



25 years
of a strong union
between Belarus
and Russia:
background
and prospects

4



Why in Ukraine
they turn militaries
and civilians
into ‘organic
fertiliser’ for the
European Union

9

INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 13 (923) ● THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2022 ● WWW.SB.BY



The Belarus-3522 tractor draws patterns on the fields of the Dubrava-agro subsidiary of Gomelenergo

Grain is new gold

Grain producers of Belarus are rapidly covering hectares of sown area day by day. The work in the fields is progressing ahead of schedule. Sowing of spring sown cereals and pulse crops has already been carried out.

“Today grain is practically new gold or oil. It might even become more expensive,” the Belarusian President recently said at the meeting to discuss spring field work. Aleksandr Lukashenko has set an important task — to get 9 million tonnes of grain. After all, it is not only necessary to provide the country with food, but also to provide animal husbandry with fodder. Belarus must export a significant amount of agricultural products, but not only grain.

To do this, the country has a powerful technical resource, an army of agricultural machines created by our engineers. The bank of plants has hundreds, if not thousands, of varieties adapted to the conditions of the country. Belarusian farmers will feed the country, our friends and neighbours!



Historical parallels and economic pragmatism

Historical memory and economy — these two topics became key during the meeting of the President with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Nguyen Van Ngu. Aleksandr Lukashenko assessed the current level of bilateral relations, “Vietnam has always been our friend and will remain so. This is the main thing... We are determined to develop our co-operation in the economic sphere.”



Nguyen Van Ngu

The President touched upon the historical context in a conversation with a diplomat: he spoke about the difficult times that this southeastern state has experienced. It was about one of the largest military conflicts of the second half of the 20th century — Vietnam War, where the main world aggressors, the Americans, were involved. The Head of State noted, “When it comes to Vietnam, I always recall the struggle of the Vietnamese people against those who

wanted to destroy Vietnam and establish a foothold in this blissful place, a strategic country of Southeast Asia. We were together back then. We fought together, we helped Vietnam.

Furthermore, we were rendering assistance, and we helped to win. I have an association with those times; there is something to remember. This is our foundation. And this history of joint fight is the foundation of bilateral relations. I want to assure you that we will always cherish these times of joint struggle that brought peace to the Vietnamese people, which later paved the way to today’s prosperity of your country.”

Extensive plans

According to the President, Southeast Asia is a very promis-

ing region for Belarus. Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised, “We will always do our best to help Vietnam to remain on the growth track. It is not only because we love the Vietnamese people, but also because it makes economic sense. This pragmatism is characteristic of the Belarusian people and the Vietnamese. This co-operation has always brought and will bring benefits. We are determined to promote economic co-operation. This is the pillar of our relations.”

The President emphasised the fact that the trade turnover between our countries makes about \$200 million. According to him, this is not much, but is also a fair amount.

As noted at the meeting, Belarus and Vietnam have mutually beneficial plans for the near future. Deliveries of Be-

larus special tractors for work in rice fields are being worked out. In addition, the prospect of building a joint venture for the production of milk and dairy products is being discussed. In general, our capabilities, the Head of State emphasises, are known to Vietnam, “We will be working to transfer our technologies to Vietnam and create joint ventures there to produce engineering products. I mean our major enterprises: Minsk Tractor Works, Minsk Automobile Plant, BELAZ. We are ready to co-operate with you in supplies of food and mineral fertilisers; it is very topical now. This will probably become a right avenue of liaisons for 100 million of Vietnamese. I know that we are certifying some of our food products, and I would like this to be more expeditious.”

The main results of the Belarusian-Vietnamese co-operation and its prospects in the near future can be discussed in detail in Vietnam: during the meeting, the President announced the visit of Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko to this southeastern country.

Background materials

► Belarus exported potash fertilisers, livestock products, instrumentation products, medicines and cosmetics.

► Rubber, integrated circuits, propylene polymers, some foods — nuts, fish fillets, canned fruits are imported from Vietnam.

► A representative office of MAZ and an official dealer of MTZ operate in Vietnam. In addition, the country has a factory assembling MAZ trucks since 2019.

Penza Region increases supplies of Belarusian goods

New projects and directions of co-operation were discussed at a meeting of the President with a delegation from the Penza Region headed by Governor Oleg Melnichenko

Last year alone, the trade with Penza Region (whose population, by the way, is much smaller than in Minsk) amounted to about \$100 million. This is more than a quarter more than in 2020. Now, in the opinion of the Head of State, it is high time to unleash the existing great potential,

“I think that the last few months, maybe a year and a half, were eye-opening. We realised that no one else could save and protect us but ourselves. Nobody needs us. We realised this earlier. Russia has come to realise it now, probably more clearly than ever. And we are ready to make the most of this time of opportunities despite all the difficulties we are facing today... Anyway, no one doubts today that we will not only survive, but will rise like a phoenix from the ashes. We had to do this more than once in our history.”

About economy, history and memory

Among the promising directions of bilateral co-operation, the Head of State named agriculture, agricultural personnel training, technologies in seed production, animal husbandry and construction.

However, Aleksandr Lukashenko considers the active creation of joint ventures to be the key task, “Here and especial-



ly in your direction. In the field of mechanical engineering, agriculture, scientific and technical field. And the President of Russia and I constantly emphasise this.”

The Head of State noted that Belarus has always been careful and scrupulous about the admission of foreign companies to joint work at large industrial enterprises, “We were very cautious about giving foreigners access to our manufacturing sector. Therefore, the Western sanctions did not hit us as badly as, for example, KAMAZ. First of all, the Germans had access there. We had MAZ — MAN and Neoplan at MAZ. But when the contract ended, I thanked them and said that we would continue by ourselves.”

The Head of State noted that 2022 was declared the Year of Historical Memory in Belarus, and we pay serious attention to this,

“2020 taught us a lot. You also learned your lessons from 2021, and maybe from 2020. And this bitter experience of what we went through over the past two years helps us to stay focused on the future. I often say jokingly (though this is not really a joke) that these difficulties showed us who is who and pushed us to move in the direction in which we should have moved long ago, including right after the collapse of the Soviet Union.”

The Russian delegation visited the 11th outpost ‘Brest’ that bears the name of a native of Penza village of Seliksy, Hero of the Soviet Union Andrei Kizhevator before the meeting with the President. Aleksandr Lukashenko said that he himself once served there, “This place shaped my person-

ality to a great extent. This is an amazing place, our place, a place of heroic memory. The border guards fought there with dignity, including Kizhevator’s outpost. He was a hero. Kizhevator’s outpost was known all over the Soviet Union. It was the best outpost. I served in a border unit that was called the Brest unit, it was the best in the Soviet Union.”

Belarusian products are in demand

The delegation that arrived in Minsk was very representative. It included representatives of the Industrial Association, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the agricultural sector, directors of large enterprises. Oleg Melnichenko said,

“We were seriously preparing for the visit. We carefully analysed the range of

products that we are interested in. We looked into our imports to be replaced. It features about 800 items which we will be replacing. This is where we can really follow the path of import substitution.”

Governor of Russia’s Penza Region shared some details of the negotiations with journalists. In particular, it was possible to resolve the issue of the supply of Belarusian tractors and combines to the Penza Region. In addition, the region is interested in buying road equipment, “We are ready to buy about 200 MAZ vehicles this year. We have a major overhaul programme, which means we need to change the elevators. Last year, 50 elevators were purchased in Belarus, in total, about 500 will have to be replaced in the next two years.

And everyone knows that Belarusian lifts are the world’s best!. A large amount of what we bought in Europe today can be substituted due to the capabilities of Belarus. You have not just wait, you are developing very well. We shook ourselves, but now we understand what we should replace and with whose help we will do it. Here the role of Belarus is extremely important.”

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

New tradition



Natalya Borodkova, Senior Researcher at the Space Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, was awarded the prize for the development and creation of highly effective electromagnetic protection system and a new generation of cosmic radiation flux sensors for space devices with improved performance

In November 2021, the Supreme State Council of the Union State decided to present the science and technology award. Two teams of authors were chosen from 18 works in such areas as machine building, laser technology, space exploration, medicine, biotechnology, materials science, environmental management, agriculture, etc. The award went to scientists who created the Belarusian space system for Earth remote sensing and the Russian-Belarusian orbital constellation of satellites BKA and Kanopus-V, as well as specialists who developed a highly effective electromagnetic protection system, which has no analogues in the world.

