand amongst the public. Voters can get a better picture of the candidates enabling them to make a well-thought-out and informed choice. Another advantage of PR is that it encourages stronger competition among pre-election manifestos: PR simplifies information sharing, while attracting greater attention to the process. Interest in election campaigns is piqued and encouraged with

good PR, this is important in times of absenteeism and reduced turnout, the latter is an acute problem in the EU.

With independent candidates, as a rule, most of the attention, ideas and proposals are concentrated on a single personality. It is not only the candidate but their team that play an important role in the process by developing a pre-election programme and, in case of success, creating the advisory cabinet surrounding the elected candidate. Certainly PR also has disadvantages but these negative influences can be controlled through a developed election culture.



Accepting promises but respecting real deeds

Professor Boris Lepeshko:

In most cases, voters are pragmatic. If a person's life experiences have allowed scepticism to develop, they are only ready to believe those who've shown themselves capable of concrete action. Why was Franklin Delano Roosevelt re-elected as the US President several times? The explanation is simple: most voters understood that the elderly man had done so much for his country. He challenged the Great Depression and was one of the victors in a serious war. Similarly, by the time Winston Churchill was selected for Parliament, he had taken part in the Boer War, escaped captivity, demonstrated extreme bravery during WWI and fought successful political programmes. He was a worthy candidate for the post. When we consider this, the futuristic ideas seen in the post-Soviet region can be explained (the state is young and elites are just being formed) but it's impossible to believe that they would be able to attract the necessary numbers of voters.

Existing political techniques are primarily aimed at rational and, importantly, westernised voters. They can easily face the fate of some of the famous liberal projects of the 1990s, which were attempted in the post-Soviet area. We do not need any persuasion to see that Belarusian voters are dissimilar to those in the USA or Western

Europe. This is not because the issues differ; but our social background, historical past and the nuances of our personalities are different. Just as the understanding of democracy and human rights differs in China, France, the UK or Iran, we have differing opinions on values.

Voters' wishes are a key issue. The successful candidates won't be those who promise manna from heaven but those who feel, think, love or hate in the manner of ordinary people. Not everyone loved General de Gaulle in the aftermath of the war in France: he was viewed as a monarchist, with a dictator's behaviour. However, when people learnt how kindly he treated his chronically ill daughter, their opinions changed.

A pre-election campaign has been launched in Belarus. When we hear of 'a prosperous country', 'peace in the world' or that 'God is with us', we truly lack the personal touch. We all advocate a prosperous Belarus. We all dream of peace in our world and would love to know that God is always with us. However, these phrases lack innovation and personalisation.

I remember the former US President, Bill Clinton, spoke of the importance of renewal in the country during his pre-election campaign. He played on people's desire for a younger ruling party who would introduce new young trends into political life. We also know of an example when a pre-election campaign was based on overcoming corruption. It later became clear that those were not only words but also a true political ambition. Conservatives speak of the importance of traditions, searching for a politician to represent a well-known family: as a result, a third of the Bush family has entered the political arena.

Any election campaign has to rely on voters' thinking and their wishes: it's the people who live in the country and theirs is the voice that matters.

Danger of social networks investigated

MT reporter Olga Sovrasova asks Grodno residents their opinions

Maria Kovalenko, Secretary of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union's Grodno Regional Committee:

According to the statistics, around 80 percent of our young people use social networks. Our organisation also has its pages and groups. To learn more about the positive and negative sides, Grodno Regional Committee recently held a youth debate. Young people appreciate networks for their potential for easy and convenient communication and the chance to learn of news promptly. However, they admit that online activities take a great deal of our time and can be used to excess. Both opponents and followers agree that much useful information can be found online.

Yekaterina Vorobieva, psychologist:

We need to understand that communication via social networks is a characteristic feature of our modern generation; this fact must be accepted. The problem is rooted in our psychological dependence; this especially refers to the weak psyche of children and young people. We know cases of 'unpopular' teenagers being bullied by their peers through social networks. This has resulted not simply in unhappiness but suicide.

Gennady Bondarik, pensioner:

It's well known that political conflicts and, even, wars can be inspired by activity within social networks. I'm convinced that the authorities of any state — including ours — should re-

member this. Clearly, it's impossible to control Internet resources (and there's no need in fact); however, it's vital to locate those dividing society. I believe we need to work harder at this in today's world.

Valentin Yatsuk, programmer:

The online environment is ripe for criminal activity. Take spice [a type of drug] distribution as an example. While young people die or go mad, 'businessmen' make money. I'm surprised at how many teenagers know how to buy drugs via social networking sites yet the police remain inactive. They need to work through social networks.

Yevgeny Kovalev, lawyer:

It provides fertile ground for illegal business promotion. Some 'enterpris-

ing' citizens manage to trade online without the required registration of their entrepreneurial activity. They might earn a great deal of money without paying taxes. We can't, yet, detect all and punish them in line with the law.

Galina Golubeva, pensioner:

I believe parents must bear responsibility for their children's obsession with virtual communication and its consequences. If children are left too much to themselves, without parental input, they seek out companionship elsewhere. Of course, social networks are an easy solution. Parents can and must influence their children's lifestyle, cultivating their interests, hobbies and friends.

Anna Nikitina, administrator:

I believe that social networks produce more evil than benefit. My niece, aged 13, is a vivid example, as she spends too much time online. Her parents have no idea how to handle this, as she shows interest in nothing else. People forget how to interact in the 'real' world. Young people make friends online, dating and parting virtually. The trouble is that many are then unprepared for 'real' life.



Business for you

We can make anything happen in life, if we are determined. Those who are unemployed can become involved in business, reinventing themselves as entrepreneurs. We chat with those who have shaken off the yoke of state benefits and unemployment in favour of starting up their own businesses.