Aleksandr Lukashenko shared an interesting fact during the award ceremony. The President recalled that when Belarus was thinking whether it needs to develop the space industry, there were many disputes. Some believed that these studies were not relevant for Belarus,

“But I thought that if we engaged in these ultra-modern technologies such as space, biotechnology, rocket science and nuclear power plant, the IT, this will raise the state and the nation to a higher level of development and pull up a lot of related industries and sectors along. This is exactly what happened.”

Inventions appear to be on the horizon

Six Belarusians and six Russians received awards that day. The scientists of the two countries worked as a single team on significant Union State programmes. The Head of State noted that the first awards for outstanding results in science and innovative products in the field of space technologies and equipment are an incentive for the further development of intellectual and technological co-operation between Belarus and Russia,

“The journey Belarusian and Russian scientists have made from the idea to the effective implementation of the innovative project is the best indication of the highest

The President promised to tell his Russian colleague Vladimir Putin about this award ceremony on the same day in a telephone conversation, “I’ll tell him about the new tradition that we have created... I’m sure it will live on. It will live until there will be winners. I really appreciate traditions. I believe that if there are traditions, then there is a basis for development, a basis for the existence of the State.”

Pyotr Vityaz, Head of the Aerospace Department of the Office of the National Academy of Sciences, the main creator of the Belarusian space system for Earth remote sensing,

told reporters that in the 1990s, space technologies became one of the strategic directions of the country’s development, which was supported by our President. Pyotr Vityaz stressed: the Belarusian spacecraft, launched in 2012 together with Russia, is still flying. With a five-year warranty period. At the same time, investments in science pay off very well, “I want to note that during this time, income exceeded expenses by \$20 million. Moreover, we worked on nine programmes related to space technologies within the framework of the Union State. These technologies have given us the opportunity to earn money for a new satellite.”

degree of mutual trust. We demonstrate that we are absolutely united, not just international, both at the stage of discovery and at the stage of final results.”

The Head of State is convinced that it is a great chance for scientists, “You will be in demand more than ever since no politicians, no economy can do it without you, without new technologies and ground-breaking things. We will expand our Union State projects, but we will make them more down-to-earth. Fundamental science has always been important, but we are now extremely in need of applied science.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also touched upon the topic of unfriendly sanctions. According to

On the eve of the Day of Unity of the Peoples of Belarus and Russia, scientists of the two countries were honoured at the highest level. Aleksandr Lukashenko presented them with the 2021 Union State Award in Science and Technology for the first time. The President emphasised, “Our successes show: the people of Belarus and Russia are united in their goals, bound by strong fraternal ties and the common history. The challenges we are facing today are also common. We have responded and will keep responding to them together”.



Laureates: Vladimir Kotsov, Oleg Korablev, Natalya Borodkova, Sergei Grabchikov, Nikolai Mukhurov and Aleksei Trukhanov

State Secretary of the Union State of Belarus and Russia Dmitry Mezentsev:

“It is totally understandable that it is impossible to reach a new level of the competitive ability of the products, which are made by enterprises of one brotherly country and the other one, by joint ventures, without scientific accomplishments, modern R&D work, and results of primarily applied research and fundamental scientific research. The priority of the scientific approach, the demand for Soviet practices today is even more relevant than before... During this stage of the waterfall of sanctions, the most severe pressure on Russia and Belarus we have to follow a complicated way of rethinking, development of new import substitution programmes, and understanding of the potential that each country in the Union State has.”

and sometimes destructive for our spiritual development, are brought here from the outside, primarily with technology. Therefore, you, researchers and developers, should be at least one step ahead. You should be at the forefront of the development of our countries.

Only in this way, pooling together the human capital and competencies of the two countries is the only way to strengthen our positions. This is an objective reality, and those who unleashed this hybrid war against us will have to reckon with it.

I am absolutely convinced that we will overcome the situation that is being escalated by the leaders who are losing global superiority and are hostile to our Slavic unity and who have imagined themselves to be world elites. Difficulties will

become an additional incentive for us to develop not only in the field of science but also all aspects of our states’ activity... We will all have to work a lot. It is necessary to quickly and effectively convert new knowledge into modern technologies, create knowledge-intensive industries that are competitive on the world market. We have to implement this not only within our Union State.”

The Head of State wished the scientists outstanding success in their future activities in the name of the peoples of Belarus and Russia, and in the name of the East Slavic civilization, “This civilization needs support today more than ever. We need to preserve it.”

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Telephone conversation between the Presidents of Belarus and Russia

Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko had a telephone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. This was reported in the press service of the Belarusian leader. The Heads of State congratulated each other on the Day of Unity of the Peoples of Belarus and Russia. Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin discussed the state and prospects for the development of bilateral relations. A separate subject was the situation around Ukraine. During the conversation, the Presidents touched upon other topical issues of co-operation.

the President, Belarus and Russia will be able to successfully resist them, using the existing huge scientific potential,

“Finally, we understood who is who: who are our friends, who are our enemies and who are our partners. Finally, we will use all those forces — Belarusian-Russian power, in order to have our own production. Like the Soviet Union once had. Only at a higher technological level.”

‘Quickly translate new knowledge into technologies’

The Head of State called the scientists ‘the main fighters on this ideological front’,

“Ideas that are not common for our Slavic mentality

In the joint family

25 years of a strong union between Belarus and Russia: background and prospects

On April 2nd, 1997, the Treaty on the Union between Belarus and Russia was signed. A lot has been done over the past 25 years: there are no customs and border control between our countries, Russians have the right to enter Belarus with internal passports, a common educational space has been created, citizens of the two countries have equal pension rights. And there are indeed many such steps demonstrating the allied equality. This is just the beginning. In November 2021, Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin approved 28 Union State programmes. Rapprochement has taken place even now, amid sanctions attacks by the collective West. Let's analyse the prerequisites and prospects point by point together with experts.

In November 2021, Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin approved 28 Union State programmes



Strengthening co-operation

Political scientist expert with the Belaya Rus public association Piotr Petrovsky spoke about how further steps to integrate the economies will affect the lives of ordinary Belarusians and Russians.

◆ There is a switch to Russian rubles in mutual settlements between Belarus and Russia. Moreover, our pricing will be joint. The same as in the Russian Federation, which the Republic of Belarus has been seeking from our eastern allies for 17 years. This will directly impact ordinary people:

— our housing and communal services will receive gas at domestic Russian prices. This means that the price of housing and communal services will not

grow so much, and we will feel it;

— our oil refineries will receive oil at domestic Russian prices — without any tax manoeuvre. This will increase the profit from its processing, which will result in an increase in tax revenues to the state budget, more funds will go to the social sphere, to infrastructure. By making such specific direct step, our country, our citizens will become more socially protected;

— the price of fuel will not rise so much. Fuel affects the price of products, logistics, production costs. This energy solution will improve the life and functioning of a huge segment of the Belarusian industry — from light to heavy.

Key directions of partnerships

- Machinery
- Petrochemistry
- Energy
- Construction
- Transport
- Agroindustrial complex

◆ Restrictions for Belarusian goods and products have been lifted. A most favoured nation (MFN) status has been introduced on domestic Russian markets amid the inclusion of our country's production facilities in the programmes of Russian import substitution and government contracts.

◆ Since April 1st, roaming for incoming calls has been cancelled. This made it possible for affordable communication between the citizens of Belarus and Russia.



President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko:

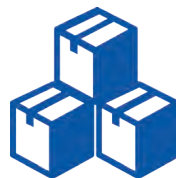
"The Union State is a top priority for Belarus. Together we have created a unique integration model, thanks to which equal rights of Belarusians and Russians are ensured, while economic co-operation is strengthening. We are actively co-operating in various areas and aim to further expand the Union State integration, while protecting historical and moral values that our brotherly nations share."

(November 4th, 2021, at a meeting of the Supreme State Council of the Union State of Belarus and Russia)

In 2021, Aleksandr Lukashenko held **6 personal meetings** with Vladimir Putin, as well as **8 meetings** of the heads of governments of the two countries both during working visits and while participating in events within the framework of the EAEU and the CIS



The Russian Federation, which is the main trading partner of Belarus, accounted for **49 percent** of the value of foreign trade in goods in 2021



Belarus' export to Russia amounted to **\$16.4 billion**

The increase in Belarusian exports amounted to **24.6 percent**

United plans

Minsk and Moscow are building far-reaching plans to strengthen co-operation in key industries in the face of external political and economic pressure. These issues were discussed in detail during 'The Union State: Economic integration — development tasks' expert and media forum dedicated to the Day of Unity of the Peoples of Belarus and Russia. The online event connected the capitals of the two states. Among the participants were well-known politicians, economists, entrepreneurs, scientists, representatives of the media community.

Opening the forum, State Secretary of the Union State Dmitry Mezentsev noted the solidarity between Belarus and Russia and stressed, "We are witnessing a new stage of economic integration between Belarus and Russia. Today we cannot forget about the tasks of increasing the competitiveness of the products of Belarusian and Russian manufacturers and the formation of those proposals that will allow us to expand our presence in new markets."

Dmitry Mezentsev noted that anti-Russian pressure has become the dominant feature of the foreign policy of the European Union. He also drew attention to the fact that the West responded to the strengthening of Russian statehood in the 2000s by building up NATO's military infrastructure, hoping that this behaviour would be ignored,

"They thought we would swallow it the same way we swallowed the loss of a great country and self-respect for a certain period of our history. It did not work out. And suddenly it turned out that private property is just a myth, it costs nothing, it is possible to take large or small property from Russian citizens or from persons with dual citizenship on the territory of 'civilised' European countries. It suddenly turned out that the rule of law is worthless, because the political expediency of a momentary conjuncture of anti-Russian pressure is

the dominant of the entire foreign policy of the EU countries and allies of this international integral association."

Belarusian Economy Minister Aleksandr Chervyakov is convinced that our countries will quickly restore the sectors that have been affected by the sanctions, "Sanctions will have an impact. We can already see that. It all depends on how quickly we can adapt to these conditions. Today, everyone in the government of Russia and Belarus is working to make prompt decisions, this is a key issue. Believe me, we will quickly restore those sectors that have been influenced by sanctions."

As the Minister further noted, Belarus has been living under sanctions pressure for the second year already. At the same time, the country's economy withstood the impact of all restrictions last year. This year, when the unprecedented volume of sanctions became apparent, plans had to be reformatted in order to withstand the sanctions pressure."

"A completely new agenda is being opened within the framework of the Union State. These are new opportunities and this is a key point. This is where the main potential is concentrated, which we must develop very actively," emphasised Aleksandr Chervyakov.

The Minister identified four main directions of co-operation with other countries, which should be given attention in the first place.



Aleksandr Chervyakov

"The redirection of export flows is a top priority. We have markets in China, India, Russia, countries of the Eurasian Economic Community. Transport logistics is the second direction. We have to decide how we will move the goods so that the transport corridors can carry the entire flow. The third direction is related to import substitution. For Belarus, this is extremely important. Here we have a huge potential for economic development. The fourth point is finance. Experts are now paying special attention to the financial ecosystem. Its independence is at the forefront," said Aleksandr Chervyakov.

Belarusian Communications and Informatisation Minister Konstantin Shulgan drew attention to the special importance of the digital agenda, "Digital technologies, modern technologies, make it possible to optimise costs and make our products competitive today. We are working very closely on a number of issues, including in healthcare, industry, and other sectors of the national economy together with colleagues from the Russian Federation. Not only within the framework of work on the projects of the Union State, but

also in other integration associations. Results are already apparent there."

Chairwoman of the Economy, Budget, and Finance Commission of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus Tatiana Runets is convinced that the sanctions against Russia and Belarus are pushing our countries to deepen integration,

"Today, the economic integration of the two countries is more important than ever before. We see that the world is changing, and the global economy is also changing. Sanctions against Russia and Belarus are spurring our economies towards greater integration and the development of co-operative ties. Russia is our main strategic partner. Our trade turnover is growing year by year. For instance, it increased by 35 percent in 2021 compared to 2020."

Tatiana Runets cited the example of the Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia, which is held annually under the auspices of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus and the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of Russia, as an effective tool for interaction.

"We calculated the amount of contracts concluded at the Forum of Regions last year in dollars. But when we broke it down into components, it turned out that 70 percent of the contracts were still concluded in Russian rubles. The fact that we are now converting payments for energy resources into Russian rubles is a very big step towards each other. In the future, we will work on developing common rules for the enterprises of both countries, because only in this case we can talk about competitive products," said Tatiana Runets.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Our wheel rolls for everyone

New models, improved product quality and reduced cost: demand for Belshina products is growing



By Inna Gorbatenko

Production mechanics

Tire design and tread pattern design is carried out by the Engineering and Technical Centre. Experienced designers and chemists work together here. The first develop the tire design on paper, the second develop rubber compounds and reinforcing material. Over 25 years, more than 400 tire sizes have been developed here — from passenger to large cars!

“A tire is a complex combination of layers and materials. Tread, sidewalls, filler cord, carcass and breaker layers... Each element consists of a unique rubber compound designed for specific purposes. With the help of a special calculation complex, our guys select the optimal profile and virtually begin to fill it with various parts, selecting the rubber compound for each of them,” says Yevgeni Kernozhitski, the Head of the Tire Design and Construction Department of the Engineering and Technical Centre, demonstrating a radial section of a passenger tire, which shows the complex structure of the product.

On the trail of the protector

Tire production is a complex process. Bringing a new tire to market takes 3 to 5 years! It all starts with mixing rubbers of different compositions. Natural rubber is the key element. Also, the composition is full of all kinds of chemistry, some of which is the know-how of the enterprise. The mixture is fed into the extruder. There it heats up, becomes plastic and acquires the desired shape. An equally important element of the tire is the steel cord. It is it which gives the tire rigidity, prevents deformation. All parts of the future tire are fed to the assembly machine. The robotic complex does its job in less than a minute. From here, the raw tire is transferred to the vulcanisation shop. The tire will come out of it heavy-duty, it will be difficult to break it. Its performance will improve, and endurance will reach incredible parameters.

“We are constantly enhancing exist-

Amid the shutdown of tire factories of foreign manufacturers in Russia, the question arises — does Belshina seek to occupy this market segment? Demand for the plant’s products has already increased. Now it is loaded by work at almost 90 percent. In order to win the competition with foreign companies, the company’s specialists are constantly working on updating the range of products, improving their quality and reducing costs. We visited the Engineering and Technical Centre of Belshina and learned how Belarusian tires are produced.

ustrial tires, but with a diagonal design on a textile cord. The new line is all-metal cord. With the same parameters, the new models are able to carry loads much higher than their diagonal predecessors, and the service life is almost doubled!

Tires for BELAZ trucks look especially impressive. The largest has a diameter of more than 4 metres and weighs almost 6 tonnes! In the CIS, large oversized tires are produced only in Belarus. The workshop that assembles giant tires is the size



of a football field, and the vulcanisation mold weighs about 110 tonnes.

“The most difficult thing for the designer is to figure out how to reduce the heat generation that inevitably occurs between the layers of the tire due to the colossal loads. One of the largest dump trucks weighs 260 tonnes, plus a load of 360 tonnes... So far, we are fully satisfying the requests of BELAZ, but in the future, I think, we will master new sizes for rare models of bulldozers. There are also ideas to create Belarusian tires for SUVs, allowing one to drive on any off-road,” shares his plans Yevgeni Kernozhitski.

Market is not made of rubber

The main directions for the sale of Belshina products on the domestic market are the machine-building cluster. All equipment manufactured by MTZ, MAZ, BELAZ, Gomselmash, AMKODOR is 95 percent equipped with Belshina models. Another priority is the secondary market. Customers can buy Belarusian tires in the branded trade network and at Belarusneft gas stations. About 40 such centres will open this year at gas stations across the country.

Russia is the largest buyer of the plant’s products. Rostselmash, KAMAZ, GAZ, Ural, the St. Petersburg Tractor

Plant and many other machine-building enterprises of the neighboring country use Belarusian tires to put their equipment on. A large share of the products goes to its secondary market.

“If we talk about the structure of sales, then 40 percent of our products go to the domestic market, 60 percent — for export. In addition to Russia, we trade with our long-term partners: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan. A small part of our products went to Ukraine — no more than 70 thousand tires per month. Trade with the EU declined two years ago. Therefore, now, in terms of commodity flows, practically nothing has changed for us,” explains the Head of the Marketing Department Andrei Kanonik.