Owner of the flower shop Olga Bernard

By Taisia Azanovich

Olga Bernard takes her keys from her handbag, to open her shop; it bears a sign saying 'Flowers'. "Come in," she says, inviting us inside. Just a year ago, Olga worked in recruitment for a large company. Tough demands were placed upon personnel and she suffered from a permanent headache, due to tension and stress. She realised that she had to change her career, so she handed in her notice and, after job searching for six months, and being registered with an employment centre, decided to train in a new direction. She applied for a state subsidy and now runs her florist's.

"I never have headaches now," she admits, arranging some flowers and removing dry petals. "However, since opening my shop five days ago, I've hardly had time to sleep or rest: I'm working continuously."

Olga admits that the greatest challenge was to find premises. She needed a small pavilion and, after long searching, succeeded, paying almost Br3m a month in rental. She comments, "I had to spend around Br5m on renovations, plus Br37m on a cash register, second-hand refrigerator, stands and some other minor items. I invested almost Br12m in flowers and packaging, with Br700,000 on a simple sign. You can easily calculate how much you need to start up."

A buyer interrupts us, saying, "I need a bouquet of white and red roses. Can you do that for me?" Olga bows confidently, "Of course." However, as soon as the customer leaves, she exclaims, "I have no white roses! I need

to quickly go to my supplier!"

Olga is taking her first steps, so isn't keeping a large stock, concentrating on those she believes are most in demand. However, it's not easy guessing peoples' preferences. On the first days, people were interested in gerberas; as soon as she stocked up, interest dropped off.

It's time for Olga to go to her supplier who, she admits, isn't always reliable. She relates how she often arrives to collect her order, only to find that the delivery is delayed, or of poor quality. "It makes me nervous! However, I'm not afraid of difficulties. I plan to employ staff, so that I have more time to independently settle issues with suppliers and documents, while opening more outlets and launching Internet sales."

Another new entrepreneur is Alexander Zolotarev, making cabinet furniture. He retired from his job in a



Natalia DOLBIK, Head of Economics and Management Chair at the Republican Institute of Qualification Improvement and Staff Retraining at the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection:

Jobseekers wishing to launch their own businesses can address an employment department. Local staff can then send them to our Institute to study the basics of entrepreneurial activity. This year alone, 142 people attended our courses, including 36 from Minsk. Many have received subsidies to open their businesses: a one-off non-repayable state monetary grant, equal to 11-times the minimum wage, or 20-times the minimum wage if the entrepreneurial activity is connected with implementing sci-tech research and innovative developments. In Minsk, 61 people have received subsidies.

Grants can be used to buy equipment, machinery, raw materials or ser-

vices to set up entrepreneurial activity. You apply to the employment department where you are registered, providing a business plan. At our Institute, lecturers help 'pupils' make proper business plans. Many interesting projects have been born as a result. Our students have proposed a confectionery workshop, a workshop to restore architectural monuments and a service of serenade singing under windows. Not long ago, we liaised with a surgeon who wished to patent a helmet for toddlers. He had plenty of ideas so we transformed them into real projects which produce profit. Many of our former students are successful businessmen and it's hard to believe that they were once unemployed.

FIGURES

In the first half of 2015, the employment service assisted **992** job-seekers in launching entrepreneurial activity. All received subsidies for new businesses. Overall, **1,825** should receive similar support this year.

factory, in pursuit of launching his own business: a long held dream. He tells us, "I have a wife and a child. I understand that financial problems are inevitable initially, as I need to accumulate clients." Alexander collects his toolbox and sets off to meet a customer within the hour. "My wife supported me, saying: 'I'll give you a year.'"

He admits that his studies at the Labour and Social Protection Ministry's Institute of Qualification Improvement have been of great help; he attended its classes while unemployed and registered at an employment service. Lecturers helped him prepare a business plan and Alexander learnt more about running a business.

He opens his car to show me his work tools, explaining, "I bought them with money allocated by state subsidy: around Br16m." He needs to meet all requirements: working as an individual entrepreneur for no less than a year and paying the required tax of Br1.5m for six months. He only has a few clients so far but, unsurpris-



Alexander Zolotarev enjoys his job

ingly, is trying to work hard. "When I see that a client is taking their time to decide upon designs for their future kitchen, I never try to unduly hurry them. I propose possibilities and leave it to them to think about it. Some people are indignant on my behalf, saying that my modest income gives me the right to demand that customers decide within a certain timeframe but I ignore those comments."

Alexander made most of the furniture in his flat but admits that he and his wife don't always agree on the details, saying that they often debate long and hard over something as simple as the shape and colour of a handle. Of course, modern clients are demanding so Alexander designs each piece to suit individual needs. "I believe that a professional must focus

on a single niche. With this in mind, I'd love to concentrate on kitchen production," Alexander explains, beginning to assemble a piece of furniture.

The village of Spichnik, in the Pukhovichi District, is our next destination. A new farm is soon to open here: Sergey and Yelena Marchuks plan to breed pigs. The host meets me by the gates. Dressed in a uniform, he explains, "Sorry but I'm not in my best clothes. I'm working from sunrise to sunset. To do everything, I wake up at 4am."

The farm is yet to open, but the couple are preparing documents, repairing the premises and choosing machinery, while constructing their own house. Sergey and Yelena have three children. "Our middle son — Leshka — helps so much that even adults are envious," Sergey says proudly, taking his son by the shoulder. "We've taught our children the value of work since their earliest years; my own childhood was the same."

"We'll cope well, jointly with my husband," adds Yelena, and Sergey hugs her, "Everything will be fine. If you can't stand the heat, keep out of the kitchen."

Clearly, these 'young' businessmen are living through hard times; they need to prepare documents, and find land and loans, while facing unexpected problems. They know the theory quite well — receiving good support at the initial stage. However, life will show who'll manage to remain afloat.

Metro to be without barriers

By Piotr Shchedrin

Increasing number of disabled passengers enjoy using Minsk metro

In the past month alone, the metro's security service has received over 420 requests for rendering assistance to passengers with lim-

ited mobility. Minsk's metro staff have embraced the state programme to make public transport more accessible to everyone.

Over the past three years, more than Br12.4bn has been spent on the programme, including the installation of 23 lifts, 22

platforms (including 3 with vertical movement) and 10 mobile full-track lifts. These and other elements are depicted on a detailed Internet map (on the Minsk metro's website).

Not long ago, another five mobile full-track lifts were installed at Oktyabrs-

kaya, Kupalovskaya, Pobedy Square, Yakub Kolas Square and Proletarskaya stations: all paid for from the metro's own funds. As a result, few stations are now inaccessible to those with limited mobility, enabling all passengers to feel safe and protected.

The metro has also de-



veloped special instructions to render assistance to those who are physically weak, and

all security service staff have been trained in lift maintenance.

Migrant crisis splits European countries

Cracks in Europe's handling of the migrant crisis are deepening, with Croatia under fresh fire from its neighbours

In the latest of a series of sharply-worded condemnations, Zagreb is being accused of 'violating' Hungary's 'sovereignty' by sending people across the border on a train, accompanied by police. More than 20,000 migrants have flowed into Croatia in recent days, after Budapest fenced off its border with Serbia and brought in tough anti-migrant legislation.

"In recent days, Croatia's government has lied in the face of the Hungarian people, lied in the face of the Croatian people and lied in the face of the whole European Union," said Peter Szijjarto, Hungary's Foreign Minister. Meanwhile, migrants have been arriving in Austria from Slovenia. One group of up to 200 crossed on foot.

Slovenia's Prime Minister is among those lashing out Croatia, claiming it is not playing by European rules. "We know that we're confronted by a large wave of refugees coming from Croatia. Unfortunately, our neighbour Croatia has not fulfilled its responsibilities. Things have slipped out of control," said Miro Cerar. "There has been an improper channelling of refugees towards Slovenia. As you know, Slovenia is the guardian of the Schengen border, that's our European responsibility."

Croatia's Prime Minister says he will not use 'brute force' to keep



Refugees stand behind a fence at the Hungarian border with Serbia near the town of Horgos

people out, nor will they have to stay against their will. He has also said that buses and trains will keep running to Hungary. Meanwhile, thousands of migrants walked into Austria. Aid agencies and the Red Cross were on hand to provide food, drink and medical help. With so many people arriving the Austrian police have tried to guide the refugees away from the bor-

der town of Nickelsdorf on to trains and buses. Most appeared to be headed for Germany said a police officer.

Meanwhile, the migrants are being shuttled from one country to the next. Faced with growing crowds on its territory after Hungary barricaded its border with Serbia against migrants heading north, Croatia has begun bring people to its border with

Hungary, which has been shuttling them to reception centres near Austria. European leaders who are bitterly divided will seek to find a credible response to the continent's worst migration crisis since World War II at an emergency summit. German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on her counterparts to accept joint responsibility.



Finding dating back to Archaic Rome

Ancient Rome may have been much larger than originally believed, according to recent archaeological findings

In an excavation area on Quirinal Hill, researchers have discovered a well-preserved rectangular residence they say dates back to the 6th century BC, complete with wooden beams, clay-covered walls and a roof, and what archaeologists say are clues that prove it was used for domestic purposes.

The hill was previously believed to have been used as a sacred area, with temples and a necropolis, while the city's residential part was thought to be further south where the Roman Forum is located. Today, the Quirinal

Hill is home to the Italian president's official residence.

"From the materials used we can deduce that it's an important dwelling dating back to 6th century BC, a truly archaic period, very rare in Rome," says Francesco Prosperetti, superintendent for Rome's Archaeological Heritage, who says the finding is considered to be among the most important of the last 10 years.

The dwelling is located near a fifth-century temple discovered in 2013. According to the director of the excavation, Mirella Serlorenzi, the position of the house near the temple hints at it being a sacred area, and that whoever lived there was watching over it.

Tsipras returns as PM in decisive Greek election

Alexis Tsipras and his leftist Syriza party have been voted back into power after a surprisingly decisive Greek election — the country's fifth in six years

Syriza quickly pulled away from the second placed conservative New Democracy party — not enough for a majority in the 300 seat-parliament, but the Independent Greeks have agreed to join a coalition. The far-right Golden Dawn came in third. Tsipras returns as Prime Minister despite having been abandoned by party radicals last month after he gave in to demands for austerity to win a Eurozone bailout.

"This mandate is a victory of the people, we fought a difficult and hard battle and I feel today that I was proven right because the Greek people gave us a clear mandate, to continue to battle inside and outside for this country." He made no direct reference to the 85

billion Euro bailout which Syriza has pledged to implement while protecting vulnerable groups. "My friends, the mandate that we have been given by the Greek people today is also a crystal clear message



for us to untangle viciousness and a world of corruption that all these years have been governing this country," said Tsipras.

Tsipras was joined on stage by Panos Kammenos, leader of the nationalist Independent Greeks who were his former partners after the previous election in January.

At least five dead as magnitude 8.3 earthquake strikes Chile

The Chilean government says at least five people have been killed and more than a million evacuated following a magnitude 8.3 earthquake

A number of strong aftershocks were also felt. The quake struck off the coast near the region around Coquimbo, some 300 kilometres north of the capital Santiago. Near to the epicentre, buildings were damaged and power supplies cut. The quake, the biggest to hit Chile since 2010, could be felt as far away as the Argentinian capital.