Amid the suspension of individual plants in Russia, the question arises: does Belshina seek to occupy this niche abroad? The plant produces about 350

thousand tires per month. Over the past year, the company produced more than 4 million tires, of which 2 million models for passenger cars went to the Russian market. Andrei Kanonik says that there really is an increased demand now, but it is basically impossible to satisfy the needs of the Russian market, there is a likely shortage, “A part of the Russian market is satisfied by local manufacturers — Nizhnekamskshina PJSC, Cordiant, Voltyre-Prom JSC. Chinese suppliers will actively join in, there are also Turkish tires Petlas... However, it will be difficult to fully replace the departed foreign tire companies. We’re pretty busy right now. We have a 90 percent load by work on passenger tires. And it is technologically impossible for us to grow to such a volume as to cover demand in the Russian market. We will now be actively involved in the large oversized tires direction, because the same Michelin and Bridgestone, which suspended their work, had a share of about 80 percent in the Russian market. And we see this as an opportunity for us.”

Belshina is optimistic about future, and sees the main advantage over competitors in price, because Belarusian tires are cheaper than imported ones and still have the same level of quality.



Time-tested friendship

By Anastasia Tselyuk

Belt and Road Initiative

New opportunities for Belarusian-Chinese co-operation were opened by a global infrastructure development strategy for the construction of the 'Silk Road Economic Belt' and the '21st Century Maritime Silk Road'. Dozens of states have joined the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. However, Belarus was the first European country to join this initiative. There is every reason to say that the Belt and Road Initiative has become a real alternative to the negative trends on the world stage. It not only redraws the economic map of the world, creates new points of growth, but also forms international relations of a new type. This is integration on top of blocks, designed to harmonise all economic institutions and remove barriers to the free movement of goods, investments and people.

Great Stone Industrial Park

The China-Belarus Great Stone Industrial Park project is being actively implemented. Today, it already has 85 registered residents from 15 countries, including 43 residents with Chinese capital, as well as one joint venture, the Eurasian Railway Gateway. The Park accounts for the main inflow of investments. All participants invested \$753.7 million in the project. The total amount of announced investments is \$1.27 billion.

To improve legal regulation and the investment climate of the park, on June 11th, 2021, Decree of the President of Belarus No. 215 was adopted, providing for the expansion of activities, support for start-ups and the creation of preferential conditions for large investment projects.

Thanks to the support of the Geely plant and People's Republic of China, a line of cars has been created in Belarus, which is popular not only among Belarusians, but also abroad.

Concerning credit co-operation

Twenty-five projects totalling about \$4.73 billion have been implemented at the expense of

Belarusian-Chinese relations are considered to be exemplary in the modern system of interstate relations. Co-operation between our countries is developing consistently and systematically in almost all directions. President Aleksandr Lukashenko has repeatedly stated in his speeches that China is one of the main trade partners of Belarus. Economic performance also testifies to the results of mutually beneficial partnership. Thus, since 1992, the trade turnover between our countries has increased by more than 130 times and reached a record \$5,115.2 million. The total investment from China exceeded \$2.6 billion.

Chinese government loans under existing loan agreements. Four projects worth \$2.26 billion are under implementation. More than 1.5 billion yuan (about \$243 million) of technical and economic assistance has been spent on 14 projects. The main ones are the support of the Great Stone Industrial Park, the construction of social housing, as well as a student hostel in Minsk and a therapeutic building of the Minsk District Central Hospital.

In accordance with the medium term, three key directions of co-operation in the field of technical and economic assistance until 2025 have been outlined: the implementation of the National Football Stadium and the International Standard Swimming Pool projects, support for the development of the Great Stone Industrial Park, and the promotion of stability and security (projects of the State Border Committee of the Republic of Belarus, State Customs Committee).

Medicine

The future innovative project — the National Biotechnological Corporation — is being actively implemented. Belarus was the first in the Eurasian region to start the production of traditional Chinese medicine.

In 2021, 4.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine were supplied to Belarus. 3 million doses of vaccine were delivered in January (1.5 million doses purchased from China, and 1.5 million doses donated by China to Belarus as foreign aid).

Today it is safe to say that the co-operation between the two countries has passed all the tests of time, while our relations are based on mutual respect, honesty and friendship.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Belarusian Master's Degree Student became the best student of the CIS in 2022

The honorary award of Anastasia Esaulenko was sent from Kazakhstan, where her article *Teaching Visually Impaired Children to Play the Piano as a Way to Actualise the Creative Needs of the Individual* was awarded a first-class diploma and published in the 4th Book Collection called *International Encyclopedia of Talented Youth*.

Anastasia graduated from the Belarusian State Academy of Music in piano. She was a multiple winner of competitions in the chamber ensembles category. However, musical pedagogy remained the most important part of her life. Work and study at the Belarusian State Pedagogical University, where Anastasia Esaulenko works with students and at the same time develops methods of teaching visually impaired children to play the piano, is the clearest proof of that.



Belarus among leaders of milk exporters in 2021

Based on the European Commission data, our country was placed third in exports of butter (behind New Zealand and the EU), condensed milk (behind the EU and Malaysia), dry whey and products based on the latter (behind the EU and the US) in 2021.

As regards cheese exports, Belarus occupied the fourth position — behind the European Union, the United States, and New Zealand.

Another advantageous position taken by Belarus is skimmed milk powder: the country was ranked fifth in its exports (following the US, the EU, New Zealand, and Australia).

Belarusian dairy industry embraces: 7.8 million tonnes of manufactured products in 2021; 55 countries that imported Belarusian products last year; 36 large dairy processing enterprises; 1500 articles of whole milk products; 256 percent self-sufficiency level.



BELAZ International Centre for Mining Technology Education Competence opened at Saint Petersburg Mining University

About a year ago, BELAZ JSC — Management Company of Holding 'BELAZ-HOLDING' and Saint Petersburg Mining University entered into a co-operation agreement to create BELAZ International Centre for Mining Technology Education Competence based on the best technological solutions in mechanical engineering, digital and information technologies in the mining industry. This is a milestone in the preparation of students who will work in mining industry.

The Centre has four facilities: a training complex, educational laboratory complex, Digital Mining Production and Intelligent Mining Equipment laboratories, which is equipped with a dynamic auto simulator for haul truck driver training.





Yuri Senko and Wu Weishan

The solemn award ceremony was held at the Belarusian embassy in China. The world famous Chinese sculptor was honoured with this award for services to international cultural contacts in line with a decree signed by Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The Medal of Francysk

Skaryna was presented by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to China Yuri Senko. The ceremony was attended by Vice Minister of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China Zhang Xu, Special Representative of the Chinese Government on Eurasian Affairs Li

Belarusian award for the world famous sculptor

Director of the National Art Museum of China Wu Weishan has been awarded the Medal of Francysk Skaryna

Hui, famous figures of culture and art of China.

Congratulations to Wu Weishan on receiving the state award were sent by Culture Minister of the Republic of Belarus Anatoly Markevich and Director of the National Art Museum of Belarus Vladimir Prokoptsov.