A Tsunami warning was initially put in place in some parts of the country and across the South Pacific. The government has since cancelled the warning. Heavy waves, some reaching heights of 4.5 metres, caused flooding in Chile's coastal towns. Chilean President Michelle Bachelet says she will visit the worst hit areas.

"The most important thing today is to support the people, protect them, prevent any more deaths or injuries and to make sure all appropriate measures are put in place," she said.

The government rapidly warned people living near the coast to leave their homes, anxious to avoid a repeat of 2010, when a slow reaction to an earthquake and subsequent tsunami resulted in hundreds of deaths.

Hewlett-Packard to cut up to 30,000 more jobs

Hewlett-Packard says it expects to cut between 25,000 and 30,000 more jobs in its enterprise division, as it adjusts to falling demand



The latest reductions, which are expected to be global, come on top of 55,000 layoffs previously announced. The company says they will be in its faster growing corporate hardware and services operations — to be known as Hewlett-Packard Enterprise (HPE) when the firm splits into two later this year.

The other unit, HP Inc., will comprise its computer and printer business, which has been hit by declining sales of PCs. The total cuts represent about a tenth of the workforce. The job reductions are aimed at saving \$2.7 billion (2.4 billion Euros) a year — although HP says the plan will cost as much to carry out.

"We've done a significant amount of work over the past few years to take costs out and simplify processes and these final actions will eliminate the need for any future corporate restructuring," CEO Meg Whitman said in a statement.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Journey into Ashot Khachatrian's art

National Art Museum hosts exhibition by St. Petersburg's Ashot Khachatrian: more than 30 canvases created over the decades

By Veniamin Mikheev

Mr. Khachatrian's childhood and young years were spent in Armenia: in the Ararat Valley in particular. This, naturally, became his source of inspiration, leading him to explore the history and ancient traditions of the Armenian people. In 1991, he enjoyed his first personal exhibition in St. Petersburg, which brought him recognition.

His paintings have powerful emotional appeal, being rich, generous and brightly coloured. Working across various genres, from still-life works of fruits and flowers, to self-portraits and those of relatives, and landscapes with Armenian motifs, he finds new paths of expression, inspired by his native land. Mountains, houses and churches are rendered vividly, in tones of green and red.

The current exhibition is retrospective, showing us the evolution of his style. His earliest works, *Self-Portrait with a White Bandage* (1979) and *Still-life with Bananas* (1980), are followed by *Monastery Geghard* and *From Century to Century* (both 1993). Meanwhile, *Angels* (2002), *Watermelons* (2008), *Triptych* (2010), *Nature: a Female Figure* (2010), *Shadow of History* (2011), *Lyric: Melody of the Soul* (2011), *Magic Music* (2013), and *Nature of Music*



(2013) are from his later years.

Most recently, Ashot has achieved wider recognition, gaining a number of exhibitions, including fifteen personal. His works are held by the Museum of St. Echmiadzin, in Armenia, by the Museum of Yerevan city, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in St. Petersburg, and by the Shandong Wen Tsai Museum of Painting in China, as well as being evident in private collections around the world.

MTS REFERENCE:

Ashot Khachatrian was born in the Armenian city of Hoktemberyn (now Armavir) in 1954. In 1973, he graduated from Yerevan's School of Decorative-and-Applied Arts. In 1977, after two years of study at the Department of Painting, at the Abovyan Yerevan State Pedagogical Institute, he moved to Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). Between 1978 and 1981, he studied at the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. In 1992, he joined the St. Petersburg Union of Artists and, since 1993, has been a member of the Painting Bureau. Since 2002, Khachatrian has been a member of the St. Petersburg League of Professional Artists.

Unique facts from composer's life

By Yelena Vladimirova

Polonaises for Return exhibition, dedicated to 250th anniversary of Michal Kleofas Oginski's birth, opens at Foreign Ministry of Belarus

Oginski's creative heritage is shared by Belarus with neighbouring states, showing the deep European roots of Belarusian culture, as was noted at the opening of the exhibition, by Yelena Kupchina, Deputy Foreign Minister. She underlined that artefacts are from the State Museum of Theatre and Musical Culture History of Belarus.

In 2008, electronic copies of materials from the Oginski archives were returned to Belarus, with assistance from the UNESCO Bureau in Moscow and at the initiative of Belarus' National Committee for UNESCO. The State Museum of Theatre and Musical Culture History has been negotiating to ensure the return of archives.

Museum Director Zinaida Kucher explains that the exhibition comprises materials from the returned archive, on display for the first time: correspondence between Michal Kleofas Oginski and his relatives, as well as his publicistic works and 400 sheets of his musical scores. Although he didn't call himself a professional musician, his brilliant polonaise — *Farewell to the Homeland* — remains popular today. *Vytoki* band performed Oginski's music at the exhibition.

The archive is being used to create a museum exhibition at the Oginski estate in Zalesie village, where the great man spent 20 years of his life.

Surviving pages from the past

There are those who are of the opinion that, until the 16th century, few items of art and literature were created in our country and our culture was only developing slowly. In truth, not many icons and manuscripts have survived from the Skorina times but numerous wars can be partly blamed for this. Churches, museums and archives were robbed and many cultural treasures were burnt or taken abroad. Even now, not many people are aware of the Minsk manuscripts written before the 17th century. Historian Yuri Mikulsky tells us about them. He's also collected data on six gospels that are held to be older than the 16th century, all written or kept in Minsk. All of them are abroad now or have disappeared without trace. Only one of the gospels is kept in St. Petersburg's Russian National Library.

By Viktor Korbut

Mr. Mikulsky has developed a keen interest in the fate of gospels. He explains, "This was the only service book in church and, in line with the popular custom, also registered judicial acts. It was a collection of both religious and legal texts and were often taken to courts to investigate claims." Archivists say that if no court cases had ever taken place, we would have never learnt of many people and events in history. Documents seldom register kind deeds; they mostly inform us of problems or disasters. Scholars learnt of one of the gospels, kept in the now destroyed Ascension Cathedral, by chance. These late

16th or early 17th century documents record that in 1502, Yelena, the daughter of Moscow's Duke, donated the village of Trostenets (near Minsk) to the monastery. The record was registered in the gospel, covered with gold and silver. The book was later kept by city residents for some time and eventually found a home in the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral (in Nemiga Street); it was last seen there in 1778.

The 1957 inventory of articles discovered in the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God Cathedral, located in Minsk's citadel, not

far from the modern Nemiga underground station, mentioned 'the old Gospel framed in copper'. The Minsk Mother of God icon was also found there; it was donated to the city by the aforementioned Duchess Yelena. Even in 1972, the book was kept at the cathedral, covered in velvet, with a silver gilt-covered cross on the cover. A court case of two



15th century Minsk Gospel kept at St. Petersburg's Russian National Library



Mstizh Gospel

Minsk merchants in 1597 brought to light the Gospel of the 'church of St. Kuzma and Demyan'. It became apparent that the former priest, Ivan, had erased some notes from the Gospel on church property outside the city because he had appropriated it. Nobody knows where the book went...

These stories provide us with an answer to what happened to a vast layer of the national heritage. It has actually gone nowhere. Where did book disappear? A similar mystery happened to the Gospel discovered in the 1860s on the Masyukovshchina estate (currently in the Minsk district), in the cellar of an unknown building. In 1923, the book was kept by Larisa Kuzminskaya, from Ukraine's Kamenets-Podolsky. At that time, researcher Mikhailo Drai-Khmara became familiar with the 35 surviving pages of the manuscript. He was the last to see the rare book and even managed to publish it in 1931 in Kiev. Only two ancient rare books from Minsk's churches have survived. One of them is known as the Mstizh Gospel among scholars; it comes from the village of Mstizh of the Borisov District. At present, it's kept at the library of Lithuania's Academy of Sciences, having been brought there in 1869 from Minsk. The 14th century manuscript came to Mstizh in the 16th century, taken by Minsk's major, Vasil Lyakh. There is no information on where he took the book.

It is likely that the Gospel from the Basilian Monastery (whose stone



SERGEY LOZUK

Historian Yuri Mikulsky near Minsk's Basilian Monastery

buildings have been preserved until now between Minsk's Svobody Square and Engels Street) boasts the most mysterious history. It seems that Duke Fiodor Tolstoy, who had a rich library, received the book from there in the early 19th century. It's an even stranger fact that, until recently, no Belarusian scholars have studied the manuscript in detail, although its current location in St. Petersburg's Russian National Library is known. Judging by the watermarks on it, the written document dates back to 1450-1460. Mr. Mikulsky is convinced that it's hard to objectively speak of Belarus' history without studying these pages. In fact, the country's history is much richer than it might appear at first sight.

City through artist's eyes

Over 30 works by Belarus State Award holder Victor Alshevsky on show as part of *My Minsk: Symbols of Space and Time* art project



Victor Alshevsky's art project emphasises the uniqueness of national cultural symbols

By Victoria Kovalevskaya

The art project is devoted to our beautiful and unique city at the centre of Europe: Minsk. The Mikhail Savitsky Art Gallery is hosting Mr. Alshevsky's personal exhibition for the first time. Victor was a pupil of People's Artist Mikhail Savitsky, although the show features pieces drawn by Mr. Alshevsky over the past five years: part of his *My Minsk* and *Museums of the World* collections.

The *My Minsk: Symbols of Space and Time* art project reveals the depth of the artist's philosophical thoughts, and Minsk's famous architectural landmarks, against the rich rhythms of life. Mr. Alshevsky depicts Minsk's architectural ornamental reliefs, with their geometric forms and botanical heraldry: our unique cultural symbols.

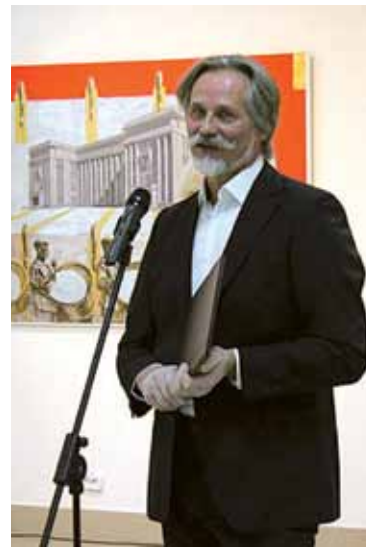
Mr. Alshevsky particularly fa-



vours the majestic architecture of Nezavisimosti Avenue, the old city park and sports sites. Each building is special to Minsk's history and has significance globally. Dinamo Stadium reminds us of Rome's Coliseum, while the Trade Union Culture Palace resembles Athens' Acropolis

and GUM is like a classical Italian palace. The artist pays special attention to buildings designed by Iosif Langbard: these prominent architectural masterpieces each have their own inner life.

The project is not just artistic but innovative, uniting art and real-



Premiere for Bobruisk

By Olga Kislyakova

Director Pavel Chukhray's *Alien*, based on Efraim Sevela's *Sell Your Mother*

Sevela, whose real name is Yefim Drabkin, was born in Bobruisk and was a close friend of the director's father, knowing Pavel from childhood. Mr. Chukhray is now working on his new film, agreeing the details with the writer's widow, Zoya Osipova.

The film, which should be released in 2016, is to be shot in Lithuania and will feature such famous actors as Yulia Peresild and Sergey Garmash.