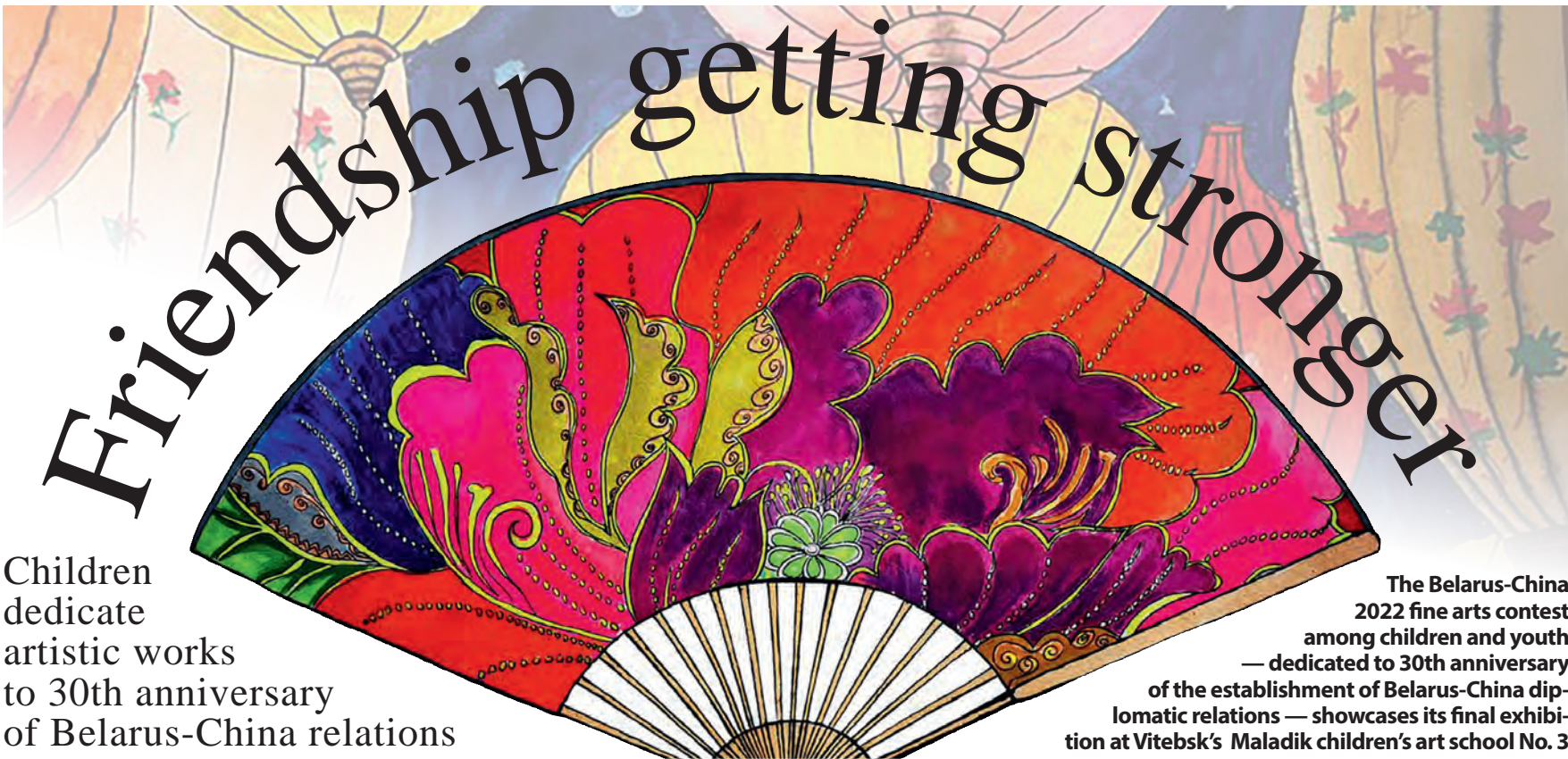
The cultural projects initiated and supported by Wu Weishan have become symbols of dialogue, cultural enrichment, and friendship between the peoples of Belarus and China. The permanent exposition of the National Art Museum of the Republic of

Belarus features a sculptural composition by Wu Weishan called *In Search of Wisdom: Conversation between Confucius and Lao Tzu about Tao*. Wu Weishan's watercolor works depicting the Mir Castle are kept in the holdings of the National Art Museum

of Belarus and the Mir Castle Complex.

A monument to Yanka Kupala made by Wu Weishan was unveiled at Beijing International Studies University.

The Medal of Francysk Skaryna was the first state award instituted in independent Belarus. It is awarded to scientists, educators and figures of culture for outstanding achievements, a significant personal contribution to the development and enhancement of the spiritual and intellectual potential and cultural heritage of the Belarusian people, and the strengthening of international humanitarian ties.



Children dedicate artistic works to 30th anniversary of Belarus-China relations

The Belarus-China 2022 fine arts contest among children and youth — dedicated to 30th anniversary of the establishment of Belarus-China diplomatic relations — showcases its final exhibition at Vitebsk's Maladik children's art school No. 3

The main goal of the contest is to strengthen friendly relations between Belarus and China, to generate interest among children and young people in studying the two states' history and culture.

Over 500 works by 6-31-year-olds — representing educational and cultural institutions of Vitebsk and the Vitebsk Region — have been sent to the contest; 158 of these are authored by Chinese young people who study in the region.

All artistic pieces are divided into three categories: Drawing (graphics, painting), Design, and Photography. Young people painted with oil, gouache, watercolour, coloured pencils, felt-tip pens, ink, and pastels — to create works in various techniques: collage, batik, paper plastics, vytinanka, and tapestry. Urban landscapes with views



of the sights are captured in photos and collages. "The language of fine arts clearly demonstrates the cultural peculiarities of Belarus and China. There

mas at a solemn ceremony on April 8th.

Based on materials of belta.by



Beijing: *America’s plans will fail*

Commenting on the Pentagon’s National Defence Strategy sent to Congress, China’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the report ‘is full of Cold War and bloc confrontation mentality’

Washington will fail in its scheme to put pressure on Beijing and Moscow and deter them, China’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a briefing.

Commenting on the Pentagon’s National Defence Strategy sent to Congress, Mr. Wenbin said the report ‘is full of Cold War and bloc confrontation mentality’. “China and Russia are two major countries. The US attempt to

contain and suppress them will not succeed,” he said.

The spokesperson added that the US should ‘reflect on its due responsibilities in the Ukraine crisis, show repentance for and correct the practice of establishing imaginary enemies, ignoring other countries’ legitimate security concerns and stoking bloc confrontation’.

Moreover, Mr. Wenbin said that China urges ‘the US to earnestly imple-

ment its leadership’s statements that the US does not seek a new Cold War with China’.

The US Department of Defence handed over its new classified version of the National Defence Strategy to Congress. According to it, the Pentagon said Russia posed an ‘acute threat’ to the US. The document also said China was America’s ‘most consequential strategic competitor and pacing challenge’.

Official mascot of Osaka Expo 2025 unveiled

We are just three years away from Expo 2025, which will be held in Osaka from April 13th to October 13th, 2025. The Japan Association for the World 2025 Exposition released its logo in 2020, but now the event has an official mascot as well.

The event organiser, the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition, unveiled the bizarre creation. A total of 1,898 design works were submitted for the event, of which 3 entered the final shortlist.

The winning design was created by a Tokyo-based group of designers called ‘mountain mountain’, led by Yohei Yamashita, an art designer and illustrator.

The official mascot has a blue body that carries the expo’s bright red logo on its head. Its blue body represents water and the ability to change shapes. The logo is comprised of red cells, embodying the ‘brilliance of life’.

The group of designers said the theme of the mascot is the ‘potential for diversity and change’.

When Expo 2025 first unveiled its logo, some remarked that the emblem’s



blue dots looked a bit like eyes. Yamashita’s design leans into that impression by incorporating the logo as the face of the mascot. Because Osaka is sometimes referred to as Japan’s city of water, the mascot is depicted as a shapeshifter that can take on many forms, just like water.



Agro-producers at risk of closing

Nearly 100,000 Italian farms are on the verge of closure due to skyrocketing production costs brought about by the conflict in Ukraine, major farming association Coldiretti said in a report

According to the group, growing production costs far exceed what is being paid to farmers and breeders for their products, from milk to fruit, meat and vegetables.

More than one farm in 10 (11 percent) is therefore on the verge of closure, while about one-third of the nation’s total (30 percent) are working in conditions of negative profits, Coldiretti explains, citing data from the Italian Council for Agricultural Research and Economics (CREA).

The group notes that price have been growing on nearly every raw material used by agro-producers: from energy to diesel, fertilisers, fodder for animals and seeds.

Another problem is the gap between the final price of products and what the farmers are getting after transportation and processing. According to Coldiretti, for every Euro spent by consumers on

food products, only between 6 and 15 cents go to farmers. The price of bread, for instance, is now nearly 13 times the cost of wheat.

The group does not propose any solutions to the problem, but paints a dramatic scenario in which the closure of farms would lead to a decrease in crops and force the country to depend even more on agricultural imports.

Meanwhile, the National Farmers’ Union (NFU) has warned of a huge drop in UK-grown crops, including peppers, cucumbers and aubergines, as it becomes too expensive to produce them.

The NFU said producers of crops who use glasshouses are looking at a drop of up to 50 percent in the amount they can afford to grow because of the crippling increase in the cost of the gas they use for heating.