Efraim Sevela, who died five years ago, was not only a famous writer but a scriptwriter and a film director, writing the script for *The Hard Nut*: a comedy featuring Nadezhda Rumyantseva and Vitaly Solomin.

A monument is to be erected to Sevela in his native Bobruisk, notes the Head of the Bobruisk City Executive Committee's Department for Ideology, Culture and Youth Affairs, Nikolay Balyuk. He tells us, "We hope Sevela's native city — Bobruisk — will become the first to premiere the movie in Belarus. Our countrymen love and remember the author and his artistry. Some knew him personally, as he spent his childhood in our city."



ity within a modern mythology, inspiring us to philosophise. Minsk's familiar buildings are born anew, with streets, avenues and squares echoing global achievements.

Mr. Alshevsky comments, "We admire St. Petersburg and Moscow, Paris and London, Rome and Barcelona. However, on coming home, I enjoy the unique beauty of our capital. In painting my series devoted to our native city, I'm glorifying Minsk." His works are kept at Belarus' National Art Museum, at the Museum of Modern Fine Arts (Minsk), at the Tretyakov Gallery (Moscow), and at the Central Artists' House (Moscow), as well as at artistic galleries in Germany, Norway, Poland, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Austria, the UK, the USA, Turkey and in other states.

Tours by young and talented

By Yulia Leonova

Symphony Orchestra of the Music Academy dedicates its tours to three landmark events: the 20th anniversary since the establishment of the Special Fund of the President of Belarus for the Support of Talented Youth; the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory; and the national Year of Youth

Scholarship holders of the President's Special Fund and laureates of prestigious international contests are to delight audiences by singing and playing world classics in each of the regional centres from September 22nd-27th. Conductor and orchestra head Andrey Ivanov promises a programme most entertaining (with its traditional two sections).

"Since all the artistes in our orchestra are students of the Belarusian State Academy of Music, we've prepared a youth programme. We'll begin with the overture from *Tannhäuser* opera, then violoncellist Mikhail Radunsky will play *Vienna Rhapsody*, followed by Aram Khachaturyan's exciting *Lezhghinka*. I won't detail all 12 works but I'd like to name the soloists (students and young teachers) you'll hear: Mikhail Radunsky (violin), Maria Shabunya (soprano), Oleg Yatsyna (violin) and Aram Beknazaryan (percussion)," notes Mr. Ivanov.

Vitebsk will be the first to hear the *Music Academy Youth to Youth of Belarus* programme, with Vitebsk's Regional Philharmonic welcoming guests. The concert series will finish on September 30th, at the Minsk Philharmonic.

Labyrinth targets several dozens of people

By Veniamin Mikheev

Around 300 works by Belarusian painters on show at the first exhibition at the House of Pictures Gallery

"The idea of creating the gallery was conceived a mere six months ago, so we had to work quickly in order to finish everything on time," noted the Gallery's Director, Larisa Bortnik, at the opening.

The first exhibition of the gallery displays around 300 pieces by 19 painters and graphical artists, including those bearing the title of People's Artiste of Belarus. These include the well-known Mikhail Savitsky, Leonid Shchemelev, Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya, Gavriil Vashchenko and others.

Speaking about future projects,



the Gallery's Director noted that pictures by world famous painters will be brought to Minsk. From October 1st and until the end of the



Labyrinth where it's difficult to get lost

year, the *Great Classics of the 20th Century* project will be shown, the exhibition includes over 200 works by three masters — Salvador Dali, Marc Chagall and Henri Matisse. The project has already toured many Russian cities and now Belarusians will be able to admire works by these outstanding painters.

"For 2016, equally prominent masters are awaiting us: Picasso, Kandinsky and Miro. We also maintain contacts with foreign galleries in order to search for interesting exhibitions and to repre-

sent them at our gallery," adds Ms. Bortnik.

The creators of the gallery have shied away from the traditional idea of a big exhibition hall and made it in the form of a small labyrinth where each room smoothly flows into another. One can see paintings at the House of Culture Gallery while also watching documentaries and films about Belarusian and world painters in a specially equipped cinema hall, seating several dozen people. It will also host master classes, lectures and seminars dedicated to art.

First competition at unique sports complex

Anna Guskova of Belarus and Mischa Gasser of Switzerland win Belarus' Open Aerial Skiing Water-Ramp Championships



Belarusian aerial Denis Osipov

By Igor Leshin

Four aerial experts took part in the super-finals of the women's competition in the new Freestyle Sports and Recreation Complex. Anna Guskova was the last in the quartet to perform her jump

in the final stage and earned a high score from the judges of 85.40 securing first place. Russian Anna Orlova came second gaining 75.52 points in the final stage, followed by another representative of the Russian Federation — Tatiana Babich. Belaru-



Silver medallist A. Orlova, winner A. Guskova and bronze medallist T. Babich

sian Alexandra Romanovskaya was placed fourth with 62.39 points.

The Belarusian men were left without medals in their part of the competition. The Swiss Mischa Gasser gave his opponents no opportunities to beat him, earning 131.81 points after performing a jump with a difficulty of 4.9. Russian Piotr Medunich claimed silver (boasting 130.00 points), followed by Dimitri Isler of Switzerland (125.44 points). Meanwhile, two Belarusians took part in the super-finals: Denis Osipov came fourth (with 120.81 points)

while Maxim Gustik was placed fifth (earning 105.43 points).

Nikolay Kozeko, head coach of the Belarusian national freestyle team, commented on his team's performance. "I'm very pleased that Anna has managed to defeat some serious rivals. As far as the men are concerned, three athletes who were prize winners at the event performed a triple somersault with five turns in the Freestyle. This is a very complex programme, so the Swiss and Russians deserved their medals. We'll continue working on it."

Belarus' Open Aerial Skiing Water-Ramp Championships featured 38 athletes from five countries. The organisers of the tournament gave prize of \$3,000 to the winners, \$2,000 for the silver medallists and \$1,000 for those coming third. Before the awards ceremony, a solemn moment was held in the memory of outstanding Belarusian aerials who have already finished their sporting career, the 2010 Olympic champion in Vancouver, Alexey Grishin, and double prizewinner of the Winter Olympics in 1998 and 2006, Dmitry Dashchinsky.

Portuguese take revenge

By Kirill Karin

Belarus' national team suffers defeat from Portugal in the 3rd match of Davis Cup Europe / Africa Zone Group II

This became apparent after the first seed of the Belarusian squad, Vladimir Ignatik, lost in three sets to the leader of the Portuguese, João Sousa — 1:6, 1:6, 4:6. After four meetings, this left the score at 3:1 in favour of Portugal, who welcomed Belarusians on the clay courts of their tennis club in Viana do Castelo.

The final meeting between Yegor Gerasimov (ranked 302) and Rui Machado (seeded 254th) couldn't influence the result of the match. The Belarus team remain for the next season in the Davis Cup Europe / Africa Zone Group II (the third division) while the Portuguese receive a ticket to the Davis Cup Europe / Africa Zone Group I.

Nevertheless, Yegor Gerasimov, who brought victory to Belarus in his first game, earned one more point for his squad, defeating the Portuguese reserve player Rui Machado, who appeared on court instead of the previously planned Gastão Elias — 6:7 (3:7), 6:1, 6:4.

The first two days of the competitions saw three matches, with Yegor Gerasimov claiming a victory over the leader of the Portuguese squad, João Sousa (0:6, 1:6, 6:2, 6:2, 6:4) and number one of the Belarusian team, Vladimir Ignatik, losing to the second seed of the rivals — Gastão Elias (3:6, 6:7, 5:7). This was followed by a doubles match, where Max Mirnyi and Sergey Betov suffered a dramatic defeat in five sets by the Portuguese duo of João Sousa and Gastão Elias — 6:7 (3:7), 6:4, 3:6, 7:6 (7:5), 3:6. The game lasted 4 hours and 9 minutes.

Previously, the national teams of Portugal and Belarus had met on only one occasion. In 2002, the Belarusians defeated them confidently in Minsk 4:1 in the play-offs of the Europe / Africa Zone Group I. In the current Davis Cup rating, the national team of Belarus is ranked 47th while the Portuguese are 42nd.

The tournament acquires its logo

The Ice Hockey Federation of the Republic of Belarus Association approves logo for the start of 2015/2016 Ruslan Salei Cup play-offs

Alexander Khromylev, the Association's Sporting Director, noted that the logo is extremely symbolic. "The new emblem bears the Ruslan Salei squad number and the sports trophy, created by the Association and hockey clubs of Belarus. The Salei Cup logo echoes the Association's logo in its colours: when one speaks about Belarusian hockey in general, the first name that comes to mind is the name of the legendary defender of the Belarusian national ice hockey team — Ruslan Salei. Equally when one speaks about Ruslan Salei the whole world associates him with Belarus," After the first round of the Salei Cup, four teams will continue fighting for the honorary trophy in the semi-finals.

Bitter pills

By Yegor Glebov

BATE and Dinamo begin with defeats in the group stages of the European Cups

BATE footballers were the first to receive a bitter pill, as they lost with few chances in an away game to Germany's FC Bayer Leverkusen, 1:4. A victory was not really on the cards against such a team, though Bayer is not Barcelona, they are a serious and successful team with no international stars, but well trained in the German way. It seems a paradox however, that the actual lineup of the team does not have many Germans, but such are the ways of modern multinational football. BATE supporters always nursed the hope that they would be in a position to cheer their team to victory, but alas, it was not to be.

Alexander Yermakovich, the BATE head coach, noted that the rivals kept a constant pressure on the other half of the field, not allowing BATE's players to pass quickly from defence to attack, which is one of the main components of



DMITRY TKACHEV

their game plan. The Bayer football players were quick and sharp, giving the Belarusians no chance of controlling the ball. In the middle of the first half, Alexander Hleb suffered an injury that turned out to be muscular damage, further medical examination will show how much time will be needed for rehabilitation for the highly skilled halfback, said Alexander Yermakovich. His German colleague, Roger Schmidt, underlined that the victory over BATE is important for Bayer at the start of the group stages of the Champions League. Though the German club was the favourite in this match, they needed to prove themselves in practice. Ahead of



REUTERS

Belarusian players fail to impress

them lie meetings with ROMA and Barcelona.

The second disappointment came to Dinamo. The champions of the Czech Republic, FC Viktoria Plzen, confidently defeated Minsk Dinamo at the home Doosan Arena, 2:0. In the 36th minute, Tomás Horava pleased the Plzen supporters with a goal, while Milan Petržela distinguished himself in the 75th minute. It was a disappointing score, underlining the need for Dinamo players to be more aggressive in their approach to attacking the ball. According to the Dinamo head coach, the opposition showed that they are a highly skilled team and successfully used any opportu-

nities near Alexander Gutor's net. Speaking of the Minsk game, the coach noted that his team did not have enough accuracy when closing their attacks and players did not manage to use their scoring chances. Vuk Rasovic also said that before the game, the Dinamo players knew that the Czech team was confident in set pieces, but still failed to break through. In the second half, Dinamo fought to win the ball back, but were unsuccessful, missing a second chance at the goal, they lost 0:2. However, the Serbian expert assured the fans that in the return game with Viktoria in Borsov, Dinamo will show a completely different approach.