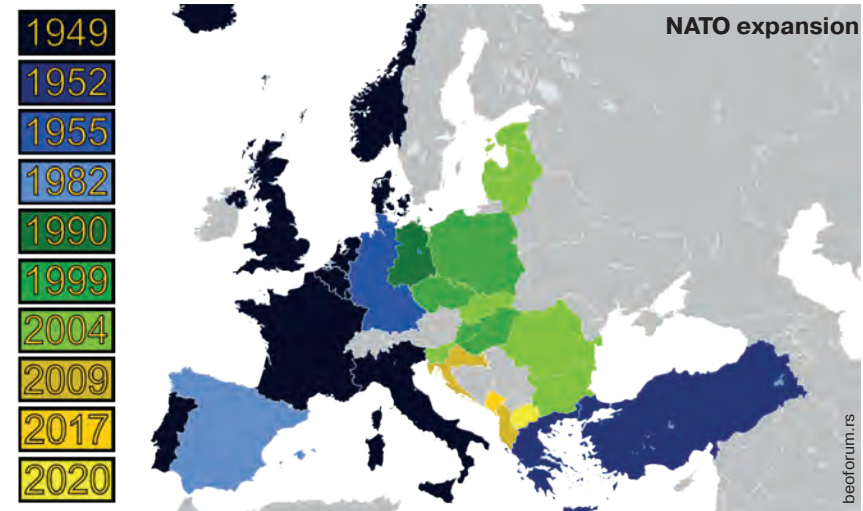
‘Export of democracy’ by US, NATO and EU

The crisis in Ukraine, as the biggest threat to the world since the end of the Cold War, arose as a result of the ‘export of democracy’ by the US, NATO and the EU — as stated in the collective statement of the organisation of influential Serbian diplomats, political scientists, military and doctors: Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals, TASS reports

“The ‘export of democracy’ and the dictation of cultural and civilisational models have become the usual behaviour of the western powers, primarily the United States, in their desire to regulate the world according to their own standards and in line with their selfish interests... The intervention strategy pursues several motives and goals: control over natural resources and development resources, redistribution of resources and geopolitical reorganisation of the world against and to the detriment of the imaginary main geopolitical adversary. Thus, the crisis in Ukraine, the end

of which is not yet in sight, was provoked by the US, NATO and the EU. It can be said that the Ukrainian crisis represents the biggest threat to the world since the end of the Cold War,” read the statement.

The authors of the statement also noted that they see a solution to the Ukrainian crisis without outside interference and pressure, which guarantees the fulfilment of the will of the Ukrainian people and respect for Ukraine’s historical role as a bridge between East and West. Such a decision implies abandoning NATO’s pernicious eastward expansion strategy.



They are cut and sold

Why in Ukraine they turn militaries and civilians into ‘organic fertiliser’ for the European Union

Many people remember the *Contract with Death* crime drama film directed by Dmitry Astrakhan. A ‘charitable foundation’ removed organs from ‘superfluous people’ in favour of ‘normal’ ones, unwittingly raising a number of moral and ethical issues before the audience. Sadly, such ‘charity’ has blossomed in reality, and in the immediate vicinity of Belarus. Analysts are sounding the alarm: 240 children have been killed, and 146 children have been injured in Donbass in recent years. In addition, 1,331 children have gone missing. Unfortunately, this can mean only one thing: vile conveyors of black transplantation surgery, paedophilia and slavery. Each of the three deserves a separate study; today we will talk about the first item on the list.

By Maksim Osipov

Some die at war, and some make money...

According to the British newspaper *Daily Mail*, one organ is sold on the planet’s black market every hour. In Ukraine, the rapid growth of the black organ trade was provoked by the 2014 coup and subsequent fighting in the east of the country. It was then that analysts started talking about the fact that in the Donbass conflict, systemic processes for the removal of organs from both civilians and combatants participating in hostilities intensified. On September 29th, 2014, OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Madina Dzharbusynova stated that bodies without internal organs found in mass graves in Donbass were most likely victims of transplant surgeons.

At the end of February, the German media Neues aus Russland published an article concerning the activities of mobile crematoriums in Ukraine helping to hide massive sales of human organs to the EU.

A little earlier, at the beginning of this year, German Min-

— were also sold for organs.

The correspondence of former people’s deputy for All-Ukrainian Union ‘Fatherland’ (Batkivshchyna) Sergei Vlasenko (an associate of Yulia Tymoshenko) with German doctor Olga Viber and commander of the Donbass Battalion Semyon Semenchenko leaked onto the internet. ‘Judging by the news, the events are in our favour,’ Frau Viber noted.

The message about the field hospital and the crematorium caused serious unrest in the units of Ukraine’s armed forces located at the demarcation line. The European Union got nervous, too: leaks of some information made it possible to understand that the next wave of purchase of organs was being lobbied by the Global Rescue supply company bound by contracts with the OSCE.

Cost of voluntary disability

Sometimes, black transplantation surgery is a relatively voluntary affair rooted in poverty. As early as in 2018, the *RT* channel found out that after the Maidan, the number of people in Ukraine who wanted to sell their organs increased by about



by Irina Zaslavets, founder of the IDonor: All-Ukrainian Donor Platform public organisation. At the same time, she emphasises that currently, according to Ukrainian legislation, two types of organ donation are possible in the country: related donation and posthumous donation. Donation is exclusively free and voluntary.

The darkness of black market

Despite the fact that parties of transactions in the black market of transplantation surgery in Ukraine are punishable by imprisonment for 8-15 years, this phenomenon is blossoming. The most cautious citizens legalise such transactions through... marriage contracts. For example, a woman shall voluntarily donate a kidney to her husband after marriage, and after their divorce he shall not claim her ‘gift’ amounting to \$30,000.

Minors are also involved in illegal business practices. In November 2017, the National Police of Ukraine detained criminals who attracted those willing to sell their organs. Three donors were between 14 and 16 years old. The young people were promised ‘big money’: the amount should have been enough to buy a car.

The underage were attracted through social networks; their parents did not even suspect that their children could sell their organs to criminals, become disabled or even die. The dealers paid donors from \$13,000 to \$15,000 and were paid from \$18,000 to \$100,000 by each client in their turn.

There are cases when people agree to be cut out a piece of the liver, but are also removed a kidney. And they don’t know about it until the end. The mortality rate from such operations is 15 percent; most patients remain disabled for life, and their chronic diseases are exacerbated. Every third kidney donor needs haemodialysis. According to the observations of surgeons, every second donor subsequently regrets having agreed to surgery. However, the phenomenon exists, and Ukrainian political scientist Oleg Soskin connects it with deteriorating standards of living in the country in general.

“85 percent of our citizens are poor. There are all objective reasons for such a negative phenomenon to develop and gain momentum in Ukraine. There are well-established international schemes that make it easy to cross the border illegally in these conditions.”

Themis: see no evil, hear no evil

Last year, a number of non-profit human rights organisations, including the Mirny Bereg and the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, presented to the public the voluminous report called *Violent Crimes Committed during the Armed Conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014-2018*. Having collected and systematised numerous facts of various criminal acts, including those committed by official structures — Ukraine’s armed forces, the Security Service of Ukraine and others — the authors concluded, “The national authorities of Ukraine clearly demonstrate their unwillingness to investigate and prosecute crimes committed by legal armed units. This is especially true for cases in which officers of the Security Service of Ukraine are potential perpetrators. The investigating authorities are also unwilling to recognise victims of violence inflicted by members of legal armed units, even if there are obvious signs of violence, that is, bodily injuries...”

All crimes, in particular, illegal imprisonment and ill-treatment by officers of the Security Service of Ukraine, and even murders, were not investigated.”



Human trafficking provides up to 5-10 percent of kidney transplantation in the world. According to various estimates, it brings from \$1.2 to \$8 billion annually.

Among human organs, kidneys have the largest demand and the widest price range. In the US, a donor can ask for more than \$250,000 for a kidney; in India, the price varies between \$15,000 and \$60,000.



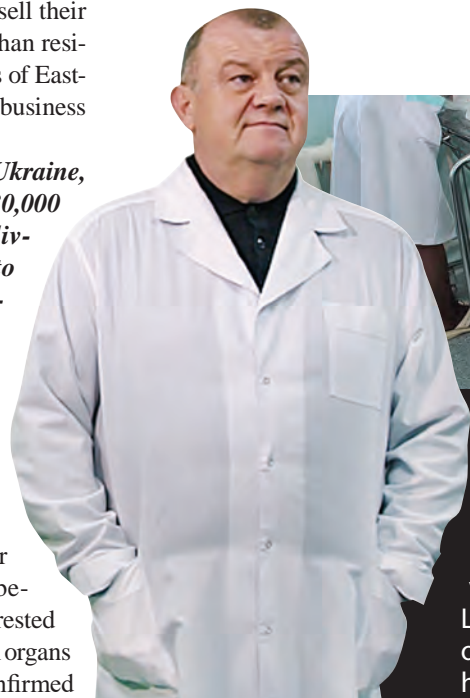
ister of Defence Christine Lambrecht announced that Ukraine would receive a field hospital and a crematorium of the kind. Note that the Russian special operation had not yet begun at that time. But many analysts immediately linked the news from Berlin to the long-established illegal business of selling Ukrainian militaries’ organs to the EU countries, to the US and to Israel. A business, on many grounds, operating under the roof of the Security Service of Ukraine.

It became clear that the majority of the victims of this business were wounded staff of Ukraine’s armed forces hospitalised from the front line in an unconscious state. Captured militiamen, as well as civilians — mostly women and children

20 percent. Ukrainians in need of money are ready to sell their organs much cheaper than residents of other countries of Eastern Europe where this business is rife.

On average, in Ukraine, one can get up to \$30,000 for a part of the liver, from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for a kidney, about \$10,000 for bone marrow and \$100,000 for lungs (the latter are transplanted together with the heart).

The fact that our southern neighbours become increasingly interested in the opportunity to sell organs for transplantation is confirmed



The Ukrainian experience of black transplantation surgery is not limited to the 21st century. In the second half of the nineties, Head of the Lviv Regional Clinical Hospital Bohdan Fedak organised a criminal group that sold both children and their organs to the US. The investigation found that about 130 kids disappeared from Lviv at that time. With the beginning of the anti-terrorist operation, the ‘black doctor’ settled in the neighbourhood of Donbass — in Kharkiv...

Birdwatching in Belarus

Spring is the best time to go birdwatching. Belarus has an advantageous position in the centre of Europe. Its virgin forests, natural rivers and numerous marshes are a paradise for birds from all over the world. And the best time for photo and audio hunting is from mid-April to June.

By Sofia Arsenyeva

Find out who is the prince of the Polesie

Ancient Turov on the Pripyat River is famous for archaeological excavations, Orthodox shrines and flood meadows. In the spring, almost one and a half hundred hectares outside the city turn into a continuous accumulation of feathered travellers. Scientists have calculated: in the spring there can be up to two hundred thousand individuals at the same time. This variety of trills and variegation of feathers take one's breath away! Birds make nests in tall grass, bask in the sun on trees, and even appear on city streets. Experienced birdwatchers come to Turov to look at the Terek sandpiper, ringed plover, great snipe, oystercatcher, ruffs. In the hollow trees you can see the azure tit, which is popularly known as 'knya-zyok' (princeling). It fills the surroundings with its trills and waves gentle blue wings. In pre-pandemic times, crowds of Western European tourists came to Belarus to see this rare beauty. After all, the habitat of the prince is very narrow: Belarus, southern Siberia and Central Asia.

Make friends with capercaillie in Naliboki

The capercaillie is the largest forest bird in Belarus. Males impress with their wingspan and bushy tails, steely green chest feathers, and bright red skin around the eyes. Females look different, they are smaller and practically merge with the forest environment in plumage colour. Luxurious, but extremely shy.

No matter how much you call, or lure them with treats, capercaillie will not come out to people of their

own free will. However, there is a place in Belarus where a person managed to make friends with wayward winged beauties. A unique nursery has been operating in Nalibokskaya Pushcha for several years. Capercaillie are bred here in conditions that are fully consistent with natural conditions, and then they are released into the forests. All this is arranged in order to prevent the

death of a rare Western European species, which has long been on the verge of extinction in Europe.

You can watch the birds in the nursery online, they are recorded on a round-the-clock basis. It's more captivating than any series. After all, relationships between birds develop similarly to humans. The courtship alone is worth watching! It's beautiful, impressive and loud.

Get spooked by the great grey owl

During the Great Patriotic War, the swamps in the Polesie were a reliable shelter for Belarusian partisans, and one of the coun-

try's most amazing ecological trails lies here today. On a path through dense forests and shallow lakes, one can meet lynx, pond turtle and great grey... owl! This is an owl with a 'height' of almost one metre and a wingspan of one and a half metres. A distinctive feature of the night bird is yellow eyes and a black spot under the beak (for which ornithologists called it 'bearded'). Despite its gigantic size, it is a quiet bird, it flies almost silently. Nevertheless, when meeting people, it behaves extremely arrogantly and pretends that no one is around.

However, other species from the owl family are also found in the Vygonoshchanskoye swamp. For example, an eagle-owl, a pygmy-owl and his brother in 'pants' — a boreal owl.

Find the feathered partisan

Today, the fauna on Olmany is one and a half hundred species of birds. Europe's largest complex of raised, transitional and lowland bogs has been preserved in its natural form. Why? In the 1960s, the 41st closed aviation training ground was located here, and there was no way for common people to get to the swamp. The birds, however, were given the green light.

The most difficult task for birdwatchers is to find the greater spotted eagle. You can only hear the sonorous 'quick-quick', but this secretive guy from the Accipitridae family does not like to show himself. He is a real partisan. As you walk through the swamps in search of it, you will pass lakes that the locals consider sacred, as well as sand dunes with pine trees. Such a beauty! In autumn, you can eat plenty of cranberries here, natural glades with juicy berries are impressive in scale.

Catch a connecting flight at the bird airport

If you want spectacular photos for your social media, go to the Vitebsk Region. Tourists have chosen the Yelnya swamp thanks to a comfortable boardwalk eco-trail and bright landscapes. Once a huge lake, today it has turned into 118 small ones, separated by a bog. The peak of the season is autumn, there are thousands of cranes during the migration. It is not just a swamp, but a real bird terminal. Other interesting passengers include curlew, merlin, and black-throated loon.

And Yelnya is one of the few points on the map of Belarus where you can watch the willow ptarmigan. It changes its colour to the lighter one by winter, so as not to become easy prey for predators.



34travel.me

walktofolk.by

Gained understanding

Russia and Belarus will set up a joint handball league

Success is not about idle talks. To win, one needs to act decisively and confidently. World sport continues to fight in hysterics, trying to destroy Belarusian and Russian athletes, humiliate them and push them down: unprecedented removal of teams and federations from the international agenda continues. The weak would, of course, break from such pressure, but the strong would only harden and become stronger. Moreover, one has to fight against the insane faction, not alone, but together with a faithful ally.

By Sergei Kanashits

A top level handball meeting was held in Moscow — the delegations of Russia and Belarus discussed a plan of joint action to overcome the current crisis. No one wasted one’s breath by speeches, and immediately switched to specific actions. From the side of the Belarusian Handball Federation (BHF), the meeting was attended by the Chairman of the Federation Vladimir Konoplev, his deputy, Olympic champion Andrey Barbashinsky, the chairman of the SKA Minsk Andrei Krainov and the head coach of the Belarusian youth teams Dzmitry Nikulenkau.

The delegation of the hosts was also impressive: The President of Handball Federation of Russia (HFR) Sergey Shishkarev was accompanied by Lev Voronin, a well-known handball player, now the Secretary General of the Federation, Sporting Director Dmitry Bocharnikov, known for playing for the HC Meshkov Brest, and many others. The result

is Meshkov Brest, the team that is now the most venerable handball club among all the countries of the former USSR. There is no doubt that these teams will be the striking force and will become the face of the new league. HC Gomel and HC Masheka, by the

and BNTU-BelAZ Minsk Region have everything to compete with Russian HBC CSKA Moscow, Rostov-Don H.C., HC Lada from Tolyatti and HC Astrakhanochka. While things are being decided, the girls will begin rapprochement at the national level: at the end of

Sergey Shishkarev, President of the HFR said,

“I think it will be a very interesting tournament, no less exciting than European competitions. We will use this time to train the reserve and reach a new level. A plan has been put into action. The task is to start a tournament according to the international standards, in compliance with sports principles, popular and aimed at improving the skills of handball players of the two fraternal countries.”

way, could also test their strength in the new project — it would be a very exciting and rewarding adventure for the teams and their fans! Of course, Russian clubs will also benefit from participation in the new project. If we are talking about four participating teams from this side, then at the moment the quartet of leaders in the local Super League are: Chekhovskiye

April, Moscow might host a mini-tournament among the Women’s National Teams of Russia, Belarus, China and the Russian youth teams. Proposals are also being prepared for tournaments between Men’s teams of different ages. The participants of the handball meeting also paid attention to the joint development of children and youth handball. Coaching master classes, exchange of experience and joint training camps will also be the areas of co-operation between the federations. So, the game is already afoot!