Festival of the week



Holi Fest Colour Festival, one of the brightest events held in Grodno, to mark its city day

Exhibitions

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 2nd November. *Great Patriotic War in Art*

Until 11th December. *From Realism to Impressionism* (19th-20th century painting)

Until 30th December. *Celebrating Victory Day in Museum*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 11th October. Exhibition by the Sergei Andriyaka State Academy of Watercolours and Fine Arts

Until 31st December. *Major Presentation of Museum Relics: 79 Steps Inside History*

WANKOWICZ HOUSE-MUSEUM

33A Internatsionalnaya Street

Until 25th December. *A Prophet of his Time. Adam Mickiewicz. Illustrations and Medals*

MAXIM BOGDANOVICH LITERARY MUSEUM

7A M. Bogdanovich Street

Until 1st December. *Maxim's Garden*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street

Until 4th October. *Life in Fairy-tales*

ZABRODIE

ETHNOGRAPHICAL COMPLEX

Zabrodie village

Until 31st October. Exhibition of Retro Technique

Until 31st October. Museum of Century-Old Way of Life

MINSK ZOO

40 Tashkentskaya Street

Until 30th September. Park of Dinosaurs Until 30th September. Aquarium exposition

Theatres

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE OF BELARUS

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

25.09. Pagliacci 27.09. Bolshoi Theatre to Children: Cipollino; Madama Butterfly

28.09. Romeo and Juliet 29.09. Tosca

30.09. Creation of the World

01.10. Alexander Nevsky cantata

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

Tours of the Sverdlovsk State Academic Theatre of Musical Comedy:

25 and 30.09. Gala-concert 26.09. The Cat; Aunt Charlie 27.09. The Duchess of Chicago; The Cat

28.09. Maritza Countess

29.09. The Park of Soviet Period

01.10. My Fair Lady

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

25.09. Bridegrooms 26.09. The Visit

27.09. Stars of the Seventh Sky; An Ideal Husband

29.09. Pygmalion 30.09. Woe from Wit

01.10. The Visit

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

25.09. World War Two 26.09. Autumn Fall. Andersen 27.09. People of the Marsh

29.09. Pinsk Gentry 30.09. Local Cabaret

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTOR

13 Pobediteley Avenue

25.09. Robbery at Midnight

26 and 27.09. Even a Wise Man Stumbles

29 and 30.09. A Very Simple Story

01.10. No One Ever Said Life Would Be Easy

01.10. International TEART Forum of Theatrical Art: Vasen-Extasen

MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Square

26.09. A Midsummer Night's Dream or King Lear

27.09. Comedy about Penny Pincher

Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

September and October of decades and centuries past come to life

September 25th. In 1765, Michal Kleofas Oginski was born — a composer and a state figure of the Rzech Pospolita and Russian Empire. He composed polonaises for forte piano and his *Farewell to Homeland* polonaise was especially popular.

September 26th. In 1915, Sergey Smirnov — who recreated the history of the legendary fortress' protection in his books *Brest Fortress* and *Heroes of Brest Fortress* — was born.

September 27th. In 1897, Irma Yaunzem was born — a Belarusian singer, a collector of folk songs and an Honoured Artiste of Belarus.

September 28th. In 1915, theatre director Georgy Tovstonogov was born. He needed several seasons to transform the Belarusian Drama Theatre into the country's centre of theatrical life. Each of Mr. Tovstonogov's plays was a true cultural landmark of the country.

September 29th. In 1880, an ethnographer and a folklorist — Sergey Sakharov — was born in Polotsk. He began collecting and publishing Belarusian folklore in 1906, releasing several calendar-books.

September 30th. In 1914, a Belarusian figure of culture and a scientist-chemist — Danila Mitskevich — was born. He was Yakub Kolas' son and an Honoured Figure of Culture of Belarus. After his father's death, he collected Kolas' legacy, organising the Yakub Kolas State Literary-Memorial Museum.

October 1st. In 1910, a USSR Hero —

Fiodor Strelets — was born. On June 26th, 1944, he demonstrated a personal example of fighting: in the battle for the village of Zalitvine (Kirov District), he beat back the enemy's attack with a gun.

September 30th. In 1966, foundations to the Mount of Glory were laid at the 21st kilometre of the Minsk-Moscow highway.



September 25th. In 1897, the first college for the blind opened in Minsk. In 1924, the Belarusian Society of the Blind — now known as BelTIZ — was founded on its basis.

September 25th. In 1971, the Brest Hero-Fortress Memorial opened.

September 26th. In 1964, Naroch resort town was founded in Minsk Region's Myadel District.

September 26th. In 1990, the Belarusian Society of Archive Workers was set up.

September 27th. In 1997, the Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya Cross — disappeared during the Great Patriotic War and copied by Brest's Nikolay Kuzmich — occupied its traditional place at the Polotsk St. Yevfrosiniya Monastery's Cathedral of the Exaltation of the Holly Cross.

September 29th. In 1529, the first statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania came into force; it focused on the feudal law, becoming a monument to the Belarusian written language and legal thoughts.

September 29th. In 1920, a flying squad was set up to counteract crimes in streets and other public places; this was a prototype of modern road patrol service.

September 29th. In 1936, the first BSSR Palace for Pioneers and Schoolchildren (named after N. Gikalo) opened at the crossroads of Minsk's Kirov and Engels streets.

September 29th. In 2005, the Museum of Trade Union Movement was established in Minsk. Its exposition is devoted to the formation and development of trade unions since early 20th century.

September 30th. In 1943, the Belarusian State Museum of Great Patriotic War History was established. It has several branches: the Obol Museum of Komsomol Glory, the Khatyn Memorial Complex, the Mound of Glory, the Museum of Military Commonwealth of Belarusian, Russian, Latvian and Lithuanian Partisans (in Rossony).