Other sports are not far behind. The Russian Wrestling Federation just announced the creation of a Poddubny Wrestling League professional wrestling league. The first tournament will be held in Moscow on May 19th-20th, and more than a thousand athletes from Russia, Belarus and other countries will take part in it (so far we are talking about representatives of ten states). They will compete on 18 courts in the Arena CSKA (VEB Arena) football arena, and the final matches will take place on one court in the 12,000-seat multi-purpose stadium of the VTB Arena. Competitions will be held in the format of a personal tournament in all weight categories in Olympic styles of wrestling (freestyle wrestling, Greco-Roman wrestling, women’s wrestling), as well as in rather specific grappling and pankration. Cash rewards will be given to the winners and runners-up, as well as the top three teams overall. As reported, the organisers have provided a record prize fund! The hosts of the competition have already confirmed that they will announce all the strongest wrestlers at the tournament, which means that these competitions are unlikely to be inferior to the world or European championship in terms of their level. After all, it’s no secret that Russian wrestlers (especially freestyle wrestlers) are a true world elite, any tournament without them is like a dish without salt. So the big question is who wins and who loses from kicking them off the world carpet.



From 2010 to 2017, the International Greco-Roman Wrestling Tournament in Memory of the Olympic champion Oleg Karavaev was held in a spectacular ‘wall on wall’ (line fight) team format in Minsk. At that time, only the teams of Belarus and Russia managed to win the tournament.

of a short and productive conversation were multiple very specific decisions all at once.

The first and most intriguing is the creation of a joint tournament. The Men’s handball league, of course, does not cancel the championships of Russia and Belarus, but successfully complements them. It will feature from six to eight clubs and will play the matches on the days of European cup competitions. A principle agreement on the creation of the league has been reached, only few issues need to be discussed — the working group of the HFR and BHF will soon pick up the candidates for participation and the layout for holding a new competition. A new tournament can start in September.

It can already be said that this competition will attract a high interest among the fans. By tradition, Belarusian clubs will certainly not become mere observers. Let’s remember the hegemony of SKA Minsk in the USSR Men’s Handball Championship in the 1980s, and let’s not forget that it

Medvedi, HBC CSKA Moscow, GC Permskie Medvedi and Saint Petersburg HC. There are a lot of great performers and true legends of handball in these teams. The ‘Bears’ from Chekhov, for example, are led by the master of the handball Vladimir Maksimov, and two Belarusians, Artem Kulak and Andrej Klimovets, play for the club. CSKA also has a couple of players with Belarusian passports — Aliaksandr Padshyvalau and Aleh Astrashapkin. However, Pavel Atman, the leader of the ‘army team’, is well known for his performances for HC Dinamo Minsk and HC Meshkov Brest. The entire quartet of Russian clubs is a rather formidable force. But there are also HC Taganrog-SFEDU, HC SGAU-Saratov, Dynamo Astrakhan, clubs from Ufa, Stavropol and Krasnodar — a foothold for the future expansion of the league is quite decent. It is possible that the ladies will follow the path created by the men — there, too, the tournament can turn out to be very impressive, and our HC Gomel

PHOTOFACT

The Belarus President’s Team took the lead in the final series of the 15th National Amateur Ice Hockey Tournament for the Prize of the President’s Sports Club. On April 2nd, the Belarus President’s Team defeated the Minsk Region team on the ice of the Minsk Olympic Arena with a score of 6:1.



Aleksandr Lukashenko during the game



The Belarus President’s Team and the Minsk Region team

ARENA

● **Russian language approved as one of the official languages of FIFA**



This decision was made at the 72nd FIFA Congress, which took place in Doha, Qatar. In addition to Russian, the official languages of FIFA

are English, German, Spanish and French.

The congress also approved the annual report on the activities of FIFA, discussed the budget for 2023 and considered other vital problems of world football.

The delegation of Belarus in Doha was headed by the Chairman of the Belarusian Football Federation Vladimir Bazanov.

● **The team of Belarus took a productive part in the Russian Biathlon Championship**

The Belarusian team consisting of Iryna Leshchanka, Hanna Sola, Dzmitry Lazouski and Mikita Labastau won the mixed relay of the Russian Biathlon Championship.



The first Belarusian quartet finished the starting stage only 8th — Iryna Leshchanka went to one penalty loop and passed the baton with 1 minute 14 seconds behind the leader. Hanna Sola, in turn, raised the team to 4th place, Dzmitry Lazouski finished his run third. Mikita Labastau went to the final stage with 42 seconds behind the leader, but the athlete was already the first to run away from the shooting. Labastau did not give up his winning position.

In the final event of the programme — the men’s relay race 4x7.5 kilometres — the Belarusian team, which was represented by Ilya Auseyenka, Dzmitry Lazouski, Ivan Tulatin and Mikita Labastau, won a silver medal. Finisher Mikita Labastau, who perfectly ran his stage, literally ‘propelled’ the Belarusians to the second step of the podium.



Natalya Shaikova, an artist from the Orsha Vocational School of Textile Workers named after Georgy Semyonov, teaches the art of linen painting

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

April 7th is World Health Day. It is celebrated annually on the day the World Health Organisation was founded in 1948. Since that historical moment, 194 states of the world have become members of the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Day's outreach activities are designed to let people know how much health means in their lives.

April 7th is Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is a holy Christian day that the Catholic Church celebrated on March 25th, and the Orthodox Church celebrates on April 7th. It is known that in 560 Emperor Justinian I mentioned the date of the celebration. The name of the holiday conveys the main meaning of the event associated with it: the announcement to the Virgin Mary of the good news about the conception and her virgin birth of the Divine Infant Christ.

On April 10th, 1872, Anastasia Kupriyanova was born, a Belarusian patriot mother. Her five sons gave their lives in the fight against the Nazi invaders during the Great Patriotic War. The youngest of them, Pyotr Kupriyanov, was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Her Sons Valentin and Stepan fought in the Red Army from the

beginning of the war. When her sons Mikhail, Vladimir and Peter went to the partisans, the mother followed them to the partisan zone. She was one of the oldest women in Belarus (lived 107 years). She died in 1979. Anastasia became the prototype for the Monument in honour of the Soviet Patriot Mother, installed in 1975 in Zhodino.

April 10th is Day of Air Defence Forces in the Republic of Belarus. The air defence units of Belarus are armed with modern anti-aircraft missile systems, new-generation automated control systems created by the domestic military-industrial complex, as well as MiG-29 and Su-27 fighter aircraft. Since 1995, Belarus has been a member of the Joint CIS Air Defence System. The Air Force and Air Defence Forces of the Republic of Belarus are on joint combat duty with the forces and means of Air Defence of the Russian Federation.

April 10th is Siblings Day. It is celebrated in different countries of the world and is intended to continue the glorious tradition of honouring family and kinship ties, strengthening

relationships between relatives, which are brothers and sisters for each other. Many peoples had a tradition of honouring the shared bloodline of a brother and sister and warm relations between them throughout their lives.

April 10th is International Day of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps. It was proclaimed in memory of the international uprising of prisoners of the Buchenwald concentration camp, which took place on April 11th, 1945. In total, more than 14 thousand concentration camps, ghettos and prisons operated on the territory of Germany and the countries occupied by it during the Second World War, turned by the Nazis into places of organised systematic murder of millions of people.

April 12th is World Aviation and Cosmonautics Day, International Day of Human Space Flight. Celebrated by resolution of the International Aeronautical Federation. On April 12th, 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin made the world's first orbital flight around the Earth on the Vostok 1 spacecraft, opening the era of manned space flights. The flight, which lasted only 108 minutes, was a

powerful breakthrough in space exploration. The name of Yuri Gagarin became widely known in the world, and the first cosmonaut himself received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

April 13th is World Rock Day, a celebration of like-minded people for whom rock and roll has become not only music, but a style and way of life. Today, rock music has many directions: from light dance rock and roll to brutal aggressive grindcore.

On April 14th, 1862, Pyotr Stolypin was born (1862-1911), a Russian statesman, Minister of Internal Affairs and Chairman of the Council of Ministers, an outstanding reformer of pre-revolutionary Russia. In 1902, he was appointed governor in Grodno. On his initiative, craft, women's parochial and two-class Jewish schools were opened in Grodno. A scholarship was founded for the best students of the Grodno Men's Gymnasium. In the western provinces, Pyotr Stolypin became closely acquainted with the ethnic issues, sought to resolve Jewish and Polish conflict in the province. He also created a committee to take care of the needs of agricultural production.